

Evening Public Ledger PUBLIC LEDGER COMPANY... EDITORIAL BOARD: DAVID B. BRIDLEY, Editor; JOHN C. MARTIN, General Business Manager...

WHERE HELL MAY BREAK OUT NEXT

WHETHER Germany attempts to seize Holland now or later is not particularly important. The reports from Europe regarding the acuteness of the crisis are conflicting. From one source we are told that there has been no change in the situation for months and from another word comes that within a few weeks, if not within a few days, Germany will act.

No one familiar with German ambitions has doubted that Germany would act when the time seemed to her ripe. "Holland has been serving her purposes from the beginning of the war better as a neutral than as an ally. Germany has been receiving much-needed supplies through the Dutch ports, and Dutch business men have been making enormous fortunes through their dealings with the Germans. The trade has gone on in spite of the efforts of the Allies and of the Netherlands Government to prevent it.

in the north are essential to the Allied fleets. The Allied fleets are essential to the safety of the world. The Germans have capitalized ignorance in Mexico. They have wrought through the perfidy and greed of the politicians and through the cupidity of the press. They are now compelling desperately to cause new complications between Washington and Mexico City.

That chauffeur whose tire exploded evidently wanted to get too much free air for nothing. BLOW TO MILITARISM NOW that the President has announced his opposition to the Chamberlain bill providing that all suspects shall be tried by court-martial its defeat is fortunately assured. Even though it should be passed by Congress it would be impossible to muster votes enough to override a presidential veto.

THE GOWNSMAN

YESTERDAY was the anniversary of the day traditionally supposed to be that on which Shakespeare first came into this vale of tears. It is likewise the date of his departure into that state in which, if, according to Masterlinck, immortality depends upon the degree in which we continue to be remembered in this world, his is a condition of security which belongs to few warriors or kings.

SHAKESPEARE is all things to all men. S or perhaps better, a different thing to each man. To the cheap writer he is a quarry, now rather overused; to the ladies' and gentlemen's Browning or other like society, a subject of interminable chatter, delightfully inconclusive; to the school boy or girl, Shakespeare is too often a woolly recollection of Lamb's Tales. It is doubtful to some if he was a book, or a man, or a syndicate. To the actor he spells ruin, yet Irving, the late Sir Beerbolch Tree and others have made a fortune out of him. To the madman he spells Raleigh, Rutland or Plantagenet—Bacon is now quite out of fashion even in the madhouses. The German thinks him best as translated by Schlegel and Tieck into the cacophonous unwhiffedness of the language of Kultur. A president of the Contemporary Club agrees with the firm of Clava and E'rlanger that Shakespeare is dead, adding, "Let us keep him so." And a superintendent of public schools once asked the Gownsmen if he did not think that perhaps the text of the poet might be in some way important. To which the superintendent graciously replied, "Well, possibly it is."

IT IS pleasant to think that the recurrent Spring should bring back to the faithful thought and recollection of the greatest artist in our English tongue. It is good to think of the kindly actorfolk in the Forrest Home, finding their pleasure, after the manner of their generous "quality," in hospitality to their guests who help them annually to honor the greatest among them. It is good, too, to think of that august annual toast of the Philadelphia "Shakespeare" Society—mark the distinguished, the distinguished spelling of the name—To William Shakespeare, Gentleman. Here, at least, there is no belief that the great poet was a lout, in this American society which has honored itself in honoring him these sixty years, and a dozen or more before the degenerate land of Kultur founded its much-belauded Shakespeare Society. It is even good to think of the many Shakespeare meetings and conventions, however they may be adding in the dust which most of our deliberations raise to a brief obscuration of the sun.

SHAKESPEARE is as common as the sun. And, for the most part so commonly disregarded. We even complain of the sun at times, for his direct rays may be grateful, stimulating, invigorating or terrible. And we come in out of his influence, seeking the half shadow of some penny-a-line commentator or the darkened counsel of some impertinent critic whose opaque body is inflated enough to cast a shade even on a cloudy day. Like the sun, too, there is nothing new under Shakespeare. The wisdom of Solomon was prophetic of him; the last clever thing that you said, my clever reader, has already been better said by Shakespeare—not Solomon. And if you are an agnostic—as in these sad days there are many whose religion is not a religion, but a mere habit of mind—Shakespeare, and for that matter, about a good many other things, as to which we must have knowledge in this world, and what is more, faith as well.

