

An Astonishing Editorial

The Chicago Tribune, under the title "Something to Think About," presents the most surprising defense yet given of the use of intoxicants, a defense which, if true, would not only threaten the continuance of prohibition but even discourage the cultivation of a temperance sentiment. The arguments are so amazing that the "Wets" have probably purchased for free circulation all surplus copies of the paper containing the editorial. It quotes Turkey and Russia as proof of the harmful (?) influence of total abstinence. It says "Turkey under Abdul the Damned was dry, as Turkey, has been always since its conquering rise, and Russia under Lenine the Terrible has been dry, and under them both humanity as organized in nations has reached its coarsest, most ferocious, brutalized and hopeless form. Bone dry Turkey has the lowest code of morals ever known in anything called a civilization. It has debased its women, permitted them only bodies and no souls, and has slaughtered helpless subjects with an almost holy zeal." Contrasting the condition in two countries that are dry the Tribune turns to France and Japan as illustrations of what can be done under the stimulus of alcohol—"The greatest intellectuals of the world, the French, are wine drinkers, the greatest Asiatics are wine and spirit drinkers, the greatest empire makers are spirit and ale drinkers, the nation of greatest artists, centuries considered, raises wine grapes on every other patch of ground and pushes its vines to the edge of the hot lava of Vesuvius, and the greatest concentrators of industry, commerce and national power, the Germans, are wine and beer drinkers. Verbum sap, or in vino veritas, or lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine."

But why does the Tribune go to Russia, Turkey, France and Japan for illustrations when it can find them at home? Averages do not count in a matter of this kind; the test must be made with the individual. Can the Tribune select a group of drinkers and show that they are superior in refinement, in wisdom and in justice to a group of teetotallers? It can easily be shown that men once refined and wise and just have been degraded by drink; can the Tribune show where coarse natures have been refined, brutes purified and criminals reformed by the substitution of intoxicating liquors for water?

If the Tribune wants to discuss groups let it take our churches where the largest percentage of teetotallers is found and compare the standing of the church members with the standing of the saloon's customers. Will it say that total abstinence among church members is debasing and that the use of intoxicants by the patrons of the saloon is elevating?

Another comparison: Will the Tribune say that the women of the United States (who drink less on the average than the men) are coarser and more brutal because of their total abstinence, and that the men, who on the average drink more than the women, make themselves superior to the women by their indulgence in intoxicants?

He asks his readers to substitute speculation for dogmatism, but why substitute imagination for history? If he will read the life of Daniel he will find that he made a test and, by proving that wine was not necessary, won the right to exclude intoxicating liquor from his bill of fare. The verdict has stood unchallenged for twenty-five centuries.

No wonder the writer of the editorial began by saying "This is bound to be an unpopular editorial any way we put it"—that is the only evidence the editor gave that he was not himself under the influence of liquor when he wrote it. Possibly he had had just enough to unhinge his reason and put his pen at the dictation of his throat. It certainly was an appetite, not a brain or a heart, that was talking when he wrote this editorial.

W. J. BRYAN.

Far be it from us to rejoice over the condition of affairs, but it is not impertinent to point out that a lot of those fellows who justified robbery prices during the last few years by the sententious declaration that business is business have about reached the point where their business is not a business any longer.

It is not likely that submarine warfare will be suspended in time to keep the dissatisfied masses from sinking the Republican ship.

HIS CHILD



—The Detroit News.

THE EASY YOKE

The world is soon to have an opportunity to understand more clearly than it has before what Christ meant when he said "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Individuals have learned by experience how much easier Christ's yoke is than the yoke of the devil and how much lighter His burden, but now the world is about to throw off the devil's war yoke and learn the relief that is to be found in following the teachings of Christ and how easy is his yoke. The learning of the schools has been turned to the inventions of instruments of destruction, battleships, dreadnaughts, and super-dreadnaughts, bullets, and bursting shells, submarines, bombs dropping from air and poisonous gas, until civilization trembled on the brink of the bottomless pit. Now the world is to face about, repudiate its evil advisors, reduce its expenses, and take up the march toward a peace that will rest upon friendship and cooperation. The song of the angels at Bethlehem seems about to be realized if we may judge by the spirit that has animated the Arms Conference at Washington.

