

Public Opinion

RAILROAD PROBLEM SOLVED. (Wall Street Journal.)

No better solution of the railroad problem could have been chosen than that which has been adopted by the President. It takes from the railroad managers the problem of finance, leaving them to the expert business of operating their roads. It transfers to the shoulders of the United States treasury the financial burdens which have harassed railroad management. It gives to the holders of securities a guarantee which amply justifies the striking recovery in Thursday's prices.

WHY HE RAN. (Canadian Hospital News.)

The bombing sergeant was accused of cowardice, but he was acquitted without a slur when he had told his story; here it is:

"I am the bombing instructor, sir, and have always taught my men to count one, two, three, before throwing their bombs. During this particular engagement I pressed a young fellow into service, handed him a bomb and told him to count three after pulling the pin. He drew it and started to count, 'wu-wu-wu-' and I ran, sir."

DOING HER BIT. (Christian Science Monitor.)

In a London district, recently, shortly after midnight, a light was seen moving from one side of the street to the other. It was carried by a postwoman, who was delivering letters after delay caused by an air raid. One of the recipients remarked to the young woman, "You ought to have a medal for doing this at this late hour." The postwoman replied, "I am a soldier's wife, madam, and I know the value of these letters I am carrying." Such ideals of service are becoming common enough in England, and in many other countries. And every time they "carry farther than the next street."

WORK. (Chicago Tribune.)

Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote an apology for idlers. It was an ingenious essay calculated to cause even the most industrious to turn a wayward glance to the pleasant fields of dalliance. In those easy times it didn't matter very much one way or the other, as far as the destiny of the world was concerned, whether you worked or loafed. It was after all a purely private affair, and if Stevenson made any converts they had only their own consciences to answer.

The war has changed all that. Idling or shirking is no longer a private affair. Any advocacy of indolence at the present time would partake of sedition.

Of itself work may not be capable of winning the war, but without a full measure of industry we shall lose.

The power of our country does not lie in our financial credit or in our material resources; it lies in our ability to make them effective. We can make them effective only by hard work, from which no one who is able is entitled to claim exemption.

NEWSPAPER ERRORS. (New York Tribune.)

"Where do you get the absurd facts you print?" is a favorite query put to newspaper men. In the view of these cynics, newspapers spend most of their time misspelling names, imagining incidents that never happened, and generally mishandling life as it is led.

There is just one answer to be made to the query above, and that is: "Newspapers get such of their facts as are absurd from the absurd human beings who for one reason or a thousand refuse to relate facts accurately." Newspapers, truth telling newspapers, spend a very large part of their time correcting these misstatements, running them to their source, and getting at the truth. A certain proportion of error gets by—not as great a proportion as can be heard in any village neighborhood gossip, for it is the concern of newspapers, of honest ones, that is, to allow for errors and correct them, whereas it is the concern of those other purveyors of news, gossips, to create errors whenever they are more interesting than the truth.

The next time you find an error in your favorite newspaper, try an experiment. Try to capture one small fact yourself, in your own home town. You will quickly discover just how wary a bird the truth is and how very unpopular.

NO BI-LINGUALISM THERE. (Christian Science Monitor.)

No other language than English will henceforth be taught in the elementary schools of New York City. This is the decision of the Board of Education, in response to a strong demand, not only from the American element, but from enlightened citizens of alien birth and extraction. The ruling does away with a great deal of contention, but it recommends itself to approval, first, for the reason that it implies the grounding of all pupils in at least an elementary knowledge of the language of the country. What the pupils may later learn of other languages is a matter of less importance.

DON'T SHUT YOURSELF UP IN AN OFFICE. (New York Herald.)

The man who shuts himself up in an office makes a great mistake, thinks Thomas E. Wilson, the Chicago packer. In the American Magazine he says:

"The trouble with the executive who is too inaccessible is that he loses more by the arrangement than anybody else. In shutting others out he shuts himself in—away from the numerous advantages of personal contact and points of view. There's nothing like looking a man in the eye and hearing his story to get at the meat of a situation. Most executives prefer to have everything brought to their attention in writing. That plan may be a time saver, but my own experience has been that it will pay to get all information possible by face to face interviews."

AND IN THE MEANTIME.—! (New York Herald.)

Jane Adams declares China had existed for 1,000 years without an army, longer than the life of most armed nations.—Washington Dispatch.

With the result that Japan has lopped off her New England and exercises absolute control over her New York and New Jersey; Russia has kindly taken over her Washington, Idaho, Montana, Dakotas, Minnesota and exercises almost as absolute control over her Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio; Germany had her Maryland, but that has now passed also into the hands of Japan; Great Britain controls her great internal artery of trade, her Mississippi river, and has taken as its own a nice slice of her Texas; France has made the southern section of her California into a fine "sphere of influence."

