

# Science Notes

BY WILLIAM G. HAYNES.

## WAR AND THE METRIC SYSTEM.

Is conservative England to be shocked by the war into giving up her antiquated systems of coinage, weights and measures? This suggestion comes from a leading editorial in *The Electrical Review* (London, October 15). The war, says the paper, is "shaking the foundations of civilization;" it cannot pass away and leave things as they were, whatever its result. There is to be a new regime of some kind, and Englishmen must adapt themselves to it. Efficiency is to be its watchword, and to attain this every obstacle to industrial and commercial progress must be removed. Among such obstacles, *The Review* decides, are certainly what it calls the "obsolete" British system of measurement. It must be noted that we Americans here are in the same boat with the English in all respects except that of coinage. We "point with pride" to our decimal system of dollars and cents as being far more logical and convenient than the English pounds, shillings and pence; but we stand shoulder to shoulder with them in our determination to reject the decimal substitutes for the equally inconvenient yards, ounces, and pints, despite the fact that all these long ago were thrown upon the scrap-heap by other civilized nations. Says the British editor:

"In every part of our social, domestic and political life the welfare of the nation must be the predominant consideration, before which all private interests must give way. We are a conservative people; but we must learn to be progressive, bearing in mind that any hindrance to our progress must be ruthlessly flung aside. And surely there is no greater obstacle to our commercial welfare than the obsolete systems—if such they can be called—of coinage, weights and measures that handicap our intercourse with foreign nations and impede the development of our trade, to an extent that is fully realized by few. We have for many years advocated reform in this connection, and we believe that the return of peace will afford an ideal and unique opportunity to bring it about—an opportunity such as may never recur.

"In normal times a great objection to the adoption of new weights and measures has been the 'dislocation of trade' that many feared would ensue; now that our export trade has undergone a compound fracture, surely no one will hint at dislocation. The mind of the country is aroused; men and women in all ranks of society are alert, they are in a mood to receive new ideas and to consider them without that tendency to prejudice with which we are afflicted in time of peace. Now, then, is the time; and we earnestly call upon all advocates of efficiency and reform to aid us in our efforts to convince the opponents of change that it is their duty to accept new systems of weights, measures, and coinage, for the sake of their country's welfare, . . .

"We may observe that, while we have coupled the metric system and decimal coinage under one heading, we do not suggest that they are necessarily combined or interdependent; either could be adopted without the other, and it is interesting to note

that altho the numbers respectively for and against these two items are approximately equal, many of our correspondents favor one while objecting to the other. In view of the necessity of economizing clerical labor after the war, we are disposed to regard the adoption of decimal coinage as of importance second only to that of the metric system. No one who has lived abroad for any length of time will dispute the assertion that facility in dealing with decimal coinage is acquired in a very few days, and that the simplicity of the system endows it with immense advantages."—*Literary Digest*.

## PAPER AS FUEL.

In a circular issued by the German government shortly after the beginning of the war the attention of the women was called to the value of paper as fuel, and they were instructed to conserve it. Within three months the waste paper in the different towns was being soaked into pulp by the thrifty housewives, formed into little balls and then dried. These were used in kindling fires and also to cook food requiring little heat.

An American firm has improved on this idea by collecting old newspapers, packing them into tight rolls about two inches thick and sawing them into three inch lengths. These rolls are put up into packages of fifty and sold at a cent a package. Housewives addicted to the use of coaloil in starting their kitchen fires can use it safely by having these paper blocks soaked in it some time before they are to be utilized.

## ICE CONSTRUCTION.

Several thousand dollars were saved recently by the use of artificial ice in repairing a leak in a cofferdam surrounding the uncompleted pier of a new bridge now being erected at Cleveland, Ohio.

This cofferdam had been built of steel strips sunk fifty feet into the ground and the water had been pumped out. Before the work was fairly started the current of the stream was strong enough to bulge one side of the dam causing a leak which stopped the work. After several other plans had proved unsuccessful a refrigerating plant was installed and eight brine pipes were driven into the ground surrounding the leak.

The brine was kept at a temperature of 10 degrees Fahrenheit and circulated at a tremendous speed. In five days it had frozen a solid wall of mud and ice which effectually stopped the leak. This was kept frozen until the concrete had been built to a higher level than the leak.

## ALL RIGHT TO FILL IN.

"Why do you go with that young man? He isn't making enough money to be married.

"But he is makin enough to provide theater seats and auto rides for Tuesdays and Fridays, and I have those evenings to spare."—*Louisville Courier Journal*.

## THE BURNING QUESTION.

Queenie—Have you ever kissed a girl?

Oswald—Is that an invitation or are you gathering statistics?—*Widow*.

## YEAR 1915 GIVES ENCOURAGEMENT TO COLORED AMERICAN.

(Continued from first page.)

ican interests and efforts than anything else in recent years.

"The Birth of a Nation," no matter what its real purpose, has worked to the benefit of Afro-Americans throughout the entire land, for the efforts to prevent its production have caused a greater, more sincere and combined force than anything else in recent years, and the end is not yet. And, too, it has brought into prominence a greater number of worth-while citizens of all races in behalf of the Afro-American. Such conditions cannot be easily subverted; and though "The Birth of a Nation" may be produced here and there, at the same time the aid and assistance of the better element of citizens as well as the strengthening of their humanitarian views must and will be responsive to the end that the Afro-American will profit.

Nothing worth while racially can be hoped for without a whole hearted and sincere campaign in which men and women of all races take a part, and these elements brought about from within the race must be creative of a deeper respect in the opinions of mankind generally. If we, as a race, seem satisfied with conditions and fail to attempt a remedy for the evils, how can we expect tolerance or respect from the other side?

Nor must the campaign in behalf of woman's suffrage be overlooked. The enlistment of woman in any cause for uplift and advancement bespeaks a wide field of popularity, and a sincere effort for its attainment, because, woman is the bulwark of the home, which, after all, is the foundation of the race. In the campaign for the enactment of woman's suffrage, able women of the race had opportunity to deliver to the laity pointed truths anent the benefits accruing from such legislation, and, too, some of them at least, took advantage of the opportunity to give other valuable information. All of which must be taken into account in the survey of things racially important in this, the passing year.

The supreme court, the highest tribunal in the land, declared the grandfather clause as unconstitutional and, theoretically, at least, placed the Afro-American on an equal footing with any and all other Americans, from the point of franchise.

The year 1915 has therefore been a wonderful year. Its record is replete with instances of import to the Afro-American, and it must stand far up in the list of achievements.

The year 1916 just on the threshold of Time inherits a wonderful aggregation of important events. Let us not only hope for, but bend all our efforts to the perfection and perpetuation of these elements of uplift, advancement and the enjoyment of manhood's rights, firm in the conviction that each effort in the right direction, whether successful or not, must create for us as a race, a deeper respect in the hearts of those about us, of those whom we should and must consider as our friends, and engender an air of co-operation which in the end will be productive of good and lasting results.

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