

Public Opinion

TO SAVE LEATHER.

Look at the sweat band in your hat or cap. It is about two inches wide and twenty-five inches long—a little thing, you say. It takes an annual total of fifty-five million feet of leather to put this in the headgear men wear, says the *Popular Science Monthly*. It is, in truth, one of the biggest little leather leaks brought to the attention of the public. But it is not a difficult leak to stop. By wearing hats or caps with substitute leather bands or no bands at all, you can divert the leather to more important needs.

THE GLOBE'S INFLUENCE.

(London Daily News.)

A Canadian Major who is a Liberal in politics told me that he thought the Borden victory in Canada was largely due to the influence of *The Toronto Globe*. It is the greatest journal in Canada, has been the backbone of the Liberal party for a generation, and has stuck to Sir Wilfrid Laurier from his earliest campaign in 1881 until he refused to join the Coalition Government this year. *The Globe* declared for "Conscription and Coalition." So did all the dailies in Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton. Their weight was too much for Quebec.

DAYLIGHT SAVING.

(Chicago Tribune.)

The coal shortage, as a correspondent of *The Tribune* points out, gives special emphasis to the arguments heretofore made in favor of setting the clocks forward. One hour of daylight saving, beginning May 1, he says, would save 900,000 tons of coal. We are not informed as to the accuracy of his figures, but the saving would, undoubtedly, be great. The country is now observing lightless nights, but there is no reason, when the days grow longer, why we should not take advantage of an extra hour of daylight which can be had without expense and without hardship. Congress should pass daylight saving legislation without delay.

THE MORAL VALUE OF MATHEMATICS.

(By Theo. H. Price, in *Commerce and Finance*.)

A speaker at the Michigan State Convention of Teachers held last autumn expressed an unusual view in regard to the educational value of mathematics when he said: "In no other branch of learning does a man learn respect for actual facts as he does in the study of mathematics. The fact that two and two make four is a dignified truth. When a man learns to respect such truths he lays the foundation of respect for truth in all things great and small."

While the idea of including mathematics among the meridities will no doubt seem strange to some, no one will deny that straight thinking is essential to right living and that rectilinear thought is assisted by the study of a science that is based upon axiomatic or self-evident truths.

To teach men their duty and the reason for it is the function of moral philosophy and at a time when there is a great confusion of thought in regard to the economic duty of the citizen the inexorable truths that are expressed in the simplest mathematical proposition have great moral value and peculiar moral force.

An old merchant once explained to us that most business failures were due to the use of hope rather than arithmetic in book-keeping. "Men first deceive themselves" he said, "and then they deceive others" becoming thereby guilty of the gravest immorality.

Some of those who aspire to lead or to direct the commercial policy of America at war are we fear making the same series of mistakes. They have first deceived themselves and they are now trying to deceive others into the belief that economy and self-denial are unnecessary to the successful prosecution of the war in which we are engaged.

In most cases self-interest seems to be consciously or unconsciously responsible for this self-deception.

We commend the study of mathematics to the proponents of "business as usual" who have deluded themselves and are trying to delude others into believing that "we can eat our cake and keep it too" and that all the angles of a triangle may be equal to more or less than two right angles—and we mean right angles in a moral as well as a geometrical sense.

THE HOUSE OF HAPSBURG.

(Commerce and Finance.)

What a horror the story of the Hapsburgs furnishes. Within the range of the reign of Franz Josef we have the massacre of the Hungarians, the mystery of John Orth, the double tragedy of the Crown Prince and Marie Vetsera, the murder of the Empress, the double tragedy of Ferdinand and his morganatic wife at Sarajevo, the world war of which that double killing was the prelude, and next the death of the Emperor. And now the woman the Emperor loved, the only one perhaps who ever loved him, dies a pauper.

WHAT NEW DEVICE OF DEATH?

The New York Tribune points out that each year of the war, thus far, has produced some new and terrible instrument of destruction. For example:

1914—The 42 centimetre gun which pulverized fortifications that were supposed to be impregnable.

1915—Poison gas which added new horrors to conflict between armies.

1916—The "tank."

1917—The depth bomb which is conquering the submarine.

And

1918—What?

Possibly a new explosive.

BACK TO THE BROWN SUGAR BARREL.

(Wall Street Journal.)

Among the many suggestions inspired by the sugar crisis has been a movement to use unrefined sugar as an economy measure, thus saving extra expense of the refined product, amounting to more than a cent a pound. Brown sugar is equally nourishing and many think equally palatable. An objection raised is that sugar direct from the producer would need a special process to make it fit for the table, which would be almost as costly as refining. Steps have already been taken to overcome this difficulty by producers, who think that by simple additions to machinery of the centrals the changes can be made during production. If anything should come of the movement it would be a return to the days when the brown sugar barrel in the pantry played a very important part in domestic life of the people.

MEXICO'S MIXTURE OF RACES.

