Two Minutes of Optimism

By HERMAN J. STICH

The other night I attended an "annual dinner."

And when it was all over, and while I was trying hard to listen to the speeches, my mind got to wandering, and it occurred to me all of a sudden that the whole world had been on the job to make that dinner, from soup to nuts, thoroughly enjoyable and a success.

The olives at which we nibbled came from faraway lazy Spain. The crab we had for entrée was packed in the land of jujuisu. The rice in the soup had traveled four thousand miles from China. While Texas, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and other states had contributed our favorite meats.

The great Middle West, too, had been at work so we could have our choice of rye, whole wheat, white, graham or any one of a dozen different kinds of bread. In Brazil agriculturists day in and day out had carefully inspected and tended their coffee and cocoa plants, so we could have a delectable drink with which to "finish up." The sugar with which we sweetened it came from Cuba. And the nuts and fruit which some of us munched and the cigars which others smoked had been transported all of them either from across our continent or across the ocean from some distant land.

And yet, I thought, all this is merely the smallest part of what the whole world is constantly doing for us.

Millions of men are working all the time to make us contented and comfortable. On the farm, in the mine, in factories, high up in the mountains, in offices and workshops, in every nook and cranny of our globe, everywhere people are seeing to it that we may be able to live safely, soundly and happily. A little carelessness in the packing of your favorite preserved dish and perhaps the undertaker would overtake you. A bit of irresponsibility on the part of the man who built the car that takes you to work—or of the man who runs it—and you would never again argue about the League of Nations.

The fact that this sort of thing so seldom happens is fairly good evidence that the vast majority of the people who minister to our well-being do their job conscientiously and well. And it is only right that we return the compliment; that we see to it that the thing we are doing will give the satisfaction we expect to get from the things other people are doing; that there will be no cause for complaint so far as we are concerned—in other words, that we do the job we are assigned to do as though we were doing it for our own selves.

And after all that is what civilization is—it is merely a scheme for securing the aid of our fellow man.

If we were savages it would be different. With the savage it is a case of every man for himself. He has little or no thought for his neighbor. He gives no aid, asks none, and is little better than or above the animal. The fact that we are dependent upon our fellow man, that we let him work for us, and in return work for him, is what makes us civilized.

So, the man who skimps his own job, who does not do his level best at his own tasks, who fails to work for others as if he were the others, is nothing more or less than a camouflaged savage. He is out of his habitat. And he ought to be deported either to Africa or to the bushmen of Australia.

In the Waist on Its Way Home?

The waistline is a great tourist. Last winter it booked to the hips and even beyond that. Now, however, there are signs that it is on the eve of buying a return trip ticket. Several of the Paris designers notably raised the waistline, among these being the great house of Callot.

In the type of dance frock shown above the waist has always been rather home keeping. And this sort of model, be it said, is maintaining its position among all newcomers. The wide skirts of these picturesque frocks are often made of many layers of material, and in the billows of net, lace, crepe and satin individual tints are lost in a sea-like glint of color.

Thus the above charming dress places cream color georgette over blue satin, and affixes to the skirt a panel of corn color and silver lace. From this point radiate bands of corn-colored grosgrain ribbons, each punctuated with blue satin flowers centered by brilliants. Brilliants make the girdle also, and this ends in another satin flower.

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