

Public Opinion

QUEER THINGS.

(Commerce and Finance.)

Newspapers are queer things. They're always instructing the public and always acting as if they needed more instruction than the public.

HERE IS A TRUTHFUL MAN.

Thomas H. Swope, Kansas City multimillionaire, always declared he never earned a dollar of his millions.

"All I did," he used to say, "was to buy Kansas City real estate when people were anxious to sell, and sell it occasionally when they were anxious to buy, but I kept the most of it. I just sat back and loafed while the people of Kansas City worked for me, and built a great city and made me rich."

Such frankness is refreshing and illuminating.

HE KNEW.

(The Wall Street Journal.)

A man, who wanted to buy some shares of Pacific Mail stock, went to a Wall Street brokerage house. One of the members, a friend of his, advised against purchase of the stock, thinking it was due for a slump. However, the man was positive. "The stock is bound to rise," he said. "I know all about the company." A few days later the stock went up and the man came the following day to collect his money. While there he met his friend. After the member had congratulated him on his intuition and observation, the buyer inquired, "By the way, Mr. Brown, where does that road operate?"

DENOUNCING A HERESY.

(Chicago Post.)

Says General Pershing: "Tell them there is no ground for the heresy that Germany cannot be beaten. Germany can be beaten. Germany must be beaten. Germany will be beaten." That is not a patriot's rhetoric; it is a soldier's sober judgment of the task his country has set for him. It is not an impossible task. It is a task that must be done and will be done. What General Pershing calls heresy is one of the shrewdest of enemy propaganda that revives with every enemy success. It is the cry of the pro-German, the pacifist and the pessimist — Germany cannot be beaten. Nobody ever heard it from the lips of men who have been on the firing line. Germany can be beaten. That is the word to stimulate our activities; to intensify our spirit of sacrifice; to promote unity of aim and effort. Pershing counts on these things when he says "can" and "will." Germany can be beaten if we make victory the supreme aim of national life. And without victory there will be no aim in national life worth while.

PRODUCTION AND TRANSPORTATION.

(Florida Times-Union.)

The South produces more corn in proportion to population than the North. A vast amount of it is shipped to the big grain houses of Chicago and other northern cities, and by them shipped back to the South, paying freight both ways and requiring freight cars both ways. The South has nearly as many meat animals in proportion to population as the North. A vast number of them are shipped to the big packing houses of St. Louis, Chicago and Kansas City, and slaughtered and shipped back South, paying freight both ways and requiring the use of freight cars both ways. Pennsylvania coal is shipped to the South and Alabama coal shipped to the North. Florida oranges are shipped far west of the Mississippi River and California oranges shipped to the Atlantic seaboard. One hundred and fifty carloads of Pacific Coast firs are on their way to the Atlantic and as likely as not as many carloads of Atlantic Coast pine or cypress are being shipped to the Pacific Coast. There is a tendency everywhere to get things from as great a distance as possible, despite the fact that the railroads' supply of cars and engines is inadequate to the needs of transportation.

While we are systematizing things it would be a good idea to make an effort to systematize business so that each demand would be supplied from the nearest source of supply. In that way the business needs of the country could be supplied with half the mileage of freight cars. This would do all intents and purposes double the number of engines and freight cars at one sweep. Nearly every section of the country is self-sustaining in large part. Why not arrange so that each section will sustain itself to the extent that it can draw on more distant sections for the deficit and not for the whole supply?

THE KAISER'S DILEMMA.

(Boston News Bureau.)

In the long run, the whole Russian situation may prove a Teuton boomerang, — both in the regeneration of Russia and in reaction on Germany, along lines of the Wilson strategy of cleavage.

Why Teuton urgency now exists, first of all to make peace, and, failing that, perhaps incidentally to attempt final desperate blows in attack is clear enough. The answer is America.

But also it is America that furnishes irrefutable logic in words against a false peace, and inflexible will in deeds for victory in war.

The Kaiser could at will call on war; not so as to peace.

IN SOMEWISE GREAT.

(Southern Lumberman.)

Not in a military way, perhaps, but from several other viewpoints the capture of Jerusalem by British troops is one of the great events of the war. To the Christians it means the rescue of holy places from the curse of Moslem rule. To the Jews it has similar significance and holds out promise to the Zionists that they will realize their dream of a Jewish state in their ancient home. "To the Germans," says a well-informed writer, "the fall of Jerusalem implies the inability of the Kaiser to keep his promise of protection to three hundred million Moslems whom he designed to use as the instrument for extending Pan-Germany through western Asia and for destroying British power in India and Egypt."

THE WAR GARDENS.

(Popular Science Monthly.)

Station agents of many railroad companies have become war gardeners this year. There are one thousand and two hundred such war gardens on the vacant lands of the Pennsylvania Railroad. It is expected that the value of the crops raised in these gardens will be two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

The crops tilled by the railroad employees average a little less than an acre. They are planted with potatoes, peas, beans, tomatoes, corn, and various other vegetables.

An agent on the New York Central, stationed at Chaumont, New York, has specialized in beans. He planted a plot one thousand five hundred feet long and twenty-five feet wide on the offside of the station platform.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

(The Wall Street Journal.)

