

Evening Public Ledger

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Complexities and Contradictions

The formal task of legislation is to be entrusted to the Senate, which is thus forced to assume more than its share of responsibilities. The tinkering has already withdrawn the clause providing for the free judgment of the Shipping Board in selling the commercial fleet, and have complicated the subsidy machinery by making its operation contingent upon the disposition of Congress to make an annual assistance appropriation to ship-owners. The difficulty of reviving American shipping under conditions rendering it impossible for private companies to know whether they are to be beneficiaries of governmental aid or not is apparent.

Upon one act of common sense, however, the House deserves congratulations. The amendment restricting compensation to vessels transporting no liquor was palpably superfluous under the existing laws and their interpretation by the Administration. The amendment merited the defeat it received.

THANKSGIVING DAY AS A SPIRITUAL FESTIVAL

Its Meaning Is Lost When It Is Regarded as Merely a Time for Feasting and Mirth

A STRANGER visiting America for the first time and unfamiliar with our customs would be likely to think, in view of the display of food in the markets in anticipation of the festivities of today, that the spirit of the observance was set forth in the well-known "Grace Before Meat" of Burns:

Some have meat and canna eat, And some would eat that want it; But we have meat and we can eat, So let the Lord be thankit.

And he would be right in part. Thanksgiving Day is an occasion of gratitude for bountiful harvests and we celebrate it with feasting.

Expressions of gratitude to the Lord of the Harvest are not so common as they once were, when the whole community flocked to the churches. Nowadays in many far-flung it is thought that sufficient thankfulness is shown if tribute is paid to the bounty of Nature by partaking of it to the extent of the diners' capacity. Yet there remain a few who in a contrite and humble spirit obey the injunction of the President's Thanksgiving Proclamation and go to their respective places of worship and express their gratitude.

But a thanksgiving which considers only material things is empty and futile. There can be no heart in it if there is not in the back of the consciousness a realization of the spiritual forces at play among men. Without this realization it becomes a glorification of a crass materialism. Materialism is but another word for death. The earnest of the steer is inert matter. A nation absorbed in material things to the exclusion of all others is as dead as the steer that has passed through the Chicago stockyards.

The spiritual forces are those which keep men and nations alive, which enable them to grow in stature and to confront the universe with level and confident gaze un- abashed by its shining glory.

The history of the decay of civilization is the history of the atrophy of the spiritual instinct. When men reach out into the invisible and take the unseen hand extended to them they march forward. Their minds are centered on a Higher Power, and they are reaching forward to an ideal so much bigger than they can fully comprehend that they are continually stretching their minds in an effort to realize the greatness of which humanity is capable, a greatness that outsteps the highest that mere selfish glorification can attain.

The priests and prophets of the spiritual era of the dead nations live to this day, while the kings and conquerors are all but forgotten. The thinking of Socrates and of Plato has colored all the thinking of the whole western world, while even the names of the commercial magnates of their time are forgotten. Confucius is a living force and Gautama Buddha's teachings influence the lives of uncounted millions.

It would be counted as irreverence to class the Founder of Christianity with any of these, but His influence reaches the western world. He breathed upon the materialism of His time and life began to stir among His dry bones. It is due to His influence that the first thanksgiving service was held on this continent, and without that influence this Nation would never have set apart a day for expressing its gratitude to the Power that controls the recurrence of seed-time and harvest and makes the herbs and flocks bring forth their increase.

It is, indeed, strange that we today should say with Burns that:

We have meat and we can eat, So let the Lord be thankit.

But it is more fitting that we should be conscious of the unseen forces that put it into the heart of man to be thankful in any degree for the blessings of home and wife and child, and for those bonds which bind all mankind in a common brotherhood descended from a common Father whose greatest joy is that men should dwell together in unity.

Steps are being taken, it is said, to punish the middle-class who drank to excess last Saturday. But the punishment will be incomplete unless it is shared by those who furnished the liquor.

Prohibition agents aver that a glass of whiskey was "in the line" in one saloon which has dropped the anchor. So marvellously has the bootlegging business grown that there is now much to suit all tastes.

Male students of the University of California have signed a petition to abolish women from the campus. Which is a natural reaction, says Democratic Congressman, against such sentimental puffs.