There is no reason to believe that this situation is one enjoyed or even approved by patriotic Chinese. In any event, it is not a very alluring picture to hold as an example before the eyes of the people of the United States.

THE LESSON OF 1917. (By Theo. H. Price, in Commerce and Finance.)

We shall not attempt either a review of 1917 or a forecast of 1918. We have no gift of prophecy and the history of our own times generally sheds a light that dazzles rather than illuminates.

The drama that we are now witnessing is absorbing, but its deeper significance will not be understood or interpreted until long after the actors have passed off the stage into the wings of the beyond. It is natural, nevertheless, that we should feel the reaction of the tragedy and try to draw some lessons from it in the entre act that is called New Year's day.

Most of those who read this paper are, like the writer, engaged in business. Our lives are spent in the appraisal of values, the ascertainment of costs and the pursuit of profit. What is the lesson of the year just closed for us? What shall we learn from the heroism of the men who have gone gladly to death that the world might live? For answer can we do better than to ask ourselves again "what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" and resolve, as we ponder the obvious reply, that we will exemplify it in our lives hereafter; that our accounts from now until our books are closed by death shall record a constantly increasing balance against self and in favor of selflessness and that the last statement of our affairs shall reveal a large investment in idealism.

The philosophers may attempt to explain and justify war as they choose, but they must all admit that it is brutalizing unless it compels us to re-erect the ideals that we have "loved long since but lost awhile" and revive the spirit of service and sacrifice that is too often deadened by the prosperity and self sufficiency of peace.

SLOW PERHAPS; THOROUGH; ANYWAY. (Kansas City Star.)

The tanks have a certain British slowness, to be sure, but it is noticed that they never have to run over anything twice.

GOOD RULES FOR BUSINESS MEN.

Don't worry; don't overbuy; don't go security. Keep a high vitality; keep insured; keep sober; keep cool.

Stick to chosen pursuits, but not to chosen methods. Be content with small beginnings and develop them.

Be wary of dealings of unsuccessful men. Be cautious, but when a bargain is made stick to it. Keep down expenses, but don't be stingy.

Make friends, but not favorites. Don't take new risks to retrieve old losses. Make plans ahead, but don't make them in cast iron.

Don't tell what you are going to do until you have done it.

DO NOT KILL PRODUCTION. (New York Commercial.)

If America remains busy and prosperous the financial burden of the war will not crush the people. Business men are asked to save money and lend it to the Government, and the same appeal is addressed to wage earners and all other classes. They cannot do it if they do not make money. As the Camden Courier very pertinently says: "How manufacturers and merchants can curtail or altogether suspend business, and at the same time earn and save money to loan the Government, is something beyond the comprehension of the ordinary citizen."

Thrift does not mean inaction. This country is bearing the financial burdens of the war well because of healthy business conditions.

FACTORS OF VALUE IN NEWSPAPERS. (Editor and Publisher.)

The Indianapolis News has made a canvass of one thousand readers, equally apportioned between its city and country circulation, to determine reader-preferences for features and factors of value in the paper.

As might have been anticipated, local news takes first place in the returns from this canvass. But the fact that both city and country readers place display advertising in second place in their estimates of what makes the paper valuable to them may cause some surprise to a few newspaper makers. Classified advertising is rated third by city readers and fifth by country readers, the latter placing a higher value upon market and weather reports.

The significant feature of this census is that advertising shares with local news the interest of readers. The inquiry made by the Indianapolis News would probably have similar results if made by any other representative, high-class newspaper. It indicates the real service performed for readers by the newspaper which carries a large volume of advertising.

THE FOES OF FREEDOM. (New York Times.)

The Lowell, Mass., branch of the United Irish League has sent to Irish leaders in Ireland a manifesto that the misguided Sinn Feiners there and in this country need to study. How anybody can be so wrongheaded as to see in Germany a force for freedom anywhere passes understanding. "As for any promise of independence for Ireland coming from Germany, with all our souls we denounce them as hypocritical and insincere," say the Lowell United Irishmen, "but equally to be spurned if they were sincere." Ireland would be "unworthy of freedom if she lined up with the modern Attila. Germany is trying to make a catspaw of Ireland, and unfortunately some Irishmen are helping her horde of paid agents in that direction."

The enthusiasts and the dupes in Ireland who are hurrahing for the Kaiser and shouting that "England's enemies are our friends," the "patriots" who hiss "The Star Spangled Banner" and assault our sailors, the few American-Irish tools or gulls of Germany, the men who in the name of Ireland are doing their foolish best to injure the United States and freedom everywhere, need to ponder these words of truth and soberness from Massachusetts.