

Public Opinion

IS "ALRIGHT" ALWRONG?

(London Daily News).

A father writes that his son has been severely scolded by his schoolmaster for using the phrase "all right" in its amalgamated form, "alright," and asks if the latter is not an abbreviated modern form as legitimate as, say, "already." Far from being a modern upstart, "alright" is, as a matter of fact, of very hoary antiquity, being used by English writers of a very early day. It may be anathema to the pedant, but it has its niche in the "Oxford Dictionary."

INTERNATIONAL SLACKERS.

(Chicago Tribune).

Talk all you like about the "melting pot." International slackerdom won't melt. No gentle treatment affects it. You can reason or wheedle or sentimentalize until the cows come home, but only harsh measures avail. Give an international slacker the very dose he flees from country to country to dodge. Draft him. Drill him. Make him serve. In that way you will pound into him the first rudiments of manhood.

MANCHURIA.

(East and West News).

Manchuria is terribly poor, despite the mineral and agricultural riches extracted from its soil and rocks, all of which products are shipped abroad. There are probably thousands of industries unable, by remitting toil, to earn more than a meagre living. When to their natural difficulties are added the ravages of bandits and the evils of misgovernment, such as now prevails in many parts of China, abject poverty and starvation must be the lot of the people who, in the best of time, are only half fed.

OVERCOMING THE SHIP SCARCITY.

(Wall Street Journal).

Shortage of bottoms has been felt on the Pacific coast, as elsewhere, but lack of ships, in one instance at least, has been overcome by Yankee ingenuity in a novel manner.

The government's orders for lumber for new ships, army cantonments, etc., overtaxed carrying capacity of Pacific coastwise lines, and to get the logs from Oregon and Washington forests to the mills, the logs are chained together in huge rafts, 800 feet in length and 40 to 60 in width. The completed raft is oval in shape and has appearance of an immense turtle. It is picked up by a sea-going tug and towed to its destination, safe against U-boat attacks and at a very reasonable rate for freight.

THE AIRPLANE CAMERA.

The greatest work of the airplane is to locate the enemy's strongholds and batteries and then map them. The multiple airplane camera which the Allies are using—an American invention, by the way—can map the German lines with truly marvelous proficiency. Where, in the first part of the war, artist-observers were used to make pencil sketches as accurately and as quickly as they could, now cameras such as this one are employed to take thousands of photographs at the rate of one a second, if necessary.

One multiple airplane-camera, described in the Popular Science Monthly, is capable of seven hundred and fifty exposures with a single loading. The secret of this great capacity lies in its use of ordinary motion picture film. It is constructed much like the ordinary film camera, with the exception that the turning of the film for a new exposure is accomplished automatically by the action of a set of gears.

The camera is placed on the airplane so that it will have an unobstructed view downward and slightly forward. One pull on the flexible cable, connected with the operating lever of the gears, winds up the previously exposed film, sets the shutter, makes the new exposure, and registers its number. A spring instantly brings the lever back into normal position ready for the next picture. This happens so swiftly that it is possible to make a continuous record of a flight. In bomb-dropping the camera is capable of taking pictures of the bomb in the air and at the very instant of explosion.

TANTALIZING.

(Southern Lumberman).

Although it is a source of never-failing pleasure, the fifty-years-ago-to-day column in certain newspapers is a bit tantalizing at times. We should like to know what became of the man who got married in a certain Massachusetts town, August 8, 1867, and whose surprising conduct is recorded in this brief press dispatch: "John ——— shoved a counterfeit bill into the marrying parson's hand after the ceremony and then stole the reverend gentleman's umbrella."

NEW ONTARIO ALL RIGHT.

(Ottawa Citizen).

The settlers of New Ontario stoutly maintain that their country is all right. Each year more land is coming under cultivation; and with the clearing and settling of the land there seems to be a steady improvement in the behavior of the weather. And this year the north country is preparing an exhibit at the Central Canada Exhibition in Ottawa to surprise the populace of this conservatively settled part of the world.

PAINTING THE NAVY.

Our battleships literally eat paint. The initial color requirements for a new battleship cost about twenty-five thousand dollars, which is the price of about one hundred tons of the kind of paint the navy uses. In addition to this, according to the Popular Science Monthly, it is customary to repaint the different parts of a ship two or three times a year, so the annual upkeep probably exceeds this sum. This brings the annual outlay in paint for the entire fleet to a million dollars. The most important coating a vessel receives is the paint applied to the submerged parts of the hull to protect it from corrosion or barnacles.

ITALIANS NATIONAL FIGHTERS.

(Boston News Bureau).

The Italian has established himself as a national fighter, in a mechanical and bloody war. The world had too much thought of him as picturesque peasant, troubadour, gondolier, barber or even bandit. It had overlooked the recent industrial renaissance of his country, and its new sense of national solidity and aspiration. The tireless ditchdigger here has en masse proved the superlative trench digger and mountain burrower there.

