

THE BLAST

LYDIA GIBSON

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No. 12



THE "DIGNITY" OF LABOR

To Hell With the Government

THREE successive issues of THE BLAST have been vetoed by the Post Office censorship. The determination of the Washington authorities to suppress this publication is obvious. But the high muck-a-mucks of the government are too cowardly and hypocritical to inform us to that effect, honestly and frankly. That would not befit a "proud government." By the way, who was it that said that a government always represents the lowest social level? Evidently he knew. The methods used by the Federal government, the chambermaid of the money paunches, to suppress THE BLAST are beneath contempt. We were first informed by the local postal officials that issues 9 and 10 of our paper were prohibited to pass through the mails, by order from Washington. When No. 11 of THE BLAST appeared, it was again held up and we were informed that the Postmaster General had wired a SPECIAL ORDER to hold up EVERY issue of THE BLAST, and that our paper would not be permitted to pass through the mails until a copy of each issue had been forwarded to Washington, there to be passed upon its "fitness" to be circulated in this good and pious country. Accordingly, the first assistant Postmaster of this city, William Burke, informed us that he immediately forwarded a copy of No. 11 to Washington, and that he requested a reply by wire.

It would take five days, we were told, to receive the decision of the Postmaster General. At the end of that time we again got in touch with Mr. Burke. He expressed surprise that no reply had been received from Washington and promised to look into the matter. We waited a few more days and again sought information from the local postal officials. No reply had been received, we were informed, but Mr. Burke assured us that he would immediately telegraph to Washington to request the decision by wire.

We waited that day, and the next, and the next. Our repeated inquiries elicited no further information, except that a reply was being awaited. Our own urgent demand upon the Postmaster General to show cause why THE BLAST was being held up, and how long the embargo was to continue (as well as numerous other inquiries and protests from our friends and several radical organizations), remained unanswered. Meanwhile the paper was not permitted to pass through the San Francisco post-office.

We waited another week, two weeks. Still no reply from Washington. In the absence of further instructions, the local postal authorities continued to apply the previous order excluding THE BLAST from the mails.

THE BLAST must have hit 'em pretty hard to make them so mad. But we are tired of awaiting the pleasure of His Majesty, Postmaster General Burleson, and his Comstockian censorship. Who the hell is Burleson, anyhow, to presume to dictate what is or is not "fit" to be read by the American public? As our friends, Douglas B. and Annie Bruce Carr Sterrett, of Washington, D. C., so well put it in their protest to Burleson, "The Post Office

was supposed to be mechanically efficient, and nothing beyond that. That it should now dictate on ethical questions is as absurd as if the railroads and street car companies were legally empowered to refuse to accept passengers whose ideas they did not like."

To the filthy mind, all things are filthy. The Postmaster General is evidently suffering from this Comstockian disease, but we have reason to believe that the suppression of THE BLAST is not so much due to the unfortunate mental condition of Burleson, as to the pressure from other quarters that have found our frank criticism "too strong" for their digestion, and very unpalatable to the powers that be. But whatever the reason or forces behind the suppression of THE BLAST, we are tired of the whole pestiferous gang and of the postal tyranny. We hereby declare our independence of the Autocrat of the Post Office and of his governmental and plutocratic chiefs. We are heartily sick of the whole canaille. We know that THE BLAST is a thorn in their side. We defy them to do their worst. We will continue to publish THE BLAST as long as we can find friends to support our resistance to this postal despotism. Rebels and liberty lovers, it is up to you to show if you are really sincere in your protestations. Help us to keep up THE BLAST. There is no greater menace to progress than the suppression of the radical press.

And let the overlords and their hirelings be warned that their craven and sneaky methods of stifling unpopular thought will but serve to drive our propaganda underground, *sub rosa*—as in Russia, for instance—and force it to assume more aggressive expression. In vain is the hope of the American governmental Black Hundred to suppress the Spirit of Revolt. In vain! For

Ye fools! Do I not live where ye have tried to pierce
in vain?
Rests not a nook for me to dwell in every heart and
every brain?
In every workshop breeding woe? in every hut that
harbors grief?
Ha! Am I not the Breath of Life, that pants and
struggles for relief?

'Tis therefore I will be—and lead the people yet
your hosts to meet,
And on your necks, your heads, your crowns, will
plant my strong, resistless feet!
It is no boast—it is no threat—thus history's iron law
decrees—
The day grows hot, O Babylon! 'Tis cool beneath thy
willow trees!

