

"The Pin's Sharp Little Sister."

This is a name which some one has given to what? The needle, of course. Its duties are similar to that of the pin, but the needle is far more thorough in its work. The pin, to be sure, holds things together, but usually this is only for a short time; the needle is called into play to join things which are meant to stay together for a long time. The needle can be trusted to do its work effectively. In and out, in and out, it thrusts its little body, guided by the sewing machine or by your mother's fingers. Up and down and round about it goes, piercing sometimes several thicknesses of the gingham material which is to be a dress for you; yet, when it is removed from the scene, it scarcely leaves a trace of its work—only a tiny little line of footsteps like those a rabbit leaves in the smooth snow.

A great many centuries ago men discovered the need of sewing things together. First of all, they probably used bones and thorns, as they did for pins also; but the thorns which they wished to use for needles they made in something the shape of an awl, attaching to them long fibres of plants or tiny strips of leather with which their skins could be held together. Later men found out how to pierce these primitive needles with eyes; such needles have been found in Egypt, in the ruins of Greece, even near ancient settlements of the lake dwellers. Then it is supposed that the first steel needles were invented by the Chinese—those skillful people who invented so many useful things long before the people of the West knew of them. Possibly these needles were introduced into Europe by the Moors who settled in Spain in the Middle Ages. After that it was not long before others began to copy them, making steel needles of their own. Probably the Germans manufactured them first, but the English were not long in following their example, for needles were known in Elizabethan London. Soon England was producing more needles than any other country. Hand needles are still largely made in England and Germany, though the United States manufactures more of the needles used in sewing machines. Hundreds of millions of them are produced every year.

Needles are made of steel wire. In the common sewing needle, the wire is first wound in a coil, which is cut by machinery into lengths of just the right size to make two needles each. The coiling of the wire curves it a little, and it must be made perfectly straight before the work can go on. For this purpose the little pieces are collected into bundles and placed in two iron rings which hold them loosely together. They are now heated slightly and then rolled over and over on a flat iron plate. The action of the wires upon each other tends to straighten them, and after a while the curve is all taken out, and the bits of wire are as straight as the needles sold in the stores.

The next operation is pointing or grinding the blunt ends to the exquisite sharpness required, writes Frank G. Carpenter in "How the World is Clothed." This was once done by hand, but it is now performed at the rate of 40,000 an hour by means of a little machine that the Germans have invented. This is a metal wheel upon which the blunt wires drop from an inclined tray, and are held fast by an India rubber band that runs around the wheel. They lie in such a way on the wheel that the two ends of the wires just touch a wire grindstone placed near it, and so that each end is made sharp as the wheel flies around.

The double needle wires are now ready for their eyes. The process of making these is important, for roughly done, the thread will be cut and frayed as it goes through. The work begins in what is called the stamping room. The double needles, pointed at each end, are placed upon a solid block, to which is fastened a mass of iron. On the upper side of this moves the under half of the stamp which cuts the groove for the eye of the needle. The upper half of the stamp is fastened to a heavy hammer, and, when worked by machinery, it falls down upon the needles with such force that the grooves or depressions for the eyes are made.

The wires now go to the piercers, who are usually small boys working at hand presses. . . It is said that the best of them can punch a hole through a human hair. These boys first spread out the wires upon an iron slab, laying them under the press in the form of a fan. They then punch wire after wire, making two eyes each time. The wires are now taken out and so arranged that the roughness is divided between the eyes, making two needles. The heads are then filed into shape.

But the needles are not yet ready for use. They must be hardened, tempered, polished and brightened before they can be stuck in the papers and packed up for sale. The first process is performed by baking them in a furnace until they are white hot; and then cooling them in a bath of water and oil. They are then washed and dried and tempered by slightly heating them once more. The polishing is done by putting them in bags with a mixture of soft soap, oil, emery and sand; and then rolling the bags over and over between heavy slabs, weighted with iron, until at the end they come out smooth and bright. They are next shaken up in a sieve to separate them from the dirt, and are then further smoothed and polished. Altogether, every needle has to go through many hands, and it takes quite a long time to make one.

—Timothy hay is a dangerous feed for sheep. It is coarse and woody; it causes more indigestion than any other feed, and hundreds of sheep are lost each year from being fed on timothy hay. It leaves the wool around their heads and necks filled with heads, which prevents the wool from bringing the highest price.

An Old Mobilization Camp.