London woman doctor says men should do the cooking and scrubbing around the house, so that women may do uplift work outside. Part of the uplift will, of course, be the finding of some more jobs for mere men.

Four shells exploded; six men burned. This shows the cruel, insistent demands of sport. If duty had not called the prohibition enforcement officers to Franklin Field they might have discovered something on Noble Street.

Congressman Burton, of Ohio, performs a public service in reiterating the fact that payments made to us by foreign Governments should be sacredly devoted to reducing our own bonded debt and should never be subject to an appropriation by Congress.

General Pershing, pleading for military training, urges the country to look the facts in the face. But that's the trouble. The facts won't be looked at. They carry peace labels and have shifty eyes. Every time we get ready to beat our swords into plowshares and get another order for shrapnel and poison gas.

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NAVAL TREATY DELAY

IN THE announced determination of the British Admiralty to scrap no more naval vessels until the Washington disarmament treaties have been ratified by all the nations concerned there is a recognizable undercurrent of grievance.

According to Commander Monsell, who made the statement in the House of Commons, Great Britain already has materially reduced the strength of its navy. Eight capital ships have been made useless for war service and have been sold to ship-breaking firms for destruction. Six more vessels have been rendered incapable of war-risk service and two more will be similarly treated by the end of December.

That a policy of delay is now advocated is a fact that reflects less upon the sincerity of Great Britain than upon that of several of her sister nations. France and Italy have not yet ratified the Washington treaties, although more than a year has elapsed since the first session of the Washington Conference was held.

If these nations are playing for position in the Near Eastern and other international situations by holding up the naval treaty sanction, such maneuvering is wholly at variance with the spirit of co-operation supposed to have been engendered in Washington.

It was believed at the sessions last year that the disarmament program was as good as authorized by the signatures of the qualified delegates. This opinion was not so easily affected by predictions of amendments and revisions of certain details that might be made in some European Parliament. What is unpleasantly apparent now is a more or less studied indifference to responsibilities and pledges regarded as valid at the time of acknowledgment and making.

Premier Poincare has lately been insisting that the treaties would pass the French Parliament and that he was emphatically in favor of ratification. Evidence of such ungrudgingly for the cause of peace in Paris, and an equivalent at Rome, would contribute vitally to the clearing up of a situation which is becoming awkward, to say the least. One recent effort of the procrastination has been the automatic renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance for another year.

The United States, Japan and Great Britain have clean records so far as ratification of the Washington covenants is concerned. Curiously enough, it was these nations to whom the questions of naval disarmament and the balance of peace in the Pacific were of major importance.

France and Italy have never been reckoned among foremost naval powers. They have comparatively subordinate territorial interests in the Pacific and the latter none whatever. What is the meaning and purpose of the obscure game of inaction now being played?

Another thing that galls the ex-Kaiser is that certain of his former subjects have the nerve to criticize his book.

The work of the modern Athenian is full of color, but the civilized world does not wholly approve of his execution.

The curious and startling thing about the Hall-Sullivan case is that so very many people refuse to consider it unsoiled.

Though her ultimate intentions be ever so good, France has a way of embarrassing those who declare her peaceably inclined.

Women's Democratic Club Holds Card Party With Many Prizes. We trust the lucky husbands took proper care of the little ones.

Clemens itemizes war materials Germany has hidden. Among them he would doubtless include the will to wage another conflict.

Five hundred shoekeepers have opened drug stores in New York City. If a breath of suspicion is ever raised against them they'll probably have it with clothes.

Discussion of the Deep Anti-Lending Bill in Congress appears to be prospective of discussion of pretty nearly everything under the sun except the Deep Anti-Lending Bill.

That men with money are growing more expert in holding on to it is evidenced by the fact that the income of the Government has dropped pretty nearly a billion and a half this year.

Steps are being taken, it is said, to punish the middle-class who drank to excess last Saturday. But the punishment will be incomplete unless it is shared by those who furnished the liquor.

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GREAT THINGS AHEAD

Men From Twenty States to Discuss a Canal Across New Jersey—The United States Gave Them \$42,500,000 Last Year

By GEORGE NOX MCCAIN GREAT things for Philadelphia will be afloat in Washington next week. A body of very earnest and far-seeing men will meet there to discuss ways and means for spending many millions of dollars. By agreement, they will suggest ways and means for getting these vast sums.