BUT the Gownsmen is not only doubly swamped in his gown, he is half-way up the steps of the pulpit. To descend: There was once a man—was it Dr. Benjamin Rush or somebody else—who wrote a prefatory act entitled "Hamlet of Wittenberg." He was a bold man and his act was bold. There was once a lady who wrote a delectable book about the childhood of the heroines of Shakespeare. Think of ladylike Lady Marchetti; and Chopin must have been a beautiful young thing to have been found even passing decorous. It is wonderful what people will perpetrate in the name of Shakespeare! The Gownsmen once heard all copies of "Shakespeareans" conveniently near the fireplace; this journal is peculiarly fitted to this useful purpose; its only illumination is in burning. It is a serious albeit not a serious—dear old Warburton, for example—to write a treatise on the present place of abode of, say, Iago or Richard III? The commentator, by this time, should know of this matter at first hand.

EVERYBODY can tell you why Shakespeare is this, that or the other. He has always heard about it. He learned it in school, in the street, in college, he wanted to know, yes, but only as a means to enjoy and lust and bloodshed—these are the result. In the end Faust immorally outwits the devil and is received into a German heaven; the happy possessor of both the penny and the cake. Hamlet hesitates, fears to do wrong, and blunders in the end he does. "What was I that was not, we are incessantly affected by the moral standard of our race; and these standards are recorded in the poets.

CONSIDERING how honor would be to some such a person, that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall if renewed made it not stir, was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brow bound with oak. "But had he died in the business, madam, how then? "Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. "Had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike and none less dear than thine, I had rather they should all be hanged for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action."

Here speaks the American mother, the patriot the French, the Italian mother of this, our terrible moment, however Roman the spirit. The supreme justification of our homage to Shakespeare lies in his eternal contemporaneity. Shakespeare is always a topic of the day.

Buy a Bond Buy a Bond—It's a great fight For the right—Therefore, with all Thy might, BUY A BOND! Wyncote, Pa., April 23, H. L. POUND.



EMERGENCY QUIPYARDS LAUNCH VAST PUN

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Washington, April 23.—The worst has happened. The United States Humor Administrator has put the nation on joke ration, in a desperate effort to conserve the waning supply of humor. This action was exclusively predicted in these dispatches some days ago. I hurried to the office of the Humor Administration this morning and found the Administrator in a very grave mood. "The situation is very serious," he said. "The war will only be won by laughter and high spirits and the shortage of humor is acute. Last year only 236 new jokes were launched. Keels have been laid for 400 new jokes this year in our quipyards; but we had a great disappointment the other day. Twenty-six excellent jokes, constructed of concrete, on the best New England principles, were ready to leave the ways in Boston, but as soon as they were launched they sank. We have decided not to manufacture any more in New England."

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"Tell me about your rationing plan," I said. "It is quite simple," he replied. "Every citizen is to carry a humor card. Whenever he feels the impulse to utter a joke he is to take the card to one of our local bureaus, consisting of one person, one trolley car conductor and one boarding-house keeper. Before this tribunal he will utter his jest and have his card punched. Every one is to be limited to one 100 per cent joke a day, or a number of substitutes that will total up to 100 per cent. For instance, jokes on puns, flat feet and suburban trains are reckoned as only 33 per cent humor. Three of those a day may be permitted. We have worked out a table of equivalents, which will be strictly observed:

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MORE HOG ISLAND HOGGING

THOSE in West Philadelphia who are to be evicted from their homes to make way for Hog Island shipyard workers cannot be consoled by a sense of co-operation with the Federal Government. The Federal Government never did and never will attempt such an amazing violation of moral and civil rights. The seventy or more householders who have been given "thirty days to get out" are the victims of spectacular official blundering in the Emergency Fleet Corporation.

Admiral Bowles should revoke that order of eviction. He should revoke it today. The possible reactions of such a procedure upon public sentiment in all parts of the country are unthinkable. Men will not object to leaving their homes to help the Government. Millions of them are doing it. But a semi-official organization which drives men with families into the streets in an American spirit and un-American in its shameful inefficiency.

