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Vital, Not Critical. THE issue between London and Washington is not critical, for a crisis infers psychological conditions which do not exist and which are not likely to exist. The American Government is seeking to reach an agreement under which American shipping can operate with the purpose, first, of securing definite recognition of our rights as a neutral, and second, with the idea of reaching an agreement which will preclude the possibility of animosity and hard feeling hereafter.

Smug Councils Plays the Game. THE most significant thing about the jobless men who flocked to the office of Director Harte yesterday was the obviously good character of most of them. They were poorly clad, but a glance showed that they were not typical 'bums' or chronic failures—not men that 'somehow can't get along.'

The City Is Man's. THE city is man's and God's is the country. From its asphalt to its domes each metropolis is material evidence of the ingenuity and vigor of humanity. This wonder and that wonder, all are associated intimately with great personalities, and all alike are tributes to the splendor and glory of man.

A Credit of \$90,000,000. EUROPE is practically at a standstill productively, and its necessities have required it to purchase in abnormal quantities from the United States. The result of this decrease in our imports and increase in our exports is a trade balance in our favor for December of approximately \$90,000,000.

Sheer Waste of Human Life. DR. H. A. WINSLOW, of the State Board of Health of New York, speaking before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, meeting here this week, said: Fully as tragic as the deaths due to the war were those of 1,500,000 men, women and children who died in the United States during 1914.

Let the School Code Alone. THREE years of successful operation justify the confidence of the framers of the Pennsylvania Education Code. Any attempt to overthrow it or to amend it radically must be firmly resisted. It is probably the very best codification of educational laws in America, and if Pennsylvania hasn't the best system of public education of any State in the Union it is because the several boards of school directors have failed to see and to use their opportunity.

each district, whether urban or rural, the opportunity to build and conduct schools to provide the type of education most needed by the locality. By careful provision, it minimizes to the last degree any form of political interference with the true functions of education.

1914 Year of Record. NO YEAR has stamped the record of its so deep in human chronicles as 1914. It marked the end of an era and the beginning of another. It gave birth to the grandest and most fearful of all tragedies, for in comparison with the catastrophe which it fathered all others that humanity has suffered seem almost trivial. It is a year never to be forgotten, but certain to cast its shadow forward over the last of its successors.

Sincerity and Psychology. In judging his methods two things must be considered. The first is the nature and character of the men interested locally in a "Billy" Sunday campaign, the second is the freedom and directness of the operations. More convincing than either is a personal knowledge of the evangelist, and when this has been attained by any one through weeks of repeated contact under all sorts of trying conviction upon the ear of the listener, all doubt of the man's sincerity vanishes.

Secrecy of His Versatility. Once Sunday has his crowds, the laws of psychology make the rest certain. The evangelist puts a simple proposition so simply that very few men or women with normal intellects can refuse assent. It is at this point that the great humanity of the man is seen to be a determining factor. Born a farmer, his father dead before the boy ever saw the light of day, raised under conditions that early made him know the problems of life, struggling from his youth up, fighting for every mental acquisition that has come to him, he never for an instant has lost touch with life.

What's trade between friends? There is an end to everything, even 1914. The United States knows what its rights are even if some other nations do not. The report that "bandits menace Vera Cruz" is remarkable. It was formally turned over to them weeks ago.

The Man Himself. "Billy" Sunday's personal habits are simple. He eats heartily, but of plain foods. His single nerve stimulant is coffee, of which he is very fond. When under stress he is restless. If a conveyance is not in instant waiting, he will start to walk. Wherever he is he engages some one in conversation, and more often he asks questions than answers them. To this and his habit of miscellaneous reading is to be attributed his astonishing versatility.

The French Yellow Book. In July the Germans believed what they did not know, because it was pleasant; the British refused to believe what they knew, because it was unpleasant. But French diplomacy from the very start recognized the fact, terrible as it was to France, that the British were not to be taken for granted.

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"BILLY" SUNDAY AS EVANGELIST AND MAN. Some of the Secrets of His Marvelous Power—"Psychological Preaching," Versatile in Interests and Activities, Sunday Outside the Pulpit.

MUCH has been said and much more written about Rev. William A. Sunday, the baseball player evangelist, fearless flyer of sin and sinners, the man who in seven short weeks turned Scranton and the entire Lackawanna Valley upside down and inside out, who flashed across the vision of 200,000 people like a meteor to disappear and leave behind him and his series of remarkable meetings a wake of memories and results that bid fair to endure.

