

The Watchman and Soutron.

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FRIENDLY NAVIES.

An interesting British view of the American plan for a larger navy is that of the London Morning Post, which says:

"The proposal of the United States government as announced by Secretary Daniels to build a more powerful navy should be entirely welcome to this country.

"When Secretary Daniels talks of a supreme American navy being necessary if the peace conference fails to agree on the limitation of armament, he is quite right. We would go further and say that if America will stand the expense, she would be well advised to keep a strong navy in any case.

"This country would be glad to see America relieving Great Britain of part of the heavy cost of insuring the safety of sea communications for the world; and whether that relief is afforded by the general limitation of armaments or the increased naval power of the western republic is comparatively immaterial.

This frank and friendly utterance puts British sea power in quite a new light from that in which most Americans have been wont to regard it in the past.

"The attitude of Germany toward the war," says one writer, "reminds us of the small boy who puts a tack on his grandfather's chair and then, when reprimanded for the result, says with an air of innocence and affection, 'Tack? What tack?'"

There are not so many fat Germans as formerly, according to some reports. Well, we understood that the course of exercise prescribed by the Allies in the last four years had thinned them a little.

The principal New York crops are so commonly supposed to be chorus girls and lobster palaces, it comes as something of a shock to hear that over \$800,000,000 worth of farm produce was raised in New York last year.

SOCIALIST "PRINCIPLES."

Victor Berger, former congressman from Milwaukee, convicted of violating the federal espionage act through conspiracy to obstruct the government's war program, declared in court:

"I have done no wrong. I have been living up to these principles for 37 years—those principles the jury has seen fit to condemn. I cannot account for the verdict."

Here we have another evidence, more striking than usual, of the strange blindness which seems to have come over so many Socialist leaders during the war.

Mr. Berger has repeatedly defended the sinking of the Lusitania. He regarded it as quite justifiable, apparently, for Germany not only to take up arms against her neighbors, but to assassinate helpless noncombatants when the German government happened to consider them as standing in the way of accomplishing its military purpose.

The absurd conflict of logic in such an attitude is evident. The curious thing about it is that Socialists, of all men, should have thus championed German aggression and violence. Needless to say, neither Victor Berger nor any other Socialist of any repute preached for a generation before the war, the right and justice of such acts as the invasion of Belgium and the sinking of the Lusitania.

Socialism made headway precisely because it preached a gospel of brotherhood, justice, peace and good will to men. It is one of the strangest facts

in political history that such a movement, in theory so idealistic, should have been suddenly perverted, in this and various other countries, to a practical championship of a German system of political and military aggression which is the diametrical opposite of what Socialism had always professed to represent. Socialism as a theoretical plan for reconstructing society still exists, and commands support among many thinking men as one possible solution for political and economic problems. But any intelligent non-Socialist must wonder how men holding such views as those of Victor Berger and other like-minded Americans can still call themselves Socialists.

THE CONQUERING PENNY.

The American people consumed, last year, 307,614,000 pennies. That is the number minted and thrown into circulation, to add to the quantity already circulating. The total, if there were any way of finding it out, would certainly be an imposing figure, inasmuch as no less than 1,000,000,000 pennies had been minted in the previous ten years, and most of them are probably still in use.

The fact that last year's production is three times the previous ten-year average shows what an important place the one-cent piece occupies in our present coinage. If the humble copper was scorned in pre-war years, and in the early years of the war, it is scorned no longer. Mounting prices have only increased the demand for it.

The principal cause of the greatly accelerated demand of late may have been the payment of the many small war taxes running into odd cents; but a still stronger influence has been the growing spirit of thrift, revealed in the fixing of odd prices for commodities and in the claiming of small change by many who used to scorn anything less than a nickel. Even on the Pacific Slope the penny has won recognition at last.

"The Soviet form of government is the ideal form, only men have to be angels to work it successfully," says one political economist. At the rate at which they are killing one another off in Russia there soon should be angels enough to turn the trick.

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"Don't spoil a good meal with a bad stomach," says an ad. That is all right; but it's better to get back to first principles, thus: "Don't spoil a good stomach with a bad meal."

Uncle Sam will soon be singing that good old song, "How dry I am!" And nobody will know how dry he is, because it will be beyond the power of human comprehension.

THE Y. M. C. A.

To the great mass of thinking people in this country, the attacks upon the service of the Y. M. C. A. abroad will be a matter of indignation and regret. That the Y. M. C. A. both here and overseas rendered a tremendous service to our boys is unquestionable.

Of course there were mistakes, and since the undertaking was a colossal one, the mistakes may loom up with proportionate bigness. But like every other institution in this country, it entered war service without opportunity for preparation, it had to learn as it worked and learn in many cases by its mistakes. The same thing is true of every other institution and individual in this country from president to plumber.