Hog Island was planned a year ago. Since then the Emergency Fleet Corporation has had limitless resources at its disposal. It has permitted itself to be dazed and bamboozled by a frowny clique of petty profiteers and so confused that it now must force a hundred citizens out of their homes in order to carry out its construction program. The plan, says Admiral Bowles, may be "expanded." The housing plan, so far as it involves forced evictions, should be abandoned at once. Otherwise a nation-wide temper of criticism is certain to rattle the Emergency Fleet Corporation as it has never been rattled before.

Joseph G. Guffey is retiring from the manufacture of coal gas preparatory to engaging in the production of campaign hot air.

NOTHING BUT A SMOKE BARRAGE

THAT resolution adopted by the Republican City Committee, directing its counsel to draft an act "which will render it impossible for any member of the Philadelphia police force to participate either directly or indirectly in any political activities whatsoever," is nothing but a smoke barrage behind which the men who have been using the police for political ends are trying to hide themselves.

We have a pretty good law now which forbids, not only policemen, but all other city employees to participate in politics directly or indirectly. It is chapter 29 of the laws of 1904. The Mayor and the heads of the departments are ordered categorically to dismiss from office any one who violates the law.

The city committee by adopting its resolution admits that the police are in politics. Why does it not demand that the Director of Public Safety dismiss the guilty instead of wasting its time passing a camouflaging resolution? Captain Mills is legally impotent to punish policemen guilty of political activity, for that power rests under the charter in the hands of the Director of Public Safety. Director Wilson has not exercised that power in the past and there is no reason to believe he will exercise it in the future. If we mistake not, one of the reasons for keeping him in office is to protect the favorites of the politicians in their jobs.

SOLDIERS' LETTERS

MUCH is being written by military men about the supreme importance of lines of communication. We are told that they are the nerves of the war machine. Meanwhile the Postoffice Department seems to be hopelessly bungling one of the most important of all lines of communication in permitting endless delays and general inefficiency in the system of mail delivery to soldiers not only abroad but at home. It is said that the Christmas mail sent to France from the United States has not yet all been distributed. It is possible, of course, that shifts and transfers of troops abroad, the hurried reorganization of military forces made necessary by changing conditions behind the front, have confused the mail service temporarily. This does not explain delays in mail shipment to cantonments, nor does it explain the interruptions that are said to have been common abroad since the first American soldiers landed on the other side. Mr. Burleson owes the soldiers and the country an explanation. He owes the soldiers better service. This is a courtesy which should be accorded the man in uniform by the civil order which he is fighting to uphold. Any one who has ever been young knows the real importance of mail from home. Good wishes can travel overseas in letters. So, too, can the heartening spirit of the place where a soldier left his heart behind him when he went away. Letters are important to him. They can mean more to him than any other word from home. Mexico is a tempting field for German agents to exercise their art.

THE STILL, SMALL VOICE

That Belt is the line of the Sam Brown belt, The snappiest thing in leather welt; It is not worn by our soldiers, But in all the smartest tailors' ads.

Desk Mottos

The sweetest words in the English language are INCLOSED FIND CHECK. STREBOR.

The Humor Shortage

To the U. S. Humor Administrator, care of The Still, Small Voice: Dear Sir—I see with pleasure that some one beside myself has noticed the humor shortage. The situation is indeed bad, particularly in the Philadelphia evening papers. Every patriotic citizen should back you up in your demand for conservation of all available raw material.

RAIDS

WHOEVER has seen a vice raid of the old-fashioned sort in its final culmination at the night court and about the City Hall cellrooms will understand the full significance of Acting Superintendent Mills' announcement that raids are to be no more. That one statement inspires a sense of something actually achieved in the direction of police reform.

The most familiar gallery play of other police administrators was a spectacle adequate to make any heart cold with despair for free institutions. Nothing crueler or more brutal, more ignorant or less efficient has ever been conceived under ordinary forms of civil law.

The present acting superintendent of police could have made no better bid for intelligent support than that involved in his first order. When the police department is properly directed raids will be unnecessary.

KEEP AN EYE ON MEXICO

TROUBLE is brewing again—or still, if you prefer—in Mexico. There are warnings of border raids, of trench systems and of military activity upon an unexampled scale. Germans are, of course, behind it. The hordes who left here at the outbreak of the war have already done much to make Mexico an outpost among the world's republics. And they could not remain idle during this crisis of the war.