ALEXANDER BERKMAN

The First of May and the General Strike

THE MAY IDEA—in the relation of its revolutionary spirit to Labor struggles—first manifested itself in the economic battles of the Knights of Labor. The final theoretical aim of that organization—founded by Uriah S. Stephens and fellow workers in 1869, and bearing a pronounced radical character in the beginning of its history—was the emancipation of the working classes by means of direct economic action. Its first practical demand was the eight-hour day, and agitation to that end was an unusually strenuous one. Several strikes of the Knights of Labor were practically General Strikes. The various economic battles of that period, supported by the American Federation of Labor during its young days, culminated, on the first of May, 1886, in a great strike, which gradually assumed almost national proportions. The workingmen of a number of large cities, especially those of Chicago, ceased their work on that day and proclaimed a strike in favor of the eight-hour day. They thus served notice on their plutocratic masters that henceforth they will not be submissively exploited by the unlimited greed of the capitalists, who had appropriated the means of production created by many generations of Labor, thus usurping the position of masters—the good masters who kindly leave the workers the alternative of either prostituting their brawn or dying with their families of starvation.

The manly attitude of Labor in 1886 supported the resolution passed by the Labor Congress held at St. Louis, one year previously. Great demonstrations of a pronounced social revolutionary character took place all over the country, culminating in the strike of two hundred thousand workingmen, the majority of whom were successful in winning the eight-hour day.

But great principles of historic significance never triumph without a blood baptism. Such was also the case in 1886. The determination of the workingmen to decide for themselves how much of their time they were willing to sell to the purchasers of labor was looked upon by the exploiters as the height of assumption, and condemned accordingly. Individual capitalists, though unwilling, were nevertheless forced to submit to the demands of organized Labor; perceiving, however, in the self-respecting attitude of the working masses a peril threatening the very foundation of the capitalistic economic system, they thirsted for revenge. Nothing less would satisfy the cannibalistic master but human sacrifices: the most devoted and advanced representatives of the movement—Parsons, Spies, Engel, Fischer and Lingg—were the victims.

The names of our murdered brothers, sacrificed to propitiate an enraged Moloch, will always remain indivisibly linked with the idea of the First of May. Let it forever be remembered by the workers that it was the Anarchists who bore the brunt of those economic battles.

In vain, however, did organized capital hope to strangle the Labor movement on the scaffold. A bitter disappointment awaited the exploiters. True, the movement suffered an eclipse, but only a temporary one. Quickly rallying its forces, it grew with renewed vigor and energy.

In December, 1888, the American Federation of Labor decided to make another attempt to win the eight-hour day, and again by means of direct economic action. The strike was to be initiated by a gigantic demonstration on the First of May, 1890.

THE BLAST

Three

In the meantime there assembled at Paris (1889) an International Labor Congress. A resolution was offered to join the demonstration, and the day which three years previously initiated the eight-hour movement, became the slogan of the international proletariat, awakened to the realization of the revolutionary character of its final emancipation. Chicago was to serve as an example.

Unfortunately, however, the direction was not followed. The majority of the congress consisting of political parliamentarists, believers in indirect action, they purposely ignored the essential import of the First of May, so dearly bought on the battlefield; they decided that henceforth the First of May was to be "consecrated to the dignity of Labor," thus perverting the revolutionary significance of the great day into a mere appeal to the powers that be to grant the favor of an eight-hour day. By these means the parliamentarists degraded the noble meaning of the historic day.

The First of May "consecrated to the dignity of labor!" As if slavery could be dignified by anything save revolutionary action. As long as Labor remains mere prostitution, selling its producing power for money, and as long as the majority of mankind are excluded from the blessings of civilization, the First of May must remain the revolutionary battle cry of Labor's economic emancipation.

The effect of the Paris resolution soon manifested itself: the revolutionary energy of the masses became dormant; the wage slaves limited their activity to mere appeals to their masters for alleviation and to political action, either independent of, or in fusion with, middle-class parties. They quietly suffered their representatives in Parliament and Congress to defend and strengthen their enemy, the government. They remained passive while their alleged leaders made deals with the exploiters, hobbled with the bourgeois, and were banqueted by the exploiters, while oppression steadily grew in proportion and intensity, and all attempts of the wage slaves to throw off their yoke were suppressed in the most merciless manner.

