

Wasting Time

What a frightful waste of time there is, and in how many ways. Just now millions of precious moments are being wasted in the discussion of immaterial phases of the awful war which is devastating Europe—time that might better be spent in building up a sentiment against our participation in the war, and in discussing means of assisting the warring nations to bring the war to a close.

It is a waste of time to discuss who is to blame for STARTING the war; the practical question is not who STARTED it but WHY DOES IT CONTINUE? It is a waste of time to compare cruelties and to weigh inhumanities; it is not for us to encourage inhumanities on either side by expressing a preference or by giving judgment in favor of them. It is our duty as neutrals to discourage both sides by refusing to commend cruelties even relatively. It is a waste of time to discuss hypothetical questions or to try to decide whether our nation would be aided or injured by the triumph of this nation or that. We can not tear away the veil that conceals the future; we can not say with any certainty that, for the good of our nation, either side should be victorious; but if we have read history to advantage we know that no peace compelled by force and preserved by fear can be permanent, and we should, therefore, use our influence to encourage the belligerent nations to substitute co-operation for hatred.

It is not only a waste of time to attempt the impossible task of finding out how our country can be benefited by the triumph of either side, but it is dangerous to neutrality for us to form a fixed opinion on this subject. As soon as an American citizen becomes firmly convinced that the welfare of his country will be best served by the victory of any nation or group of nations, he becomes prejudiced in favor of that side and his judgment as to what this nation ought to do will be colored by his desire to aid the side which he favors. We see this constantly illustrated by that portion of the press which has taken sides. If our nation is to remain neutral it must be indifferent as to the results of the war and content itself with the protection of the rights of its own people and with the guarding of the welfare of this nation.

Now is the time when the hours should be wisely used, and they can best be used in the consideration of the questions upon which we must act. By observing not only the letter but the spirit of neutrality we can remain the sincere friend of ALL THE BELLIGERENTS, and thus become not only mediator but their accepted advisor in laying the foundation of a peace that shall endure.

W. J. BRYAN.

A referendum taken by a number of big Washington republicans is declared to have resulted in the choice of Elihu Root as the republican candidate for 1916. The voters were party leaders in various states. Fishing will be a popular pastime with democratic campaign managers if Root is made the republican nominee. There will be nothing else to do.

OUR DUTY

Those who talk war present it as a duty, but to whom? We owe no such duty to the belligerents on either side. They are fighting over questions which do not affect our welfare or destiny. They entered into the war without consulting us; they are conducting it without any regard for our wishes or our rights. An American must have more interest in one of the belligerents than he has in the United States if he desires to see us dragged into the contest as the ally or the opponent of either side.

Duty to our own people requires that we keep out. The duelist put a sham "sense of honor" above his duty to his wife, his children and his country. According to his code in case of insult, real or supposed, someone had to be killed, regardless of the injustice done to those dependent upon him and regardless also of the needs of society. But the day of the duelist's code is past. Duty requires us to consider the welfare of ALL the people—not merely the whims or interests of a few; duty requires us to consider the welfare of the neutrals who look to us as their leaders; and duty also requires us to consider the future interests of the belligerents. We are the friends of all and must remain in a position to mediate and to advise.

W. J. BRYAN.

LET THE JINGOES DIE FIRST

The southern congressman who suggested that war, if we are to declare it, should be voted BY the people themselves and not voted UPON them, struck a popular chord. If there is any question that ought to be referred to a referendum vote it is the question that determines peace or war for the nation, and the suggestion was made still more attractive when he added that, to secure deliberation in the voting, it ought to be understood that THOSE WHO VOTED FOR WAR WOULD ENLIST FIRST. This is capital, and of course no jingo could complain because it would be a reflection upon his courage to assume that he would vote for war if he had any intention of shirking the responsibility himself and throwing the burden and risks of the war upon others.

By all means let us have a referendum before war is wished on the public, and let the vote be cast with the understanding that no one will vote for war unless she is ready to enlist.

And, as a further protection to the public, would it not be well to give the jingoes the privilege of fighting in the front line so that they would have the glory of dying before any other lives were sacrificed? They might stop fanning the flame that kindles war if they knew that they would have to take some of the risk themselves. Mr. Dooley never said a wiser thing than when, in 1898, he replied to Mr. Hennessey's question that he would go down to see the soldiers off "whenever those who get up the war enlist."

W. J. BRYAN.

CHRISTIANITY VS. MILITARISM

Rev. J. W. Shenk of Los Angeles, Cal., quotes the following indictment against militarism:

"Militarism is the absolute negation of Christianity. The one exhibits a mailed fist, the other shows a hand that is pierced. The one carries a big stick, the other carries a cross on which the Prince of Glory died. The one declares that might makes right; the other affirms that right makes might. The one says that the foundation of all things is force; the other says that the foundation of all things is love. Militarism is materialism in its deadliest manifestation; it is atheism in its most brutal and blatant incarnation; it is the enemy of God and man. It must be overthrown. Every nation which becomes its devotee is doomed. Militaristic nations are broken to pieces like pottery's vessels. So did the Almighty break Nineveh and Babylon, Persia, and Greece, and Rome, and unless they repent He will break in pieces the so-called great powers of Europe."