It is the misfortune of the militarist German and his fundamental weakness to know nothing of the power and potentiality of wholesome rage and hatred; nothing of what might be called constructive indignation. It has been evident that he never reacts to a sense of personal outrage or personal emotion.

These are habits of the free mind. The German does as he is told. Berlin, therefore, has not yet realized that each one of the innumerable crimes that have made the ordinary terrors of war seem relatively acceptable and decent has tended definitely to make disaster more certain for Germany. The blundering plots against America, like the violation of all military ethics in other fields, have had a cumulative effect in aiding war loans, in writing opinion, in tempering even selfish folk to sacrifice, in hardening even the most charitable hearts to a doctrine of vengeance. Germany is consistently building up in outraged human consciousness a force terrible and immeasurable, with which she can never deal except in defeat and humiliation, which makes her doom daily more of a certainty. Mexico is merely another illustration of the process.

BUY A BOND

Philadelphia has oversubscribed her quota in the Third Liberty Loan. We are back of you, every minute. Your affectionate

THERE is no feeling of satisfaction like that of having just bought a Bond—Except that of just having bought ANOTHER BOND. Cited by The Still, Small Voice.

SOCRATES.

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TODAY'S USELESS QUESTION

If beans are beneficial and nuts are nutritious and safe is full of calories, what are prunes?

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"What are you going to call it?" I asked the Administrator. "Hush!" he said. "This is Shakespeare's birthday. In his honor we have called this pun Petruchio.

"But why?" I asked. "Because it is going to tame the shrew boys."

The World Plays "Hamlet" JAMES M. BECK, in his address at the Edwin Forrest Home yesterday afternoon on the occasion of the annual Shakespeare festival, drew a very interesting analogy between the characters of "Hamlet" and the international actors on the present world stage. It was one more proof of what the Gownsmen today calls "The eternal contemporaneity of Shakespeare."

The Kaiser, said Mr. Beck, is the King Claudius of this world drama; the smiling villain who poisoned civilization as it is sleeping in its orchard, in the secure hour of its afternoon peace. Germany is Claudius, queen, tyrant; once well beloved of all when she was the old Germany of Goethe and Beethoven, but now leading herself in the infamous derision of the pitiless, unsharable nature, but crowned by Claudius into being the poisoned foil by which he himself perishes. Turkey and Bulgaria are the arch Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern.

France is plainly the Horatio of the tragedy, the noble soul of whom Hamlet says: As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing. England is the brave Fortinbras, "And under quarrel in a straw when honor's at the stake." Belgium is poor, broken Ophelia, and Russia is old Poland, whose motto is full of sweet and high-sounding doctrine, but which is nothing but the brain of the assassin.

And our own country, said Mr. Beck, who is it but Hamlet himself, the distracted hero of the deadly scenario? Hamlet, recovers himself, he holds in the mind to suffer. The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune To take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing, end them.

The analogy between the plot of "Hamlet" and the present tragedy of nations is deeper and deeper as one examines it. Beck is perhaps the first to point it out. And, as he said, the curtain is now lifted on the fifth act of the stupendous drama whose denouement involves the life and future of civilization.

What Do You Know? QUIZ 1. Identify "the Boy State." 2. Name the author of "Cordelia." 3. What is skunk cabbage? 4. Who is canonizer-in-chief of the American army and navy? 5. What is the difference between a bottled and cold-frame? 6. Who was Robin Hood? 7. What were the Vestal Virgins? 8. What is a chymester? 9. Where is the Isle of Wight? 10. Who was Baron Bismarck's son-in-law?

Answers to Yesterday's Quiz 1. Rhode is an ancient city of France, 100 miles east-northeast of Paris and 100 miles back of the "Cordelia." 2. John Purroy Mitchell, the former United States Attorney General, is now a member of the United States aerial corps. 3. "The king can do no wrong" means that the king is not liable for mistakes in government. 4. Lombard street, London. 5. Macadamized derived from the name of the inventor of the process, so called. 6. Maine is the Pinetree State. 7. William Penn founded Pennsylvania. 8. The Lascaris is a celebrated statue in Valparaiso, showing the stranding of the ship. 9. Kilkenny cats: disputationists people who speak English with their eyes on a Kilkenny cat. 10. The name of the man who was the first to use the word "chymester" was...