Christmas spirit prevails at the New York Telephone Co., and any one who doubts, should note the following:

The company, some time ago, resolved to send Christmas kits to every one of its men in the service. It announced that employees could join in and contribute whatever they saw fit. The result, to the surprise of the company, was that its employees with their nickels, dimes and dollars, contributed about \$4,810 for the fund, which was \$10 more than the total cost of the kits. This left nothing for the company to do. Whereupon the company came forward with the announcement that all salaries were increased.

Not only did the young women of the company contribute with money, but saw to it that each package contained a note of cheer from the "office back home."

ACTION BETTER THAN WORDS.

(Los Angeles Tribune.)

The less Americans and foreign friends and admirers of America have to say about American "supremacy" in the war or in war councils, the better for America and for the great cause in which she is now fully enlisted. To begin with, no good thing is to be accomplished by this braggart talk. It is reasonably to be assumed that those who have borne the brunt of this great conflict for over three long years, at frightful cost, may be nettled at the suggestion that certain Americans who talk and write better than they shoot are claiming credit for "winning the war" in advance of their equal participation in its real sacrifices. Let's be modest. We do well to remember the sacrifices of our allies and to gratefully acknowledge their bravery on our behalf as well as their own. We of America will do well to measure our part in this war in actual achievement and in sacrifice. Work, not talk, will fix our right place in the record of this struggle.

ANCIENT PROPHECY FULFILLED.

(Ottawa Citizen.)

An ancient prophecy has been fulfilled with regard to the delivery of Jerusalem by a leader who would enter the city on foot. The Kaiser posed as the deliverer in 1898 when he made a theatrical entry into Jerusalem on horseback, through a hole in the city wall. Of course, any deliverer could fulfill the ancient prophecy's requirement with regard to entering the city on foot; but the deliverer's name had to be the "prophet of God," — "alla" god, "nabi" prophet. General Allenby was the "alla-nabi" to the wondering people of Palestine this Christmas Day.

HOW THE "SHIP OF THE DESERT" IS ANCHORED.

(Popular Science Monthly.)

Because of its peculiar swaying motion in walking, the camel has been called the "ship of the desert." This title may also have some reference to the extreme stupidity and passivity of the animal, which submits to great loads, which it will often carry for days at a time without stopping for food or drink, with no more urging than a ship would require from the hands of its pilot.

The manner in which the drivers hobble the camels when they stop for a rest is interesting. They do not depend upon stakes driven in the deep, yielding sand, but simply double back and tie one of the fore-legs of the animal, so that it can lie down or rise up but cannot move from the spot.

THE FREEDOM OF THE SEAS.

(Southern Lumberman.)

From the beginning of time one of the most frequent causes of war has been the struggle of land-locked nations to reach salt water. Serbia was not the first nation to plead for a little window on the sea. But she will be the last — if the plans outlined by President Wilson ever reach the point of successful execution. This, however, is quite a big "if." The freedom-of-the-seas idea is a lofty conception. And the human race is still mighty close to the ground.

The yearning of nations for the sovereignty of the sea is part and parcel of the age-long struggle for existence. And the instinct which impels to the struggle for existence is older than any form of government — more ancient than mankind. The early maritime nations claimed sovereignty over certain seas either because of proximity to their shores or because they had cleared those waters of pirates. When a water-path was made safe for commerce, the nation that had made it safe took possession, by the ancient right of might, and opened or closed the water-gate at will. The time came when the Pontiffs at Rome believed that the sea was theirs to dispose of as they pleased.

At the time when Venice was at the height of her power, her supremacy on the sea was celebrated each year by the dropping of a ring into the sea. The custom had its origin in the year 1177, when the Pope gave a ring to his friend the Doge of Venice with these words: "Take this as a pledge of authority over the sea, and marry her every year, you and your successors forever, in order that all may know she is under your jurisdiction and that I have placed her under your dominion as a wife is under the dominion of her husband."

The annual celebration of this ceremony was one of the most brilliant ceremonies of the Middle Ages.

At a later date sovereignty over entire oceans were conferred by the Popes upon Spain. England first, then Holland, successfully ignored these claims. As the years passed and Great Britain's colonies and maritime commerce increased, she realized the need of a powerful navy to protect them and to keep sea communication open. In order to acquire naval supremacy, Britain acquired points commanding the ocean highways — such points as Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, Cingapore, Hongkong and various islands — thousands of islands, besides 500 promontories and 2,000 rivers.

Because they ruled the shores, some nations claimed the right to levy tolls on ships passing through straits. Denmark did this, at the Sound. Turkey still closes the Dardanelles and Bosphorus at will.

The tolls at the Suez Canal are equal to all nations. In wartime Britain has used her full powers. Controlling so many highways, prudence probably imposed the moderation which made Britain guardian of the seas in peace times.

In 1856 a combination of nations, including the United States and Great Britain, paid Denmark a lump sum of \$20,000,000 as compensation for abolition of the Sound dues.

It is a long way from our day and time back to the plane of thought which made it possible for a pontiff to bestow a sea or an ocean upon a king.