One of the military camps which the State of Pennsylvania established during the Civil war is to be purchased and set aside as a public park through the Legislature's appropriation of \$25,000 for the purchase and development of Camp Curtin, says a writer in the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin. Named after Andrew G. Curtin, the war Governor of the State, this camp, which was set up in the outskirts of Harrisburg three days after Sumpter was fired on, became the chief rendezvous for the troops raised in Pennsylvania, and, although there were many other camps throughout the State, none gained as much prominence throughout the war or housed a greater number of soldiers.

The rush of volunteers to respond to President Lincoln's call during the first week of the war flooded Camp Curtin with recruits. On the morning that the camp was established a company of recruits from Johnstown arrived and, inside of a week, companies came in from every county in the State, battalions were organized hurriedly and nine regiments dispatched to the front.

Nearly ninety regiments, embracing all arms of the service, were quartered at Camp Curtin at various times during that period. In the first eight months of the war, 60,000 men reported at the camp; many others drifted in and out during the war, and, in addition to the Pennsylvania regiments, there were a number of commands from the other States that occasionally stopped for the rest and training at Harrisburg. After the first rush, Governor Curtin's call for the reserve regiments to protect the State against invasion brought many more soldiers to the camp; at that time, too, the three months' men were returning to be mustered out, and the soldiers at the camp were kept busy doing police duty about the Arsenal at Harrisburg, which was besieged by the stranded soldiers left dependent on the townspeople. The second batch of men was just getting into shape with squad and company drills, moreover, when the news came of the Bull Run disaster accompanied by frantic appeals from Washington for more men.

These alarms always seemed to arrive at Camp Curtin as soon as it had a quota of men on hand and the majority of the regiments mobilized there had to be sent forward with little training. Stonewall Jackson's raid on Hagerstown drew a number away; the second battle of Bull Run called for more, and the Gettysburg campaign witnessed the hurried assembling of the emergency regiments. Quite a number of Philadelphians traveled to the war by way of Camp Curtin, although the major portion of the city's volunteers went direct to the South from training camps in this city. Among those who were trained under the shadow of the State Capitol, too, were three soldiers who afterward controlled affairs at Harrisburg—Beaver, Hartranft and Quay.

In addition, the State also maintained large camps at Easton, West Chester and Pittsburgh, while Philadelphia had a number of regimental and brigade camps.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

Land Will be Taxed.

Legislation is to be presented to Congress soon to levy a federal land tax of 1 per cent. on the assessed value of all improved land and of 2 per cent. upon the value of all unimproved land. The proceeds are to be used for the war in place of further taxes upon industry and workers.

Along with the land value tax laws are proposed for the immediate acquisition by the federal government of all natural resources (such as coal and oil lands, iron ores, timber, water power sites, etc.) to be owned and operated by the public for the public at least for the duration of the war. The principal of compensation to the private owners is to be a return on the actual, honest investment and nothing of the fictitious "values" of "good will," etc.

The committee on the high cost of living in whose name the legislation will be presented, has held exhibits and recent conferences before and since the war came to the United States.

Another still larger conference will be held in the Raleigh Hotel, Washington, D. C., July 30 and 31. From a statement prepared by Benjamin C. Marsh, executive secretary of the committee, the following extracts are made:

"The committee comprises in its membership, drawn from twenty-eight States, men and women like John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor; C. B. Kegley, just elected for the twelfth year, master of the Washington State Grange; Mrs. Joseph Pels, Commissioner Frederick C. Howe, Frank P. Walsh and Amos Pinchot. The committee also favors government ownership and operation of natural monopolies, such as railroads, in the fight to cut living costs.

"The committee estimates that the aggregate unearned profits of land speculators, owners of natural resources and natural monopolies is approximately \$5,500,000,000 in taxes, because land owners are permitted to retain most of the ground rent. Despite the shortage of crops, nearly half of the arable farm land of the country is held idle, most of it for speculative purposes. To secure more food the slackers who hold land idle, must be heavily taxed, so they will produce or let some one else produce."

—Declaring that he was going back to the trenches to rest, an American who had been wounded three times while serving in Europe with the Canadian forces and who had been decorated for gallantry in action, left the reserve officers' training camp at Plattsburg the other day, after looking at the training schedule.

—Goat's milk as a food in cases of typhoid fever has no equal. A patient who had a severe attack lived entirely on goat's milk for nine weeks, and his temperature never got above 102 during the time. His digestion was perfect.

—Subscribe for the "Watchman."

Essentials in Aviation Corps.

