

The Philosopher

THE LUSITANIA ANNIVERSARY

The first Sunday of the month will be the first anniversary of Lusitania sea-massacre. By that appalling piece of savagery, planned and carried out with the most cold-blooded deliberateness, a stain was placed upon the Germanic name which will endure as long as human memory continues. Outrage has since been piled upon outrage, both on sea and on land, in this war of barbarism upon civilization, but still the Lusitania outrage stands out pre-eminent; not because of its being essentially more diabolic in its character, but because of the circumstances and of the shock it gave the whole world. Preparations are being made for memorial services throughout the United States on the anniversary—"a day which ought not to go by without a nationwide observance," says the New York Outlook, "to serve, first, as a memorial to those whose lives were sacrificed, and second, as a reminder of our national duty." Unparalleled in all previous history was the massacre of non-combatants, men, women and children—including hundreds of citizens of neutral countries—who perished on the Lusitania.

THE WILD GEESE

Once more we have come round to the season of the year when out of the windy darkness of the night comes down to us from far aloft, the strange, haunting cry of the wild geese as they journey with powerful pinions to secluded summer homes afar in the vast welcome of the Northland. The world's great rivers whose course is northward, or southward, have always been routes for bird migration. The valley of the Red River has from time immemorial been one of the most notable of these migration routes on any of the continents. With the unerring guidance of inherited memory, the wild geese and the other legions of migrating birds follow its course. The wild geese fly at a great height; they learned many centuries ago what human aviators began to learn only a few years ago—it is only a few years, indeed, since human beings began to be aviators—that the steady air currents on the high levels are better to travel in than the swirl and eddies nearer the earth's surface. In the cry of the wild geese there is something that is a challenge to the spirit, something of hope and exultation; and in the ear of one who has known sorrowful changes in the passing of the years, there is mingled with that hope and exultation something of strange and piercing sadness. But the ear of youth does not discern this. The cry of the wild geese voices the joy of the season of life's renewal. The wild geese are on their way to their breeding places, following the course of countless generations of their ancestors, long before mankind built towns and cities along the valley of the Red River or laid tracks of steel across the country for great trains to thunder along.

TURNING FROM GERMANY IN HORROR

It is because Germany has in deliberate cold blood taken her stand outside the circle of civilized nations devoted to the ideals of humanity and progress, that the prayer goes up from all who cherish the foundation principles of civilization and justice—and in all such people who are of clear sight, there is as well resoluteness to fight to the death, if need be—that such ruthless rule shall not establish itself in power upon the earth. Brutal force must not be allowed to make itself master of human destinies. The deliberately adopted system by which there has been deeply instilled into the minds and characters of the mass of German people the ideal of supreme and ruthless German military domination has deadened them to the finer and nobler feelings of humanity. Individual Germans, whether in the Belgian atrocities, in the murdering of Edith Cavell, in the submarine and Zeppelin slaughterings of women and children, in the deliberate destruction of Red Cross stations and hospital ships, or in any other department or method of carrying the German idea into operation, have done their part as cogs in the working of the brutal, monstrous engine. It is because of this spirit, of these purposes, of such deeds, that all the world that is really civilized has turned from Germany in horror.

IN REGARD TO SURNAMES

Who has not found it interesting to think about the origin of surnames? Originally, of course, our names were all descriptive. But in the course of generations, with the changes of spelling they undergo, to say nothing of the changes which language undergoes, or of the fact that many names are transferred from one language to another, with more than a little transmutation in most cases, the original descriptiveness is largely, if not wholly, obliterated. To realize this, we have only to turn to the Indian surnames, which are still in their original stage. In a recent sale of Indian lands in the Standing Rock Indian Reserve, which is partly in North Dakota and partly in South Dakota, there figured such names as Barney Two Bears, Kate Good Crow, Mary Yellow Fat, Melba Crowghost. These were all neighbors. Mrs. Crazy Walking shared a section with Elk Ghost. Morris Thunder-

shield, the son of Long Step Thunderbolt, signed certain documents in connection with the sale; and among others listed were Agatha Big Shield, Mary Lean Dog, Jennie Dog Man, Mary Shave Head, Mrs. Did Not Butcher, Mrs. Frosted Red Fish, Mrs. Borrowed Grindstone, Helen Difficult and Joseph Shoot the Bear. We smile at these names. But let us not forget that there was a time when our primitive ancestor's names would have been just as laughable to people as far advanced from primitive conditions as many centuries advanced beyond primitive conditions as we are now.