Undoubtedly the men in the army who suffered from Y. M. C. A. blunders were guilty of blunders themselves before they fully learned their soldier business. Yet who would judge our army by anything but its high standards and the success of its great majority in maintaining them? Before the Y. M. C. A. is adjudged guilty it is entitled to a fair hearing, to the testimony of all the thousands of boys who found home in its huts, help in its diversions, who have stories to tell that would thrill the heart of the courtesy, the bravery and the generosity of the Y. M. C. A. men with whom they came in contact. The confession of Bill Smith, whose feet it deterred from straying, should

be heard, as well as the indignant avowal of Bob Jones, that he needed no watching.

The real character of its problems, personal and financial, should be understood before decisions are made.

PRINCIPLES OF BOLSHEVISM.

People who have been trying, without much success, to learn precisely what Bolshevism stands for, may derive enlightenment from the statement of Dr. Oudendijk, Dutch minister in Petrograd. As interviewed by the London Times, he says:

"Translated into practice, the five points of Bolshevism really come to this: (1) High wages; (2) don't work; (3) take other people's property; (4) no punishment; (5) no taxation."

He speaks from long acquaintance and careful observation of the old regime and the new. He has known Russia for 30 years. And as a result of more than a year of Bolshevism, "never have the working classes of Russia suffered as they are suffering at the present moment. I have never seen or dreamed of the possibility of such corruption, tyranny and the absence of all semblance of freedom as there are in Russia at the present moment."

He concludes that the future of Russia is hopeless. But surely there is hope even in the extremity of such an evil situation. A social and political disease when it becomes bad enough tends to cure itself. Surely the Russian masses will understand, sooner or later, the origin of the evils they suffer, and repudiate the system which is responsible before they themselves are utterly destroyed. If not, we are tempted to lose our faith not merely in human nature but in that common sense which is supposed to be the heritage of all races.

BOYS AND REVOLVERS.

A bill has been introduced in congress to prohibit the shipment of explosives and firearms to minors. It is meant primarily to prevent the purchase of revolvers from mail-order houses by lads likely to misuse them.

This is a step in the right direction. Such legislation, if it proves legal and practicable, should be supplemented by State and municipal laws calculated to keep certain types of firearms out of the hands of minors and also of adults who have no business with them.

Rifles and shotguns for legitimate hunting or target-shooting are one thing; revolvers are quite another thing. It may be granted that even boys, especially in rural districts, may properly possess the former if they have skill and sense enough to use them properly. But the time has passed, in almost every American community, when it is necessary for anybody, young or old, with the exception of police authorities, to carry or own pocket firearms.

Most of the crimes of violence nowadays are perpetrated by youths with revolvers. Most of the cases of accidental shooting are due to having loaded revolvers in the house. It is time to class revolvers with whiskey and deadly drugs, and restrict their distribution.

GOOD GIVING.

Congress is mostly reported by adverse criticism, and justly so, yet occasionally something gets done which can be approved by the American citizen without reference to party or politics.

Of this nature is the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, by which the care of our maimed and disabled soldiers becomes a federal undertaking. A federal board is given charge of the details, with a fund of \$2,000,000 and power to cooperate with the Army and

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D. H. TOMPKINS DEAD.

Former Secretary of State Passes Away. Columbia, Jan. 16.—Daniel Holland Tompkins of Ninety-Six, former secretary of State and private secretary of Gov. Tillman, died at the Columbia Hospital yesterday morning at 9.30 o'clock.

NORTH GERMAN REPUBLIC.

Brunswick Takes the Lead to Form New State. Copenhagen, Jan. 15.—The government of Brunswick has issued a proclamation proposing the formation of central "North German Federal Republic," with preliminary constitutions resembling Switzerland.

The combination of speculators, financiers and cotton manufacturers has succeeded in beating down the price of cotton in the face of the shortest crop in years. What has been done to cotton shows the power of co-operation and money and should teach the farmers a lesson. They could win the fight by cooperation in holding the cotton that a naked world needs and that the mills must have to run until the next crop is made.

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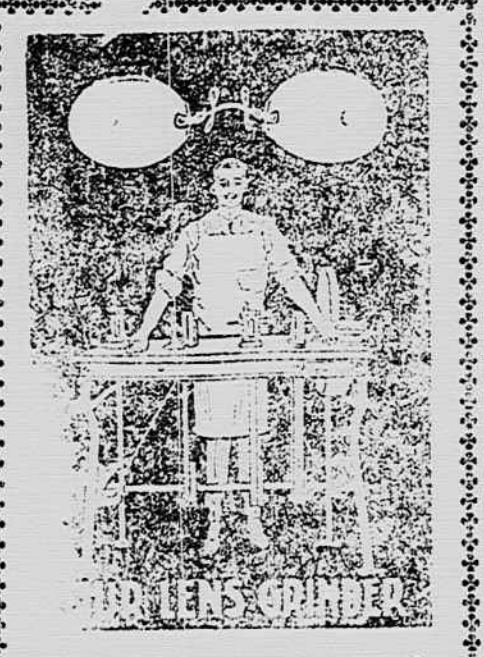
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