W. J. BRYAN.

PROHIBITION ENFORCEMENT IMPROVING

The enforcement of the Prohibition law is improving. Commissioner Haynes is weeding out the inefficient and unreliable officials, and public sentiment more and more strongly supports the law. The business men are learning that they can not encourage the violation of liquor laws without encouraging the violation of other laws. The Ten Commandments are of little value if exceptions are tolerated. The good citizen neither violates the law himself nor encourages violation by others. It is not a matter of opinion; it is a question of loyalty to the government.

HENRY WATTERSON

The country will learn with deep regret of the death of Henry Watterson. His great ability, his long experience, his picturesque style and his impressive and genial personality gave him a conspicuous place among the nation's journalists. He was a unique character. No one can fill his place. A multitude of admiring friends will share the sorrow that the illustrious editor's death has brought upon Mrs. Watterson, for so many years his companion and comrade.

W. J. BRYAN.

The Census Bureau announces that New Bedford, Mass., has the largest percentage of illiteracy of any American city having a population of one hundred thousand or more.

Please page Senator Lodge.

DISARMAMENT

The following was one of the leading planks of The Commoner's National Legislative Program, first published in the February, 1921, issue:

"The United States should immediately endeavor to assemble the representatives of the leading nations of the world in a sincere effort to bring about disarmament."

Republican Partizanship

The bill which attempts to give to federal courts jurisdiction over local lynching reflects no credit upon its partizan advocates. The purpose of the measure is to please the colored vote of the north but it will alienate more voters than it wins to the Republican party.

The race question is a very serious problem to deal with—too serious to be used for political purposes. It ought to be approached in an entirely different spirit. Lynchings in the south are not as numerous as they used to be and the lynching of the black men is by no means confined to the south. Race riots in northern cities ought to warn the Republican leaders of the danger of further inflaming race passion. The states that have to deal with the crimes that lead to lynching ought to be permitted to deal with the lynchings also. To lay greater emphasis upon the form of punishment than upon the character of the crime is apt to mislead those with whom the Republican politicians are attempting to curry favor.

Republicans who put the permanent welfare of their country above immediate party necessities will be slow to approve of this, the most distinctively partizan measure proposed during this generation.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE FOREIGN DEBTS

January 7, 1922.

The Editor, The Independent,
140 Nassau St.,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your favor enclosing advance copy of your editorial on "As we forgive our debtors." Responding to your request for an opinion I beg to say that I have for eighteen months been advocating the use of the debts due us for the purchase of world peace. I first presented the proposition at the Democratic National Convention in 1920 and have since continued to urge it wherever opportunity offered. I do not favor the cancellation of these debts unless the cancellation is accompanied by some provision for world disarmament. Unless the European nations are ready to turn away from war and begin the building of permanent peace upon friendship and cooperation, the cancellation of the debts might do more harm than good. In fixing the indemnities to be collected, the Allied Nations had in mind their indebtedness to the United States and expected the collection of the indemnities to assist in the payment of the debts. If the debts were cancelled without any re-adjustment of the indemnities, it would aggravate the situation rather than relieve it. If the Allied Nations will take the eleven billions that they owe us and so distribute it as to produce what Secretary Hughes has described as the "will to peace," we can well afford to cancel the debt but we cannot, in my judgment, afford to release the debt if the restored credit is to be used in getting ready for another war.

Very truly yours,

W. J. BRYAN.

IRISH FREE STATE

Both Great Britain and Ireland are to be congratulated on the establishment of the Irish Free State. It settles a dispute centuries old and will contribute toward the peace of the world. It is a compromise and, therefore, not satisfactory to either side, but nearly all progress comes by compromise. It is the best that could be done under the circumstances. It is unfortunate that DeValera could not join in advising ratification, but he will not be denied his share in the triumph that comes with the final realization of Ireland's hopes.

W. J. BRYAN.

LEAVE IT ALONE

An effort is being made to transfer the Forestry bureau to the Interior department. Better leave it where it is. The Secretary of Agriculture has less to look after and forestry reservations are closely connected with agricultural development. It is difficult to consider one without the other.

Disarmament on land seems to have struck a snag. Investigation may disclose the fact that the real snag is to be found in the fact that some of the European nations still regard war as a necessary part of civilization.