But the disastrous defeats suffered by Labor on the field of parliamentarism and pure-and-simple unionism are radically changing the situation. Today we stand on the threshold of a new era in the emancipation of Labor: the dissatisfaction with the former tactics is constantly growing, and the demand is being voiced for the most effective weapon at the command of Labor—the General Strike.

It is quite explicable that the more progressive workingmen of the world should hail with enthusiasm the idea of the General

Strike. The latter is the truest reflex of the crisis of economic contrasts and the most decisive expression of the intelligent dissatisfaction of the proletariat.

Bitter experience is gradually forcing upon organized Labor the realization that it is difficult, if not impossible, for isolated unions and trades to successfully wage war against organized capital; for capital is organized, into national as well as international bodies, cooperating in their exploitation and oppression of Labor. To be successful, therefore, modern strikes must constantly assume larger proportions, involving the solidaric cooperation of all the branches of an affected industry—an idea gradually gaining recognition in the trades unions. This explains the occurrence of sympathetic strikes, in which men in related industries cease work in brotherly cooperation with their striking brothers—evidences of solidaric solidarity so terrifying to the capitalistic class.

Solidaric strikes do not represent the battle of an isolated union or trade with an individual capitalist or group of capitalists. They are the war of the proletariat class with its organized enemy, the capitalist regime. The solidaric strike is the prologue of the General Strike.

The modern worker has ceased to be the slave of the individual capitalist; today, the capitalist class is his master. However great his occasional victories on the economic field, he still remains a wage slave. It is, therefore, not sufficient for Labor unions to strive to merely lessen the pressure of the capitalistic heel; progressive workingmen's organizations can have but one worthy object—to achieve their full economic stature by complete emancipation from wage slavery.

That is the true mission of Labor unions. They bear the germ of a potential social revolution; aye, more—they are the factors that will fashion the system of production and distribution in the coming free society.

The great giant of Labor must cease begging the master for a few more crumbs off the board of the wealthy. The supplicating posture of Labor, so strikingly illustrated in this issue by our gifted young artist Floyd Wilson, is the great shame and at the same time the terrible tragedy of Labor. May this giant soon learn to straighten his back, to look his masters straight in the face and realize the invincible economic power of united Labor to accomplish its great historic mission of abolishing wage slavery.

Then, only then, will the Dignity of Labor be vindicated and the true spirit and significance of the First of May translated into the actual emancipation of the working masses.

The Song of the Wage Slave

Ernest Jones

THE land it is the landlord's,
The trader's is the sea,
The ore the usurer's coffer fills—
But what remains for me?
The engine whirls for master's craft,
The steel shines to defend,
With Labor's arms, what Labor raised,
For Labor's foe to spend.
The camp, the pulpit, and the Law
For rich men's sons are free;
Theirs, theirs the learning, art, and arms—
But what remains for me?

*The coming hope, the future day,
When wrong to right shall bow,
And hearts that have the courage, man,
To make that future NOW.*

We bear the wrong in silence,
We store it in our brain;
They think us dull, they think us dead,
But we shall rise again:
A trumpet through the lands shall ring;
A heaving through the mass;
A trampling through their palaces
Until they break like glass:
We'll cease to weep by cherished graves,
From lonely homes we'll flee;
And still, as rolls our million march,
Its watchword brave shall be—

*The coming hope, the future day,
When wrong to right shall bow,
And hearts that have the courage, man,
To make that future NOW.*

A Voice of Protest

Alexander Berkman,
San Francisco.

In reference to the suppression of your revolutionary paper, *THE BLAST*, we have some views to air. We have done so by writing to "the powers that be" regarding same.

We are living in an age of reason; and the theories of evolution and revolution have kept pace with time.

Prohibition of the use of the mails, as well as the suppression of freedom of thought and speech, proves conclusively to the workers of this land that they are living under the yoke of capitalism.

History and its traditions teach us that the struggle of the workers cannot be suppressed even by bloodshed.

From time immemorial the spirit of the toilers has not been trampled under without protest from all fair minded and intelligent people.

We, the workers of the world, ask not for favors. "Let all consult for all."

Yours for freedom of thought and speech,

Local 439, I. W. W.,

Box 485, Brawley, Cal.

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Reflections

The Revolt in Ireland

REBELLION, individual or collective, is always good and justified. It is an indication that the spirit of resistance has not entirely been stifled. A very encouraging sign, for resistance to injustice and oppression is the cornerstone of true progress. Furthermore, rebellion is good practice. It strengthens the courage of the people and develops their defiance of authority and law. If successful, it imbues the rebels with greater confidence in the power of their will, as opposed to that of their masters and rulers: it tends to create more rebellion. If not successful, nothing is lost. For it is better and nobler to die on the barricades fighting the tyrant and his minions than to be killed in the factory slaving for the master.

