

Evening Public Ledger
THE EVENING TELEGRAPH
 PUBLIC LEDGER COMPANY
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 Published daily at PUBLIC LEDGER BUILDING, Independence Square, Philadelphia.
 ATLANTIC CITY: 206 Metropolitan Tower
 NEW YORK: 701 Ford Building
 ST. LOUIS: 1000 Pulitzer Building
 CHICAGO: 1292 Tribune Building
 NEWS BUREAUX:
 WASHINGTON BUREAU: 1415 K St., N. W., Washington, D. C.
 NEW YORK BUREAU: 100 Broadway, New York
 LONDON BUREAU: 10 Abchurch Lane, London, E. C. 4
 SUBSCRIPTION TERMS:
 The Evening Public Ledger is published daily except on Sundays and public holidays. It is published at the rate of twelve cents per week, payable to the carrier.
 By mail to points outside of Philadelphia, in the United States, Canada, or United States possessions, postage free. Fifty cents per month. Six dollars per year, payable in advance.
 All foreign countries one dollar per month.
 Notice—Subscribers wishing address changed must give old as well as new address.
 BELL, 3000 WALNUT KEYSTONE, MAIN 3000
 Address all communications to Evening Public Ledger, Independence Square, Philadelphia.

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 Philadelphia, Friday, May 23, 1919

GET THE AX OUT, GOVERNOR!

SOFT-PEDALED legislation always lays itself open to suspicion. In the case of the Walker parole bill, which was recently tipped through both houses at Harrisburg, the matter as well as the manner is seriously questionable. The bill provides that any judge may parole a convict sentenced after June 30, 1911, after he shall have served one-third of his sentence. Here is a most dangerous agency for violating justice. The present good-conduct regulations effectively assure prisoners a square deal. The proposed sweeping extension of paroling privileges not only carries mawkish sentimentality to a nauseous extreme, but it actually impugns the validity of court proceedings. Just penalties imposed by the judges will be mere shams if the opportunity of curtailment is afterward to be made so easy. The Board of Pardons is fully equal to considering the cases of well-behaved convicts. Much of its functioning will be superfluous and, as District Attorney Rotan puts it, the state will be threatened by a general jail delivery if Governor Sprout signs the bill. The gravest reasons exist for staying his hand. Oblivion should be the sequel of this measure's quiet but insidious life.

WILSON IN 1913 AND 1919

IT IS less than six years since the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, under threat of prosecution by the government, agreed to sell its entire holdings of stock in the Western Union Telegraph Company, bought with a view to the consolidation of the lines of the two corporations. Woodrow Wilson on December 19, 1913, in a letter to J. C. McReynolds, then the attorney general, wrote: "It is very gratifying that the company should thus volunteer to adjust its business to the conditions of competition." The same Woodrow Wilson, in a message to Congress, read that to body on May 20, 1919, five years, five months and one day after the letter to Mr. McReynolds, said: "In the case of the telegraph and telephone lines it is clearly desirable, in the public interest, that some legislation should be considered which may tend to make of these indispensable instrumentalities of our modern life a uniform and co-ordinated system." It was to create "a uniform and co-ordinated system" that the American Telephone and Telegraph Company bought a controlling interest in the Western Union Telegraph Company. The desirability of such co-ordination was manifest when the consolidation of the two corporations was planned. The President might have recommended a modification of the law in 1913 when Congress was in control of his own party. It is charitable to assume that he has learned something in the intervening years and that he is not now recommending to a Republican Congress a course of action which he wished his own party to avoid for fear of being charged with friendliness to big corporations.

CITIES AS LANDLORDS

PHILADELPHIANS who for one reason or another find it inconvenient to buy homes now and prefer to continue renting will be interested in the bill introduced at Harrisburg by Senator W. W. Meakle, of Pittsburgh. Taking cognizance of the fact that because we were too busy doing other things during the war to build and that many cities, as a consequence, are facing serious problems, the bill permits municipalities to build houses and apartments and to become landlords on a large scale. As an expedient, the measure may be justified. Departure from precedent was frequently necessary while war waged, and such a necessity may exist during the present period of reconstruction. But it would seem, on the face of it, that if the municipality can make such a venture profitable an individual builder might do the same thing. If the objection is lack of credit there might be virtue in the plan adopted in New York, where corporations have consented to lend builders up to 60 per cent of the amount needed.