AS TO SQUARE CHINS AND DIMPLES

One of the most interesting of the United States newspapers that come to the Philosopher's table is the Topeka Capital. In a recent copy of that journal there is an utterance by Margaret Lynn, Associate Professor of Literature in the University of Kansas, and herself a novelist of note, in regard to some of the phrases which novelists use in describing their heroes and their heroines. Speaking of two boys from the same family who were at the University of Kansas, she writes: "The brother with the square chin departed from us after failing in an effort to carry only ten hours' work; the other one, with supposedly weak facial characteristics, had much more determination, and proved to be a good scholar." And to quote further: "Some girls go through life looking like angels, simply because they happen to have short upper lips and can smile easily. And there is no relation between character and dimples." Which is quite true. Appearances are, indeed, often deceptive. It doesn't do to go by fixed rules. A large mouth, for example, may be the indication of a coarsely greedy nature—and then, again, it may denote generosity.

A BILLION

Among the things with which the war has made us familiar is the use of huge figures which before the war were practically confined to the expression of astronomical distances. The world has become familiar with the word "billion." But though that word has become familiar, how many of us have tried to realize what it means, a billion is a thousand millions—a figure one with nine ciphers following it. If the piling up of a dollar a minute had been begun at the beginning of the Christian era, a billion dollars would not have been piled up until the year 1903, that is to say, not until thirteen years ago. There are only fifty-two and a half millions of minutes in a hundred years. When we begin to analyze in this way, we begin to realize that a billion, a thousand millions, is truly an awful figure. Great Britain is expending on the war \$25,000,000 a day, a large part of which is for her Allies. That is to say, Great Britain is expending on the war a billion dollars every forty days. With all our analyzing and figuring out, the ordinary mind fails to grasp what this means—just as we fail to grasp the fact that the earth is ninety-five millions of miles from the sun, a distance which it takes eight minutes for the sun's light to travel over, so that if the sun were extinguished in mid-day, it would be eight minutes before we knew it.

A STRANGE SUMMER A CENTURY AGO

A reader of The Western Home Monthly, who was born in Perth, Ont., has sent the Philosopher a copy of the paper of his old home town, the Perth Expositor, which contains an interesting account, compiled from old records in Perth, of the summer of 1816, that is to say, exactly one hundred years ago, which was known as "the Summerless Summer." Throughout Eastern Canada and the adjoining portion of the United States snow fell in June, and continued falling at intervals, until, by the middle of August, it was a foot deep. From the beginning of the snowfalls in June until the following summer the earth was covered with snow. There was no harvest, of course. People lived on meat and fish, relieved by fish and flesh to-morrow taken from slaughtered cattle," says the Perth Expositor. Hay had to be brought from Ireland to save the starving cattle at Quebec, and it sold there at \$45 per ton. Flour sold at \$17 per barrel at Quebec, and potatoes were penny a pound. It was called "the year eighteen hundred and froze to death." The cause of the cold was believed to be the sunspots, which were so large that "for the first time in their history they could be seen without the aid of a telescope." It was also known as "poverty year." In New Hampshire hay sold at \$180 per ton. The next spring the market price of corn was \$2.00 per bushel, of wheat, \$2.50, of rye, \$2.00, of oats, 90 cents, of beans \$3.00. Butter was \$25 per pound. (It usually sold in that era at 8 or 10 cents per pound.) "Further particulars of 'the Summerless Summer,'" says the Perth Expositor, "are to be found among the files of the Grenville Historical Society." It would be interesting to know what there is in regard to that summer in the records of 1816 in Western Canada—the diaries of Hudson's Bay company men and any other manuscript journals, letters or other documents that have been preserved since that time.