Therefore I welcome the uprising in Ireland. Not that the Irish rebels really demand Land and Liberty, which alone spells freedom for the individual and well-being for the community. No. The present revolution in Ireland is of a Nationalist character. It demands "national independence," which is by no means synonymous with the liberty of the people, individually or collectively. National independence for Ireland, as for any other people, merely means substituting your "own" masters for those imposed on you. Nominally there is a difference; in reality there is none. The club of an Irish Republican policeman upon a Dublin citizen's head will hurt no less than the night stick of the English Bobby. It is not worth while shedding one's blood for a mere change of masters: that is, not worth while for a social revolutionist, for one who has looked *behind* the republican and democratic scenery and seen the same Master and Servant play going on, whatever the flag-rag sign on the billboards.

But the Irish Nationalist does not yet realize this. Therefore I'd rather see him rebel against England than remain passively submissive. But whether the uprising of Ireland is successful or not, the Irish people must learn sooner or later that their real struggle is not against England and its people, but against the lords of Land and Life who have enslaved the people of Great Britain no less than the Sons of Erin.

They will further have to learn that National independence is no cure for agrarian and industrial slavery, but that the salvation of the Irish people is to be found only in

making common cause with the disinherited of all other countries, in a social revolution against the Universal Plunderbund whatever its national composition.

A Premium on Murder

TALK about the blessings of civilization! If absolute perversion of the human heart and mind constitutes progress, we have surely attained its apex. Apparently sane people, preachers and writers, are now strenuously championing the great revelation that a soldier killed in battle goes directly to Heaven, no matter how sinful his past.

They assure us that God will damn to eternal torture the man who, perhaps in the heat of passion, took the life of a fellow creature. But He will reward with extra generosity him who has systematically and with all due premeditation murdered great numbers of God's children.

This setting of a Christian premium on wholesale slaughter comes rather late in the day. The Mohammedans have beat them to it several centuries ago. But no monstrosity is too big for the good Christian to swallow. Behold the *greater* miracle of our modern civilization: Jonah swallowing the whale.

Direct Action

IT IS refreshing in these days of cowardly submission and fear for one's precious skin to find Emma Goldman refusing, on principle, to pay a fine and going to prison instead. She was sentenced to fifteen days in the Blackwell's Island Workhouse, but conditions on the Island are so rotten that the authorities did not dare send her there. I understand that Commissioner Lewis, of New York, said, "She is an intelligent woman and the conditions on the island are such, she would expose them after her release." As a result, Comrade Goldman is serving her sentence in Queen's County Jail, Long Island, presumably the cleanest prison that could be found for Emma Goldman.

The comparatively light sentence in this case and the recent dismissal of the Federal charges against Margaret Sanger are no doubt due to the pressure of public sentiment that is awakening to the need of Birth Control information. But neither of those cases really affects the law on the Federal and State statute books. The way to make the law inoperative is to *continue breaking it*. We are therefore glad to hear that at the monster Carnegie Hall mass-meeting arranged to greet the release of Comrade Goldman, on May 5th, a number of women are prepared to publicly and openly distribute the forbidden Birth Control leaflets, as we have recently done in San Francisco.

We commend this action to the women of other cities.

Speaking of breaking the law willfully and consciously, our readers will be interested in a bit of news that has been totally suppressed by the press as well as by the Federal government. On the very day of Emma Goldman's trial in New York, presiding Judge O'Keefe received a *special delivery letter* from San Francisco. The letter contained a very strongly-worded protest against the prosecution of Emma Goldman. It explained at length why and wherefore intelligent women favor Birth Control. As an

evidence of good faith and determination, a copy of the English leaflet describing methods of Birth Control (recently published and distributed in San Francisco) together with a copy of the Italian translation was enclosed in the letter to Judge O'Keefe. FORTY women of San Francisco signed the protest, and thus made themselves legally liable to a term of five years in the penitentiary for sending the forbidden matter through the mails.

THE BLAST was suppressed for merely referring to that pamphlet. But the government dare not take action in the case of the women who actually sent the prohibited pamphlet by mail. It would never do to bring to trial *forty American women*—and the government quietly put its yellow tail between its legs.