THE MORNING CUP

WAR may have opened our souls to a new idealism, broadened our minds to a new patriotism and sharpened our desires for civic righteousness; but, the groceryman declares, it has assuredly blunted our taste for good coffee. It was war's running mate, old H. C. of L., that was directly responsible; and he was aided and abetted by a queer kind of human nature, if the dealers have their way.

has increased only about five or five and a half cents a pound, while the cost of inferior coffee has increased thirteen and a half cents, said thirteen and a half cents bringing the price of the inferior grade up to the price of the best coffee in pre-war days. And the kink referred to is evidenced by the fact that the inferior coffee is being purchased at the prices the purchaser paid for good coffee before the war, while the good coffee, formerly favored, is now permitted to lie on the grocers' shelves. One looks here for the logical working out of the law of supply and demand, which will call for a reduction in the price of good coffee to a figure at which it can be sold. This, presuming that the purchasers will pay no more than they are already paying for inferior coffee, will straightway cause the inferior coffee to be ignored and— Oh, well, please hand us another cup—with plenty of sugar and a little cream!

BUILDING SEWERS BETTER THAN BUILDING FACTIONS

It Would Be a Fatal Mistake to Hold Up the Items of the Proposed Loan for Permanent Public Improvements. The fact that certain members of Councils are planning to combine to prevent the necessary two-thirds vote for the loan for city improvements is regrettable. Charles H. Von Tagen, their leader, announces that all but three or four of them have pledged themselves to vote against the loan at this time, and that these three or four will fall in line. What justification is offered for taking such a course? Certainly not that there is no pressing need for new main and branch sewers and for new water mains, for which a considerable part of the money to be borrowed is to be used. Two reasons are set forth by Mr. Von Tagen. One is that the present city administration cannot be trusted to spend the money properly and the other is that if the money is appropriated now none will be left for the use of the Mayor and Council to be elected under the new charter, as "favored contractors" will be engaged in doing work which will absorb all the available resources. Public improvements should not be held up indefinitely for fear some one may make money dishonestly out of them. If the voters, aroused to a new interest in efficient government by the charter-revision discussion, shall elect the kind of a Mayor and Council which we all hope will be elected then it does not make any difference who has the contracts. The work will not be completed for many months. After the beginning of the year the enforcement of the terms of the contracts will rest with the new administration. The contracts for permanent improvements ought to be let as soon as possible. Such work has been held up by the war and the city is suffering for lack of the things which it has not been able to do.

SHIPS AND THE MEN

ONCE upon a time the only way a sailor could get a ship was to put himself into the hands of some rascally boarding-house keeper and permit himself to be sold, preferably while drunk. Life on the ocean wave was a hard life and the man before the mast had no rights that the master or the mate was bound to respect. But in spite of all this the ships of the world never lacked for men. There is possibility that America may yet build the ships for a great merchant marine. Last week's parade of shipworkers may have the effect desired on Congress. But the building of the ships does not insure the service. We need the men, and it is not yet certain that we can get them. Nelson Collins, author of "The Merchant Marine" and a former instructor at the University of Pennsylvania, points out this danger, gives a reason for it and suggests a remedy. He grieves over the fact that British, French, Italian, Spanish, Swedish and Norwegian civilian crews are employed on ships of their nationality transporting United States troops home, when the troops should properly be making the trips on American ships with American crews. He notes that while Great Britain steadily kept to the fore the importance of a civilian merchant marine, the United States, in effect, depreciated it; and an inept naval training system caused many a good man to be lost to the sea because he feared the navy was going to maintain some kind of a hold on the men of the merchant service. And he suggests, along with the building of the ships, there should be built up a strong pride in them and in the men that will sail in them. That last means publicity. It was publicity that made the merchant marine of England, even as it was publicity of the wrong kind that put a damper on American commerce in American bottoms. It was the stories of Captains Marrayat and Mayne Reid that stirred the hearts of English boys and made them seek romance in every wind-jamming lime-juicer that lay up against the docks. The scents of spices from the Indies wooed them; and the odors of ocean, tar and bilge-water could not deter them. If they couldn't ship as cabin boys they stowed away. It was the easiest thing in the world. Any sailor on board would help them. And the captain who scolded them when discovered and the cook who made galley slaves of them immediately afterward alike found them not unwelcome. On the other hand, who can say how much Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast" is responsible for the American boy's lack of interest in the sea? Today the seaman is a self-respecting man, who receives fair treatment and has ready redress for any wrongs inflicted upon him. He is well fed and well paid. Let our novelists, our poets, our dramatists, our song writers spread the news! They can do much for a successful American merchant marine.