And not least of his attainments has been an outstanding skill in two pre-eminent items of modern war—the devising of superior artillery and aircraft. He has had to achieve these largely because of the mountains; but it was in him to do it.

The bootleg of Europe may yet have much to do with the kicking out of Hohenzollern as well as Hapsburg.

WHAT THE END OF THE WAR MUST BE.

(New York Journal of Commerce).

Whatever pretense may be brazenly kept up by the official voice of the German Empire, the world knows now why it precipitated this war and what it intended that its end should be. It had been boldly preparing for it at least a quarter of a century and its chief spokesmen made no secret of that fact, however incredulous those who listened might be. The Empire armed itself to the teeth, cased itself in protective armor and trained its forces to the height of effectiveness and brutality for a purpose. Its determination was not only to dominate Central Europe, carry its sway eastward over Turkey and the Black Sea into Asia and Africa, and over the seas, but to make a display of armed power that would make other nations subservient if not submissive.

What becomes of the present Kaiser and Imperial brood of ministers is a minor consideration, but their power and influence must be destroyed. If it is accomplished with the aid of those who have been its deluded or unconscious victims, so much the better for them and for the cause, as well as for those who have the task on their hands of compelling it. The American Republic with its resources, its men and its spirit of freedom, is destined to be the decisive factor. Its people have the opportunity of teaching Central Europe a lesson which it greatly needs, regarding the results and the advantages of American principles of government.

WASTE OF MATERIAL.

(New York Evening Sun).

If the tons upon tons of iron crosses awarded in Germany had only been dropped from airplanes, the destruction of London might have been completed.

THE KITCHENER STORY.

(New York World).

Any one who supposes German military authorities would keep silence about it if they really had Kitchener as a prisoner gives them undue credit for reticence and modesty.

WHAT YOU THINK OF WHEN WAR COMES.

(From the American Magazine).

Probably every man in the United States has thought more about his family in the last three months than ever before in his life—more seriously, I mean. It has been a great time for the quiet revaluation of family ties. To me it has been rather a revelation. I have always supposed that I was unusually loyal to my parents and my brothers and sisters.

I write to my mother regularly, and have always chipped in when any one of the folks has been in a tight place. But I woke up with a start yesterday to the realization that in all these weeks when my decision has been forming I haven't thought of any of them once. All my thought has been of her and of Peter.

It brought home to me how much more she means in my life than any of the other members of my family—yes, more than all of them together. I don't suppose anything in the world could have made it quite so terribly clear to me—anything except her death. The war will not be all loss to me, no matter how much it costs, if only I can come back and have some years in which to make her as happy as I know at this minute she deserves to be.

BACON AND ITS LESSONS.

(Christian Science Monitor).

As the case of the William Davies Company is still, as it were, sub judice, and Sir Joseph Flavelle has insisted that the profits made in the bacon trade by the companies included in the corporation are not so excessive as they were declared to be in the report issued by the Commissioners on the Cost of Living, and has appealed to Sir Robert Borden for a full investigation, there is, at present, nothing specifically to be said about this matter. There is, however, a great deal to be said on matters arising out of it.

One of the proposals put forward in regard to these alleged excessive profits on bacon is to the effect that the State might regain all it has lost and "restore the balance" by taxing these profits retrospectively. Such a proposition entirely fails to recognize the dangers which at this time arise out of extortionate prices. To return to the State, by way of a tax on profits, a portion of the money which has been obtained from the whole people by an abnormal rise in price is only the veriest mitigation of a very serious condition. The danger of the inflated price, or one of its dangers, lies in the condition of uncertainty which it creates, and the encouragement which it gives to merchants, in all directions, to increase the profits on their commodities. It deals especially hardly, of course, with people with small incomes, and, when the matter is carefully worked out, it is often found that to procure revenue by taxing excessive profits, unduly obtained by raising prices, is to impose upon the working classes of a population a much heavier burden than is imposed upon those who are better able to bear it. Those who know anything of how the people in the very poor parts of great cities, not only in Canada but in many other countries, live, recognize that, owing to their method of buying in very small quantities, the price they pay for their food is often as much as two or three times more than is paid by those who are able to buy in normal quantities. The whole condition, moreover, represents an entirely wrong fiscal policy, for, in the last analysis, it means handing over the taxes of the country for war purposes to the purveyors of food.

To all intents and purposes, now that the Canadian Government has taken over the control of the foodstuffs, such conditions as those which obtained some time ago are no longer possible. But the Government must be strong and courageous in its methods, and, above all, it must not be led astray by specious argument. The point to be brought out, at the present moment, is that, no matter how effectively illegitimate profits may be taxed, such a policy is, at best, only a patching up of the difficulty. It by no means sets the matter right, on any sound basis of economics, to leave out of account, for the moment, the overriding consideration of common honesty.