Billy Sunday is great, gauged by his own achievements. To arouse in something like half a million men the desire to lead better lives, to be truer to ideals, is in itself an accomplishment that challenges comparison with the very great of all time. If it is admitted that the man's work and his achievements are worthy, then there is little room to debate their degree. He simply does more than any man of his kind in the memory of the oldest living inhabitant. It is not pertinent to adduce the fact that a certain percentage of his converts do not "stick." For that matter neither do a certain percentage of the initiates of a lodge, a certain percentage of applicants for insurance, a certain percentage of evidence taken under oath. The utter fallibility of human nature must be admitted. It has yet to be claimed that defections from those Mr. Sunday enlists for better living are any more numerous than from those secured by other men or other means.

It is unobtrusive. He, however, makes frequent public avowal of what he owes to her, and in all important councils concerning his work she has a voice, and often a deciding voice. Strong likes are usually contrasted with strong dislikes, but if Mr. Sunday has a strong dislike for any one he conceals it masterfully. The breadth of his friendship is phenomenal. So is his memory of names and faces. These, of course, account largely for the element of personal popularity of the man. In his 52d year, "Billy" Sunday seems to be at the zenith of his power as an evangelist, with organization perfected, himself experienced, ripened, heart mellowed, soul expanded, eyes to the east, marching forward to still greater conquest for right living, right thinking and right hoping.

HOW I WOULD ABOLISH WAR. No More Money, No More War—"If I Were Rothschild." By SHOLOM ALEICHEM. A Sketch by the Yiddish Mark Twain, Translated for the Evening Ledger.

If I were Rothschild, oh, if I were only Rothschild, guess what I would do? To begin with, I'd see to it that my wife is always provided with an extra threepence, so that she won't bother me every Thursday about the last Saturday provisions. Then I would redeem my Sabbath Kapota, or rather my wife's fur coat, so that she may stop picking at my brain about the cold. I would next buy the house I live in, the three rooms, the cellar, attic and all—she is always complaining of lack of space, you know. I'd say to her: "Here are three rooms for your cooking, washing, baking and leave me alone, so that I can go on with my teaching undisturbed."

By means of money. For instance, England got at the Boers. Why? Wherefore? Because it wanted the gold mines. They also say that the Germans, French and the others are brandishing their swords in the face of the Chinaman, they want him to cut off his pigtail, and dress himself in pants. What business is it of theirs if he prefers the queue and the smock? Let him walk head downward, if it so pleases him. Here is the Turk in his red fez; why do they always talk of cutting him up and dividing him?

And each of them wants the best share. One says, "You take Stamboul and give me the Bosphorus." Says the other, "No, I'll let you have Stamboul and take the Bosphorus for myself." The third comes along and says: "I don't give a darn for either Stamboul or Bosphorus, I want the Dardanelles!" Immediately a general outcry is heard—"What? the Dardanelles? The Dardanelles is public property. It must belong to all. Thus the wrangling goes on, until the Germans begin to war, and human blood is shed like water, and streams like rivers into the sea. Here are Dardanelles for you!



NEW YEAR'S CUSTOMS IN MANY COUNTRIES. The Giving of Gifts—Frolic and Pageantry, Bells and Guns, Orient and Occident, Past and Present.

CHARLES LAMB wrote, "Of all sounds of all bells, most solemn is the peal which rings out the old year." Despite the inevitable solemnity which broods over the deathbed of the old year, the new is welcomed with warm greetings and hearty anticipations. The delly Janus was represented by the Romans as a man with two faces, one looking backward, the other forward, implying that he stood between the old and the new year with a regard to both. It is the forward look that characterizes popular new year celebrations. Men meet each other with greetings of good will. There is an unusual social freedom which, on occasion, may break down the barriers of conventional conduct and give expression in fantastic and spectacular observances.

Wassail, or Egg-nog? The wassail bowl, in England—of ale, nutmeg, sugar, toast and roasted crabs or apples—and the egg-nog, in the United States, are a part of the New Year's celebration. In Scotland New Year's is more generally celebrated than Christmas. There is observed among all classes a custom of giving and receiving. It is the day of the bawpie and good will.

Persians celebrate the day by exchanging presents of eggs. The Druids distributed as New Year's gifts branches of the sacred mistletoe. In Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, New Year's gifts were common. For a long time the custom of offering gifts to the sovereign was observed. Wolsey, it will be remembered, gave Henry VIII a gold cup, and it is recorded that Bishop Latimer handed Henry a New Testament with a leaf doubled down at Hebrews 12: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin."

