

THE ALLIANCE HERALD

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THE POTATO COMES BACK

The huge potato crop which the Federal forecast indicates will be produced in the United States this year means that this important food staple will be cheaper, and makes it possible, says the United States Department of Agriculture, for American families that had to cut down on potato consumption because of high prices to restore the tuber to a prominent place on their bill of fare.

The department forecast, based on reliable estimates from all parts of the country, places the total potato yield at more than 467 million bushels as compared with 285 million in 1916 and 360 million in 1915. Potatoes of the current season are already in the market in large quantities and, since the early harvested tubers can not be kept easily, should be eaten more abundantly now if spoilage is to be avoided.

Next to the breadstuffs potatoes are the most important food crop of the western nations, the department points out. They are all the more important now that the world's wheat supply is short, since they furnish starch, the principal food element contributed by bread, and so may be substituted in part for bread.

It is no hardship to Americans, says the department to eat freely of potatoes, rather, it has been a hardship to them during the past year to forego somewhat the use of this common food.

NATIONAL DISCIPLINE

Dean West of Princeton sees a greater seriousness in American life as a result of the war and believes that this can be turned to good account by educators. In reply to those who object to the old formal disciplines of tried educational methods he is thus quoted: "No democratic nation can live without self-control; no man or woman can live well without it. There is no self-control without self-restraint. There is no self-restraint in the history of human experience which does not depend upon the ideas of discipline and duty. History has written again and again the truth that in the world's conflict the undisciplined mind is generally beaten. There is no winning the best success without first conquering ourselves. This is the verdict of the wise men of all ages."

Good words, well spoken, and befitting the times. There is no royal road to learning or easy method likely to bring the desired results, just as there can be no real character building in either the individual or nation without resolute endeavor and stern discipline. Life is a fight to turn from soft pleasure to the hard exercises that make for high achievement. Forgetfulness of this old truth is no doubt the chief trouble in Russia today. In the joy of liberation from autocracy's chains, the Russians are for the time unaware that unless they voluntarily put chains upon themselves and toil on in the right way they will become the prey of the disciplined and strong who now menace them from without. A similar lesson has been needed in this easy-going, joy-riding America that has too long and too heedlessly surrendered to soft pleasure. The war, with its sacrifice, its discipline, must and will strengthen us as a nation.

"JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT"

According to a correspondent of the New York Sun, "the Kaiser's sentence has already been pronounced by public opinion; it is St. Helena—for life." The Sun editorially adds the suggestion that a court house in the Belgian capital is "the proper place for the trial and the sentencing of the person directly responsible for the costliest and ugliest crime in all the history of the world." Granting that such a sentence would be just in the case of the kaiser, what about the crown prince? Was the kaiser wholly responsible, or was his decision to take the frightful plunge in large part due to the persuasions of his son, the prince who has obstinately piled the German dead so high before Verdun?

This question is rendered the more interesting by ex-Ambassador Gerard's report of a conversation between the crown prince and "a beautiful American woman." Early in 1914, before the great struggle began, the crown prince confided to this woman his ardent hope for war during his father's reign and his determination to have it anyhow as soon as he ascended the throne. "He said, whether war was profitable or not, that when he came to the throne there would be war—just for the fun of it. On a previous occasion he had said that the plan was to attack and conquer France, then England, and, after that, my country. Russia was also to be conquered, and Germany would be master of the world." The crown prince admitted an ambition to rival Napoleon and Frederick the Great. The latter confessedly started the Seven Years' war "in order to be talked about," and the Crown Prince wanted to conquer France, Russia, England and the United States "just for the fun of it." This inevitably suggests the question, is even the kaiser in this particular as shamelessly criminal as his son?

BLAMING THE NEWSPAPERS

When most people denounce the newspapers as untrustworthy, except where the offense is one of political policy, their criticism is based merely on the publication occasionally of unavoidably inaccurate news. A knowledge of this is doubtless the basis of the inspiration of a writer who ventures to declare that "aside from government, the newspaper stands pre-eminently as the most powerful institution of civilization," that it is "teacher, preacher, theatre, example and counsellor all in one," and who argues that a newspaper should be judged by "its policies, its editorial utterances, its attitude toward public questions, and the truthfulness with which it presents the news."

It might have been added that it is as unfair to lump several thousand newspapers together as all of a kind or level as to refuse to admit any variation in character among the inhabitants of a whole city. If one newspaper has been suspected of coloring the news for political effect, why should this be supposed to convict all the rest? But the most common complaint is against mere inaccuracies of news, and this either ignorantly or wilfully overlooks the fact that the newspaper is confronted with the task of printing overnight the history of the world for a day, without time to verify the accounts sent in by distant correspondents and with nothing to be done but to leave needed corrections for later issues.

It is four months since the Liberty Loan was authorized and more than two months since the subscription closed. Banks are being asked by impatient subscribers why they don't get their bonds and a few newspapers have demanded to know why the government is so slow. One answer is that there were more than three million small subscribers. Another answer is that when Congresswoman Rankin found that the Bureau of Printing and Engraving was working its employees more than 8 hours she loudly protested and had it stopped, much to the disgust of the employees who were glad of the extra pay.

When truth telling once more becomes respectable and therefore possible in Germany the Cologne Gazette may avoid such mendacious assertions as that "the Wilson export regulations represent an illegal action unique in the history of the civilized world." Unique! One lie leads to another, and doubtless this German editor would hold that we were not civilized when President Thomas Jefferson put in force an embargo act a hundred years ago, and contend that the other modern nations that have done the like were all semi-barbarous.

The "international" Socialist conference ought to be held in a German city, the movement being entirely Teutonic in control and aim.

A BARREN SCHEME

Bernhardi, who, in preparation for the present struggle of Germany against the nations, glorified war and conquest, contended that

the "moral and mental factors of force" are no less important than the physical, meaning that the enemy must be crushed in soul and mind as well as in body. No doubt this partly explains the inhuman methods of "frightfulness" deliberately adopted by the German war lords. Perhaps it also explains the "moral or psychological bureau" which, according to report, has been established in Berlin for the purpose of cataloguing "the precise psychological status of each of Germany's enemies" based on the accounts received from spying agents. Presumably this means that public sentiment and its fluctuations will be carefully studied and recorded so that Berlin will perceive the psychological moment most favorable for a crafty announcement or the inauguration of a new policy.

This is just such a scheme as over-confident and self-applauding German "efficiency" would be likely to evolve, but there is one convincing reason why its success is more than doubtful. German spies of the ordinary information-gathering, bomb-plotting variety may be relied on, but a German agent of this higher "psychological" type is apt to be misled, for the simple reason that the German is so constituted that he sees what he wants to see. Have not such German observers already reassured Berlin, with a confidence so complete as to carry conviction, that decadent France could not fight, that the British empire was enfeebled and on the point of disintegrating, and that dollar-chasing Americans could not even be insulted, whipped and dragged into war?

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