SELF-DETERMINATION

The Great Principle at the Basis of Sovereignty Which the Framers of the American Constitution Discovered. To the Editor of the Evening Public Ledger: Sir—If we are to accept the league of nations as a provisional government and then take measures to prepare for a real and democratic international government, one may very properly search for the most important problems to be solved. I would like to present what I conceive to be, by all odds, the most important one. In all of that great movement of the last century and a quarter, in which the world has come more and more to single out the United States as the great exemplar and model of democracy, probably 90 per cent of those who have considered the subject have attributed those democratic virtues of our government to its form. I can conceive of no need so great in American legal education as a course, handled by a political scientist who has studied law, showing the legal and political cleavage, legal classics. For example, while Blackstone is a superb legal classic, it is the most vicious political textbook that has ever won a place in American legal education. Why, then, is Blackstone a vicious political textbook in the hands of an American lawyer when it is also his best legal classic? It was written after the English revolution of 1688, but before the British colonial revolution of 1776, otherwise known as the American Revolution. What was that latter revolution? Why, separation from the mother country? No, she had a long political tutelage in living under the specified and implied powers of royal and proprietary charters or constitutions, and in that school of political research she evolved a new political principle, namely, that original sovereignty is undivided and has its seat in the individual. In this they passed far beyond the British principle of "consent of the governed," which grew out of a divided sovereignty, a crown on the one hand and a Parliament of Commons on the other; and in the vague feeling that the Commons ought to govern had to resort to the subterfuge of holding up the crown by refusal to vote money. America discovered and adopted a fundamental political principle on which to build her political structure, while Great Britain, inheriting a common law her common law as a product of custom, retained the expediency and opportunism that had always characterized her political life. This is what Blackstone voices as a by-product of a noble British classic, and this is why, in the hands of an American law student, it becomes a vicious political textbook. The difference between the two peoples politically, therefore, is not dissimilar to the difference morally between two individuals one of whom has adopted a rigid principle and the other acts upon expediency and custom. It was a perfectly natural proceeding that "The Fourteen Points" should have been American and of the nature of a creed, with "self-determination" as their cardinal point. It was the United States, not Mr. Wilson personally, who put forth "The Fourteen Points"; he merely interpreted his country correctly. "Self-determination" is a form of the principle of individual sovereignty, and it is perfectly safe to say that the American people will not accept a league of nations which is not based upon that principle. It is equally safe to say that international union will live with that principle or die. The American people will never go backward from it, and will stand united with it or stand separately with it. That is why it is absolutely impossible for the American people to accept the league of nations as a provisional government. They will suddenly become aware of the oligarchical character of the executive council some day after the acute emergency is over and sweep it away in short order, as far as their participation in it is concerned. This principle of the location of original sovereignty in the individual is vast and far-reaching in its operation. First, it denies the assumption of sovereignty anywhere else as a natural crime; it is impossible for it to be located elsewhere, and its assumption, except in temporary tutelage or crisis, is itself evidence of political crime. The American who holds the principle may take the league of nations as a provisional government or take the Philippines in minor tutelage, but it must always be temporary nature only. Then again, this principle makes governmental forms according to natural development, and so fits all possible conditions of growth. No state or nation, as such, has anything but a secondary sovereignty, granted to it by its individuals, during their pleasure. It is a quiet panorama. But we will admit that the noses of children are delightful. Nothing gives us more amusement than to watch the nose of the Urelin. When we give him his supper we cannot resist dabbling the spoonful of stewed prunes on his small, daintily bearded lip every now and then. We find an exquisite humor in the surprised gesture with which he removes the thin adhesion of prune slump and smiles as though it were a huge joke. Study the noses along Chestnut street and renew your faith in the complete absurdity of man. Both Doing Well, We Trust. Recent Yale graduate and Army instructor will serve in loco parentis after May first. Details upon inquiry. New Republic, Box 45.—The New Republic.