Nay, more: they suppressed all information about it in the press, for the country would hold its sides with laughter when it learned that these San Francisco women actually made the Post Office take special pains in delivering to Judge O'Keefe, *quickly and safely, the pamphlet that must not pass through the mails.*

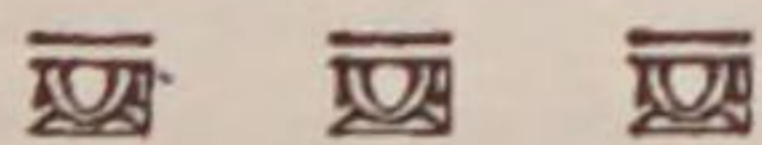
Ye gods, how Olympus must have roared.

David Caplan

IN REPLY to the numerous inquiries concerning the developments in David Caplan's case, I wish to say the following:

In the article, "David Caplan," in No. 10 of THE BLAST, I wrote that Caplan had finally decided—as I then believed—to have a revolutionary trial, and that for that purpose he had secured the services of Jacob Margolis, of Pittsburgh. Since those lines were written, the situation has changed. Caplan and Margolis could not agree upon the line of defense, and Margolis resigned and returned to Pittsburgh. The case has since been conducted by Nathan Coghlan and Edwin McKenzie, attorneys in the trial of Mathew Schmidt.

It is understood, of course, that every one has the exclusive right to decide on what lines his trial is to be conducted. Caplan has placed his fate in the hands of Coghlan, as his chief counsel—a lawyer without either sympathy for, or understanding of, the revolutionary labor movement. I regret the matter deeply and extend to David Caplan my sympathy.



IT is important to inquire whether it is not in the nature of uncontrolled power always to abuse itself. For my part, I have no doubt of it, and should as soon see the power that could arrest a stone in falling proceed from the stone itself as to trust force within any defined limits. I should like to be shown a country where slavery has been abolished by the voluntary action of the masters.

WAR is to kill the people and waste the land. Then settle around a table what could have been settled before.

HAVE two civilized peoples ever fought each other? If so, when? Name two peoples who, let alone by kings, dynasties, aristocracies and plutocracies ever fought each other. What did they have to fight for?

All Armor Plate—No Brains

B. C. Federationist

THE anti-preparedness movement has adopted a rather novel and effective method of putting a spoke in the wheel of the armor plate and munition boosters who are trying to coax, bully and frighten Uncle Sam into a huge military and naval "preparedness" obsession. They have built a huge model of the extinct "armored dinosaur," about fifteen feet in length and otherwise in proportion. This is mounted upon a truck and drawn through the streets, bearing upon one side the legend: "All armor plate—no brains," and upon the other, "This animal believed in preparedness; he is now extinct." It seems that this ancient dinosaur had no more intelligent way of overcoming the obstacles that confronted him along the pathway of his existence than that of continually putting on more armor in order to soften the effect of the bumps and jolts that he met with along the route. In consequence of this, he, in time, developed a body larger in proportion to the size of his brain than any other animal ever known, and became so weighted down with armor that he sank to extinction in the marsh lands of that age. His policy of life was truly the militaristic one of preparing to withstand the attack, instead of discovering and removing the cause which is responsible for it.

Possibly the Labor world might draw a valuable lesson from the life history of the dinosaur. For instance, let us suppose that the working class, or any section thereof, should refuse to extend its efforts beyond the mere setting up of defenses against the encroachments of capital upon the wages, working hours and other conditions of employment. This would be, in fact, equivalent to the continual addition of armor in order to soften the continually increasing blows. It would be following the route traveled by the dinosaur. By the same token it would result in extinction in the quagmire of oblivion. "All armor plate—no brains" would be the epitaph upon its tombstone. It may be that no section of the working class would ever follow so stupid a course. Then again it might be possible. We never can be quite sure as to what particular route will be taken by those whose horizon never extends beyond their jobs and whose ambitions never rise above a regular ration, of proportions most modest, indeed.

Once upon a time—well, let it go at that. It is a good story, and a true one, withal, because all true stories begin that way. It will be told at another time and many will marvel at the strange resemblance between the tale therein unfolded and the tale of the dinosaur's perambulations adown the boulevard of history. In the meantime let every workingman and woman set to work to study and understand the nature of that thing called capital that today rules the world, and against whose blows, encroachments and assaults the working class is forever trying to defend itself by adding to its armor plate. Perhaps the exercise of its brain power will disclose to the working class a more intelligent and effective means of escaping from the tyranny of capital than that of taking on scales of armor like a dinosaur.