One would naturally expect, on joining the flying division, to board a plane and joyride skyward with an experienced pilot, then go through the motions with the various controls and levers in a dummy machine on earth; a few days later go up again with a teacher; and the next to fly with an instructor as a passenger, writes H. H. Windsor in August Popular Mechanics Magazine. But not so fast, son, notwithstanding your ambition to distinguish is most noble and praiseworthy. Remember, the qualifications for the air corps include not only all the physical conditions of both army and navy, but a great many more. The candidate must be sound in every part of his body; possess internal organs equal to the rapid change in altitude, for he will often drop a mile in a minute; perfect vision, which will instantly and unflinchingly adjust itself one instant to objects far away and the next to those close by; and he must have no failing as to colors; his hearing must be faultless; he must possess a mental balance which will remain true and undisturbed when shells from the air guns are bursting uncomfortably close by; and, finally, that difficult-to-describe natural gift which turns his face toward his own lines instead of the enemies', when clouds or smoke blot out all landmarks. It is the same kind of intuitive quality which in a newspaper man is termed "a nose for news" and which leads the skillful physician to correctly diagnose a patient when the usual symptoms are absent, or the navigator to head his vessel into port when fog shuts him in and the tide swerves him from his course.

The responsibility attaching to the aviation corps is almost beyond estimate, and the ability is of a single air scout to discern and comprehend, or failure to do so, may easily win or lose a battle. His signals bring the artillery into action dropping shells in the right place and correct the fire of those guns whose faulty range is throwing away tons of projectiles each minute. The airman is more than the familiar term, "the eye of the army"—he must be a thinking eye. The submarine may even better do without the periscope than the army without its aeroplane.

Thus it will be seen that, setting aside all the other numerous and radical changes which the present war has called into being, the submarine for the sea forces and the aeroplane for the land forces are the two weapons which stand out pre-eminent; and of the two, the aeroplane is the more essential. A service so thrilling, so responsible, so possible of great accomplishment, cannot fail to appeal to the best there is in the young American; and while all service at the

front is fraught with danger, it will comfort the airman's mother to know that, contrary to generally accepted belief, service in the air fleet is several degrees removed from the most dangerous military occupations. . . . Ability to win this war will lie largely in two efforts: to defeat the submarine, and to produce at the earliest possible moment a fleet of aeroplanes which will be numbered by tens of thousands.

Women Excel in Airplane Work.

New York, N. Y.—Airplane manufacturers all over the country are employing women, and thousands of aeroplanes that will carry the Stars and Stripes over the battlefields of Europe will represent the work of the women of this country. Women have been found to excel in making wings and wing surfaces of aeroplanes, and, with this country's plan to build immense fleets of aircraft, such work will be vitally important.

At the Plainfield (N. J.) plant of the Standard Aero Corporation, which obtained the first large war order of aeroplanes for the Government, more than 60 per cent. of the employees making wings are women. Harry Bowers Mingle, president, told why his company preferred women for this work: "Preparing the linen wing surfaces and making the wings," he said, "is light work, requiring deft fingers and close application. It is ideal work for women. Before undertaking the manufacture of aeroplanes in large quantities such as the Government demands, we thoroughly investigated the question of labor. We found that women were extensively used in England and in France in making wings, and that they had proved to be better at this work than men. We soon satisfied ourselves that this was the correct practice, and started to employ women for the same class of work. In a very short time we found that the women were better workmen than the men, and we will soon be employing 500 of them at our Plainfield plant alone. We found women to be painstaking and fast in their work, and, in addition, they are precise, which means much when you are doing the highest grade work. Soon we will be employing women in other departments. Our superintendent wants to have at least 35 per cent. of the machine shop work done by women, and will put that many at work as soon as the shops are enlarged.—Monitor.

—Those who wish to hazard a guess upon the probable duration of the war will be able to derive some information from the fresh leases which the British Governments are signing on the property which they are using in French ports. The old leases are running out, and are being renewed for a period of three years.

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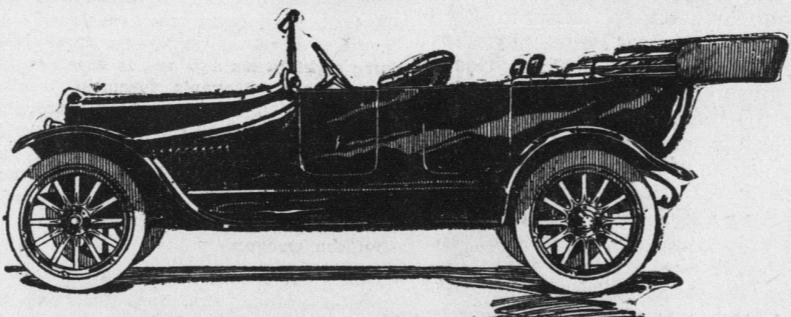


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