THE TWELVE GOOD RULES

A request has come to us for the "Twelve Good Rules" often referred to in old English books. They were framed by King Charles I for the guidance of his subjects, as follows: 1. Urge no healths. 2. Profane no Divine ordinances. 3. Touch no State matters. 4. Reveal no secrets. 5. Pick no quarrels. 6. Make no comparisons. 7. Maintain no ill opinions. 8. Keep no bad company. 9. Encourage no vice. 10. Make no long meals. 11. Repeat no grievances. 12. Lay no wagers. Such were the "Twelve Good Rules." Some of them are excellent. A few of them are obsolete, and in regard to these latter, obsolete. Merely to read No. 3, for instance, is almost as good as to read a large volume setting forth how vastly the world has changed since the time of King Charles I, who believed in absolute rule, and lost his head because of his obstinacy in trying to force his absolutism on the people of England. Rule No. 10 is still a very good rule, in one sense, though in another it most certainly runs counter to the wisdom of our own time, which is against the hasty gobbling of our meals. Such haste, the doctors of all schools concur in advising us, is a sure cause of indigestion and of many bodily ills. Rule No. 10, in order to be made a counsel of true wisdom, would have to be altered to this: 10. Take plenty of time at your meals. Never bolt your food.

OUR INDEFENSIBLE DIVORCE SYSTEM

Once more the resolution which Mr. W. B. Northrup, the member for East Hastings, Ontario, introduces every year in the House of Commons at Ottawa, has, as usual, been thrown out. Mr. Northrup pointed out, as he does every year, that while assuredly the securing of a divorce should not be made easy in Canada, in the sense of making it possible for a husband, or a wife, to throw off the obligations of the matrimonial tie for any slight or trivial reason, it is at the same time manifest that where there is ground of unquestionable seriousness, the securing of a divorce should not be so elaborate and cumbersome and costly a matter. No Canadian who has the true welfare of his country at heart can desire to have in this country any approach to the laxity in regard to divorce which is so widely prevalent in the United States. The speeches in opposition to Mr. Northrup's resolution came, as usual, from representatives of Quebec. Mr. Lemieux said that if a divorce court were established, as Mr. Northrup proposed, there would be more divorces in Canada. But this is no answer to Mr. Northrup. The reason there are not more divorces now is that few people can stand the expense under the present procedure. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Doherty raised the constitutional question that in Quebec the code of law says that marriage is indissoluble, except by death. But a constitutional amendment is, of course, possible. And, further, wealthy Quebec people do actually get divorces at Ottawa. Divorces should be granted by a court, not by action of the Senate at Ottawa, followed by action of the House of Commons. It is interesting to note that, as usual, a great many members kept away from the division on Mr. Northrup's resolution. Less than a third of the House voted, the division standing thirty-nine against, and twenty-four for, the resolution.

"A PLACE IN THE SUN"

It is announced that Germany is about to adopt the "daylight saving" scheme of putting forward the clock, and that in France, too, a committee of the Senate has reported in favor of the same device. This idea that we should regulate our daily activities by the sun, instead of by the clock, is one with which we in Western Canada are not unfamiliar. It originated with an English member of Parliament, Mr. McWillet, who took the view that the clock was too much of a tyrant. Precious sunlight was wasted in summer, he noted, simply because people allowed themselves to be dominated by the timepiece. Why not pass an Act of Parliament compelling them to move the hands of the clock on an hour every spring, and back again an hour every fall? A select committee of the House of Commons was accordingly appointed to consider the project, and after deliberating a year and a half, rejected it, expressing grave doubts whether the desired object could be attained without "subjecting some important interests to serious inconvenience." The investigations of the committee showed that not all Englishmen by any means had fallen into the habit of not arising early in summer, and the opposition of certain trade unions counted as a much more serious obstacle than did the general opposition of scientific men to the proposal. Whatever we may think of the idea, we have the plain fact before us that the early sunlight is there on summer mornings for those who desire to use it, and it is always possible for individuals to readjust their times of retiring and arising. In Japan all workers begin their day's work earlier in summer than in winter, without any legislative interference with the clock; and in all lands it is the sun, not the clock, that regulates the farmer's working day.