"WHY?"

The following poem by J. M. Lewis, in the Houston Post, emphasizes in a very impressive way the causelessness and futility of this war, which no one—not even its promoters—is willing to take the blame for.—Pathfinder.

The brooding horror of dead men
Enwraps the world. They rise again,
With pale, set features, from the deep,
From gore-mucked meadows, where they sleep,
Shroudless and coffinless, with eyes
Which seem to quest beyond the skies
And ask God "Why?" From trench and shore
They come. Past barred and sentried door,
Down guarded halls their millions throng,
Men dead, who yesterday were strong,
Some with dead sons held by the hand,
To brightly-lighted rooms and stand—
Wet with sea slime, and red with gore
From pale-lipped wounds which bled no more—
In throngs, more than a million deep,
By beds where monarchs pray for sleep;
And breathless lip, and sightless eye,
And gaping wound all question, "Why?"

They come! The women come that mourn!
They hold the bodies, starved and torn,
Of their wee babes, that died for bread—
Babes misdirected shots laid dead—
Their little children that were slain
In city street and country lane,
And tortured daughters, fair and sweet,
Pursued by war's glare through the street
And, shrieking, dragged forth by the hair,
By jeering fiends, to street and square,
And outraged, tortured till they died!
Their supplicating arms stretched wide
They stand beside your bed and mine
When the day's light has ceased to shine,
And "Why?" "Why?" "Why?" comes like the
sound
Of blood, slow-dripping from a wound!
Till waking to that soundless cry,
Sleep-robbed, the outraged world asks, "Why?"

Temperance Crusade Advancing

A press dispatch from Liverpool dated August the 7th says that new and drastic orders have been issued in that city for the regulation of the sale of liquor in saloons. One of the provisions of the new order prohibits treating; another prohibits the giving of credit for liquor, and the third limits the sale of liquor to five and one-half hours per day. Thus the cause of temperance marches on; every limitation, every reduction of the hours during which liquor can be sold is a step in advance; it is one way of measuring the strength of the opposition to alcohol. The prohibition of sales or credit is also to be commended. After a man has taken enough liquor to stupefy him he is not in a condition to contract a debt; he doesn't know what he is doing. A drunken man is in no condition to defend himself against any bill that is presented.

But the prohibition against treating will be even more effective because much of the drinking is the outcome of treating. In fact it is no unusual thing for a saloon keeper to do the treating, if necessary, until the patron gets to the point where he will spend his money freely.

And why should we not have treating prohibited in this country? It is within the power of congress to fix the conditions under which liquor shall be sold by those who obtain a government license—or, not to offend against the niceties of language, those who pay the internal revenue tax levied against the liquor dealers. There are some state laws against treating, but the trouble is that they put the penalty on the man who treats instead of putting it on the saloon keeper who permits it in his establishment. It is the saloon keeper who profits most—he is really the only one who does profit.

If congress desires to do something that will have immediate results of good, let it provide for the forfeiture of the license of any holder of a government receipt who permits treating in his place of business.

And while congress is legislating it might just as well make selling on credit a cause for forfeiture of license.

Congress should also require publication in advance of notice of application for government license; that would shut off the issue of licenses in dry territory.

And why not compel a monthly, or at least quarterly, report of all license holders. It would be instructive to know at stated intervals, first, how much liquor is sold; second the price collected for liquor sold; third, the kind of liquor sold; and fourth, the alcoholic content of the liquor sold. It would be no hardship upon the holder of the license to make such reports, and the information would be vastly helpful in the consideration of the liquor question. National prohibition is impossible until three-fourths of the states are ready to ratify a constitutional amendment, but it only requires a majority of the two houses and the concurrence of the president to legislate on the subject, and the suggestions above made outline only a few of the many things that may be done to lessen the evils of the traffic in alcoholic drinks.

W. J. BRYAN.

GOOD FAME

The fidelity of a public man to conscience—not to party—is rewarded with the sincerest popular love and confidence. * * * No man can take a pre-eminent and effective part in contentions that shake nations, or in the discussion of great national policies, of foreign relations, of domestic economy and finance, without keen reproach and fierce misconception. "But death," says Bacon, "bringeth good fame." Then, if moral integrity remain unsoiled, the purpose pure, blameless the life, and patriotism as shining as the sun, conflicting views and differing counsels disappear, and firmly fixed upon character and actual achievement, good fame rests securely.—George William Curtis.

Newspaper defenders assert that the munitions manufacturers have no occasion to interest themselves in movements to increase the national armament because they are too busy now filling contracts for European belligerents. These editorial advocates do not credit the guns and powder makers with any foresight. They are seeking a market that will be partly closed to them when the war is over and their greatly enlarged plants will be in need of orders.