The Chinese New Year's. Among all nations that observe the new year, it is a period of preparation, conviviality and merriment. The Chinese share this spirit on February 18, when differences are adjusted, debts paid, gifts exchanged and the joss houses and streets resound with the noise of fire-crackers, which splutter, crack and blaze with the inherited hope of driving the devils away.

There has grown up in the United States a new form of New Year observance. The "mummer" of Philadelphia is a development of the "bell snicker" of 50 years ago, and the festa hints of the New Orleans Mardi Gras. The American no longer stays at home if he happens to live in the city, and drinks his egg-nog or wine by his own fireside as the clock strikes 12. Instead, he goes to the streets, where he blows a horn, wears a masque, throws confetti and yells at the top of his voice. Then he will go to a fashionable cafe and make himself believe he is seeing the new year in by eating and drinking.

Philadelphia's Comic Supplement. Philadelphia has the mummers' pageant which is peculiar to this city. Each year this representation of festive Philadelphia increases in size and significance. This year it promises to surpass all previous years in its fantastic, artistic, unique and original design significant of the city's prosperity and the nation's progress. It will be the comic supplement of the year's history-making pageant of the past and future. In the masques of Christmas, New Year's

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introduces "New Year's Gift in a blue coat, serving manlike, with an orange and a sprig of rosemary on his head, his hat full of brooches, with a collar of gingerbread, his torch-bearer carrying a marchpane, with a bottle of wine on either arm." In this character Jonson represents the prevailing moods of New Year's of old England and of later America. They differ from those of Thanksgiving, which was originally a Jewish festival; of Easter, which is ruled by a sacred historical event; of Christmas, which is pre-eminently a day of holy memory and of the fireside. New Year's is the hour "when every eye Wears symptoms of a sober jollity."

Shooting Out the Old Year. Men are never so jolly as when they are celebrating the inevitable. It is something of this spirit that is in the old Epicurean injunction, "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." In the wild and often senseless manifestation of merriment witnessed in modern cities on New Year's Eve there is evident this deeper feeling, that as we cannot control the years the best thing to do is yield to them with a merry heart.

In this connection a word should be said about the use of powder on New Year's. In old England the bell is still the voice of the deeper consciousness. When the Englishman would utter his best thought he rings a bell. The chimes play the melody of his soul. In America the gun is fired. One of the differences between the United States and England is illustrated by the gun and the bell. It has been the custom in certain parts of the country to shoot out the old year and shoot in the new. Early in the morning the country boys were wont to get up and steal out with the old flint-lock or the pistol and make "the welkin ring" by shooting out the old and welcoming the new year.

Not the least among Tennyson's poems is that portion of "In Memoriam" in which he sounds the merry bells of England and rings in the true and good. It is a hint of the higher possibilities of the occasion and of the still more impressive ways to recognize the passing of a year. We are just beginning to behave intelligently on the First of January. Philadelphia is setting an example of combining fun with philosophy, merriment with sanity and the frolicsome with good taste in furnishing a pageant in which the happy good will of the people is mingled with the sober significance of a new beginning for every life.

The Shovel Mightier Than the Sword. Fighting is still an absorbing game, we continue to believe, despite the reports which lay stress on trench digging and other similar activities. Building the Panama Canal was pretty absorbing work for steam-shovel men and engineers alike, and that was no more than trench digging. There is no question, however, that the present war has finally swept out of existence the last of the old trappings which once were synonymous with martial doling in the popular mind. If war is still a thrilling, interesting occupation it is not because of any decorations with which it is idealized.

PILGRIMAGE. I will tread on the golden grass of my bright field. When the passion-star has faded, when the night has fled; I will tread on the golden grass of my bright field. In the glow of the early day when the east is red. In my bright field a broken beech tree leans; And a giant boulder stands by a black-burned wood. And a rough-built, falling wall and a rotting door. Near, like a scar, the spot where a house once stood. My eyes are mute on the white edge of the dawn. My feet fall swift and bare upon the way * * * The long, soft hills grow black against the sky. The great wood moves, unfolds; the high trees sway. The worn road stretches this, and the low hedge sits, And a strong, old bridge looms frail o'er a ghostly stream; And a white flower turns and breathes, and turns again. * * * Does it live, as I live? Does it wake, as I waked, from a dream?

How merciful is the dawn! how poignant the hush of my soul! How changeless the changing sky! how fearful that wild bird's call! I hear the quick sock of his wing, the push of his breast—he is gone! How swift is an son of time! how sudden, beginnings, all! I tread on the golden grass of my bright field; The sun's on a hundred hills; the night has fled; I tread on the golden grass of my bright field; In the glow of the early day, and the east is red. —Leath Cooper, in the Forum.