(World's Work.)

About a fifth of the people of Mexico call themselves Spanish and perhaps a twentieth are really without Indian mixture. A third of the population is of native American stock; and fully half the people have both Spanish and Indian blood. The pure Indians of Mexico include a few wild tribes which have not yet bowed the knee to the Spaniard, such as the Huichols, the Tarascas, the pigmy Otomies and the Mixes in their ridge-climbing log villages with such Aztec names as Ixcumtepec and Huixquilucan. Modern investigators like Starr and Lamboltz think they are superior to the mixed race, and to many whites.

BIDDY'S BIT.

(The Wall Street Journal.)

"Hens must help win the war," says Secretary Houston. Now, Biddy didn't raise her chicks to feed a soldier, but when duty calls, she's game. What can she do? Statistics gleaned from census reports, departmental and semi-official estimates show what she has done. From these it is easy to deduce what she is capable of doing on the laying line this year.

She is not near maximum production when she turns out 2,000,000,000 dozens of eggs a year, equivalent to that many pounds of meat. What would that much meat look like on the hoof? Imagine 3,000,000 head of cattle, and you come near it. That may be worth crowing over, but Biddy does not crow. Neither does she rest. Instead she devotes spare time to production of poultry-meat weighing 2,500,000,000 pounds, equivalent to 12,500,000 squealing pigs dressing 200 pounds each.

The civil population can eat this enormous mass of food and save beef and pork to nourish fighting men to go over the top. Meat, not talk, will help win the war. The American eagle may scream at the front, but the American hen adding to the meat supply is capable of doing a big bit in winning the fight. Why not encourage her?

INDIA'S AID TO BRITAIN.

(Southern Lumberman.)

In man power India's contribution is estimated at 1,100,000 men; these figures were given at a recent meeting of the Indian Legislative Council at Delhi. Her money contribution to England during the war approximates \$1,000,000,000. India has furnished aid also in the form of equipment and labor.

SHIPYARD PRODUCTION.

(Christian Science Monitor.)

To summarize: shipyard production in the United States, at the present time, is far from being what it should be, but the situation has been cleared, obstruction has been removed, a fresh impetus has been given to construction, and the organization of the industry, so far as can be seen at the moment, is being put on a better basis, with the result that the outlook for the near future is generally more encouraging. However opinions may differ as to the necessity for the drastic order just issued by the Fuel Administration, there will be universal satisfaction over the exemption of the shipyards from its operation, for it is universally recognized that in this particular, at least, a speeding up rather than a slowing down is called for.

WHEN DEMAGOGY HURTS.

(Chicago Tribune.)

Daniel Willard defined a weakness of a nation such as the United States when he said to the senate investigating committee that a democracy relies upon its methods to raise capable men outside of official life and then refuses to trust them when it has need of them and calls them.

We understand that American genius will not get, except by accident, the development in politics which will satisfy extraordinary national demands. A democracy, particularly a young democracy without caste or class and without a thoroughly respected profession of politics, will not reveal its best genius in politics.

Government will not claim the very best the nation can produce until the nation is in great emergency. Then men of talent and high ability will offer themselves from the fields in which they have been developed. And the nation will distrust them and restrict their usefulness, although it knows that in these men the best talent of the nation is represented.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.

(Manchester, N.H., Union.)

New Hampshire and Vermont are the only New England States mentioned in the published list of those which have been awarded \$15,000 of the federal fund for vocational education, each of them having agreed to raise a dollar for every dollar received from the Government for that purpose. The idea is altogether progressive, quite apart from war-time circumstances. This paper has repeatedly emphasized the importance of preparing pupils for a life work along the line of their respective talents, predilections or adaptabilities, and has contended that they are justly entitled to an education with special reference to their personal future as are those who contemplate a college course. Incidentally, a state or national policy of vocational training would be of inestimable benefit to the industries of the State or of the nation. When the United States entered the war, and it became necessary to call men—and women, too, for that matter—from the ordinary pursuits to those directly pertaining to the promotion of military success, American industries found themselves presently up against an overwhelming demand for trained workers. This condition has been more and more in evidence, and more and more intensified, with the progress of our war preparations. It will be so in ever-increasing measure until several years after the war closes. The places of skilled men and women who have gone to take a direct part in the war work must be taken by other skilled men and women—and those other skilled men and women must be trained with the least possible waste of time and a minimum of lost motion. In other words, they must be trained, as our soldiers are being trained, for the specific work which they are expected to do, and must be put in readiness to undertake that work as soon as may be. This was advisable before the war; now it is absolutely essential. There is bound to be a period of reconstruction, at least, in Europe, and of readjustment, at least, in America, when the war is over. If the demand for skilled workers is urgent now, it will be even more so then. The Federal Government recognized the importance of vocational education when it made this offer to the states. It is to be hoped that no time will be lost in putting the money to work where it will do the most good.