CONFETTI

Noses. WE FIND nothing so entertaining as noses. Did you ever walk down the street keeping your gaze steadfastly on the noses of the populace? Try it some time, and be convinced that the inscutable sculptor of humanity is a wag at heart. Or study your own nob in the mirror and ask yourself if you ever saw anything more humorous. There's nothing amusing about the nose of a horse or a dog. These organs are built for use and have the unassuming beauty of all useful things. But when it comes to man, nature seems to have had a wild idea of being ornamental as well as serviceable. Hence our noses. Sneak noses, snub noses, powdered noses, pink noses, purplish noses, shiny noses—it is a quiet panorama. But we will admit that the noses of children are delightful. Nothing gives us more amusement than to watch the nose of the Urelin. When we give him his supper we cannot resist dabbling the spoonful of stewed prunes on his small, daintily bearded lip every now and then. We find an exquisite humor in the surprised gesture with which he removes the thin adhesion of prune slump and smiles as though it were a huge joke. Study the noses along Chestnut street and renew your faith in the complete absurdity of man. Both Doing Well, We Trust. Recent Yale graduate and Army instructor will serve in loco parentis after May first. Details upon inquiry. New Republic, Box 45.—The New Republic.

Literary Notes

Mr. Shorter, by the way, says that he "verily believed" that "Teufel Night" and "Columbus" is the best story about twins ever written. We have taken counsel with our sagacious friend the Quizeditor on this subject, and have determined to ask Mr. Shorter to read De Morgan's "When Ghost Meets Ghost" and Mark Twain's "Those Extraordinary Twins." Among well-known plays dealing with twins we recall "Teufel Night," "The Comedy of Errors" and "Twin Beds." Our good friend the Camden Daily Courier speaks of Walt Whitman's old home on Mickle street as a "mause." In a good-natured way, we submit that Walt would not have approved of this. A mause, as we understand it, is the abode of a person, and there was nothing ecclesiastic about friend Walt. Even if our friend meant to say "mauson," we still think the term ill-chosen. According to the Camden Courier, the Whitman Park Improvement Association "is agitating the idea of purchasing the old horse-block on the sidewalk in front of the poet's home and installing it on a granite pedestal in front of the handsome clubhouse at 1175 Whitman avenue, with elaborate ceremonies. In the sides of the marble block from it came the doctrine of "antiquarianism." The name of the Whitman Park Improvement Association's founders and presidents, devotee one hair's breadth until "alliances" become as extinct as the dodo. "Alliances" are the total reversal of individual sovereignty; the two are as unmixable as oil and water. Therefore, while we are engaged in putting down the idea of purchasing the horse-block as a provisional government—"the league of nations"—let us lay this ultimate foundation solidly, for a future real international government. BURTON ALVA KONKLE, Swarthmore, Pa., May 20.

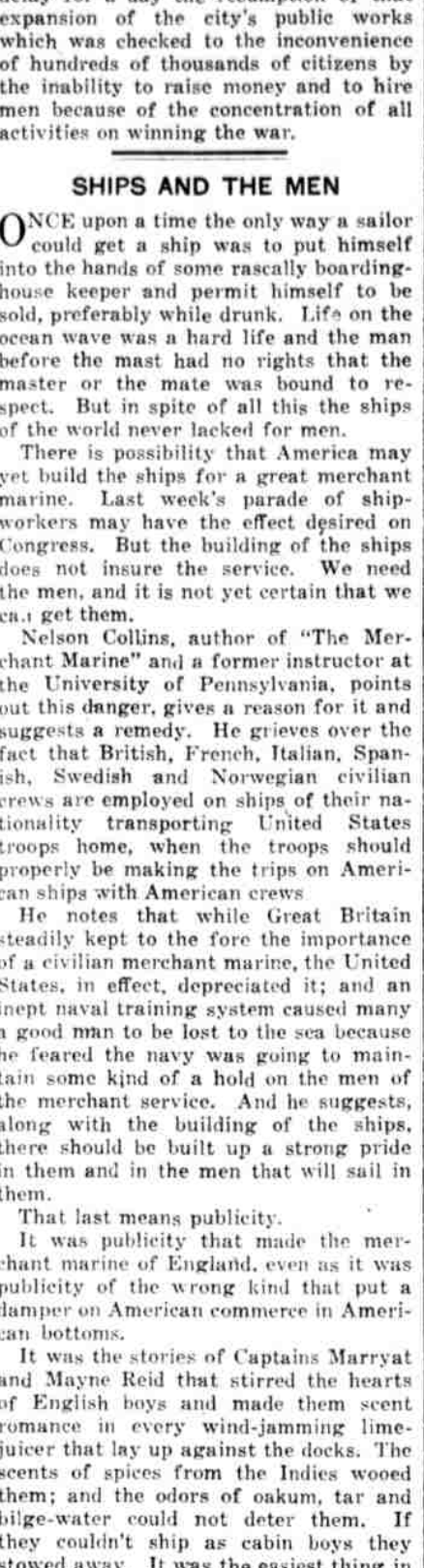
Office Reveries

By a window I never can open, That looks but a green little square, I dream in the midst of my adding, As I scent a stray whiff of spring air, How I'd like to dive through that closed window (These thoughts will steal in on the breeze), I'll run the whole length of the office, And sail head first into the trees, As swift and clean as a bullet, I'll cut a neat hole as I pass, When I burst my invisible prison How the cracks will shoot over the glass! I'll somersault, land on the pavement, And break through the drab human ring That will gape as they gather in wonder, Lost souls who've forgotten the spring, Yes, and divide and subtract, Oh how many plod by a window Dreaming parts that they never can act? PHOEBE HOFFMAN.

But How About Glencoeau?

Some people are charming so long as they are young, and afterward there is nothing attractive about them; others are vigorous and active in manhood, and then lose all the value they possess as they advance in years; many appear to beat advantage in old age, when their character assumes a gentler tone, as becomes men who have seen the world and take life easily. This is often the case with the French—Schopenhauer. Undoubtedly a German would think the French a thoroughly delightful nation if they had all passed the military age. There is no end to the humane services Philadelphia has rendered to the nation. We learn from our sprightly contemporary, the Retail Public Ledger, that 108-cream sodas were invented in this city in 1864.

LINK BY LINK



NOT I

I AM NOT healed of grief; not I, Nor shall be till spring boughs forget Their poignancies down the young sky, In dusks all violet. Not I. Not till the year has found Some other fashion for the rain In old thin autumn fields; its sound Against a lonely pane. Not till the worn, dear, usual things— Street, house, or even a chair, a jar— Bid them of all remembrances, Grow strange, and cold, and far. Who plucks my cowslips in the sun? Whose step fleets by the withered tree? Whose shadow, golden laughter run Betwixt my books and me? They have been gone a thousand years, I grant it. Are the deeps fallen dry? Wears grief a look not that of tears?— Not I, indeed, not I. —Lizette Woodworth Reese, in Contemporary Verse.

What Do You Know?

1. How many American states and what ones ratified the constitution unanimously? 2. At what temperature Fahrenheit does water boil? 3. How much longer is a knot that a mile? 4. On what island of the Azores is Ponta Delgada located? 5. What color is the Mohammedan "flag of the prophet"? 6. Of what city was Dante a native? 7. Where is the original manuscript of the Declaration of Independence kept? 8. Who was Hector Berlioz? 9. Through what English town, now virtually part of London, does longitude zero run? 10. Who wrote "Rasselas"?

Answers to Yesterday's Quiz

1. Lisbon is the Portuguese spelling for Lisbon.
2. A ditty-box is a sailor's or fisherman's receptacle for odds and ends.
3. The centenary of the birth of Walt Whitman will be celebrated on May 31.
4. Sepia is a dark, reddish brown color.
5. Ocelot; feline quadruped of South and Central America, tiger-cat, leopard-cat.
6. Chervil is a garden herb, used in soup, salad, etc.
7. Oscar W. Underwood represents Alabama in the Senate.
8. Jason was the mythological hero who went in search of the Golden Fleece.
9. "Tout ensemble"; thing viewed as a whole, general effect. Literally this French phrase means all together.
10. William B. Day, of the United States Supreme Court, was secretary of state during part of McKinley's administration.