The Basis of Modern Society

PRESENT society is based upon police, spies, and informers; the magistracy, the army, journalism, and cavil—deeply rooted and fatal elements—and I fear that their gangrene has so far eaten into the human mind, manners and customs that it will take a long time to eradicate it, for the police, spies and informers produce the abuse of confidence, calumny, denunciation, blackmail, suspicion and treachery.

The magistracy produces quarreling, suspicion, accusation, recrimination and base cowardice.

The army produces brutality, vanity, folly, rapine, barbarity, brigandage and assassination.

Journalism produces lying, jealousy, slander and defamation.

Courts of law produce equivocation, chicanery, insinuation, insincerity, double-dealing and dishonor.

So long as the people believe that they can obtain any benefit whatever by upholding these half-dozen demoralizing institutions, society will continue to be treacherous, cowardly, hypocritical, lying and barbarous.

A Case In Point

Alden Ward

THERE is probably no name more hated by American Labor than that of William J. Burns, the "hero" of the Los Angeles *Times* investigation, the man who brought "the dynamiters" to trial, the man who more than any other creature has had to do with the imprisonment of the McNamara brothers and Mathew Schmidt.

In another age, in another era, William J. Burns would be justly considered a criminal of the most dangerous sort. In our complex "civilization" he is lauded by press, pulpit and "public" as a great hero and scientist, a friend of "law and order." Still there are many who see William J. Burns as he really is. And hate him as a loathsome snake, fit only to be crushed beneath an iron heel.

But so far Burns has "gotten away with it." He is as yet unhung, and it is probable that he will continue to prosper and finally "pass away at his residence," a highly respected citizen.

In the meantime it is interesting to note that his friends and co-workers are getting into difficulties. Ever hear of Guy Biddinger? Well, he was once first lieutenant to William J. At this writing Governor Dunn of Illinois is wanting to see him on 51 charges. As the *New York Tribune* puts it: "He is wanted to face the ghost of an accusing past."

Biddinger was once a police sergeant in Chicago. Now he lives in New York, due to his association with the Val O'Farrell Detective Agency. It is from that city that Biddinger must go to call on Governor Dunn, and it is said to be practically decided that he will remain a guest of the State of Illinois for some time to come.

Among the reasons for Biddinger's trip to the Windy City are "an amazing series of crimes alleged to have been committed by Biddinger while a powerful member of the Chicago Police force," larceny, bribery, extortion, "assessment of graft and selling to prisoners their escapes." An interesting collection, indeed, with bail fixed at \$80,000.

Let us remember that a man is known by the company he keeps, and that Biddinger and Burns were shoulder to shoulder during the period when Biddinger was achieving his present fame. It is in such hands as these that lies the fate of Labor's prisoners of war.

Incontestable Rights

A GENEALOGIST sets forth to a prince that he is descended in a direct line from a count, whose kindred, three or four hundred years ago, had made a family compact with a house, the memory of which is extinguished. That house had some distant claim to a province, the last proprietor of which died suddenly of apoplexy. The prince and his council instantly resolve that this province belongs to him of divine right. The province, which is some hundred miles from him, protests that it does not so much as know him; that it is not disposed to be governed by him; and, that, before prescribing laws for them, their consent at least is necessary. These allegations do not so much as reach the prince's ears. It is insisted that his right is incontestable. He instantly picks up a multitude, who have nothing to do and nothing to lose; clothes them with coarse blue cloth; puts on them hats bound with coarse white worsted; makes them turn to the right and left; and thus marches away with them to glory.

People at no small distance, on hearing that fighting is going on, and that, if they would join, there are five or six cents a day for them, immediately divide into two bands, like reapers, and go and sell their services to the best bidder.

These multitudes furiously butcher one another, not only without having any concern in the quarrel, but without so much as knowing what it is about.

Sometimes five or six powers are engaged, three against three, two against four, sometimes even one against five, all equally detesting one another, and friends and foes by turns, agreeing only in one thing, to do all the mischief possible.

A Timely Thought

THERE is double the pathos for us in the death of one little New York waif from hunger than there is in a million deaths from famine in China. It is not that distance glosses over the terrible picture of the Chinese horror, or that a feeling of national kinship with the waif impresses us the more sincerely with his plight. It is merely that the mind is unable to grasp suffering in the gross. Suffering is so intimately personal a thing that it must be explained through the personal equation, if at all.

For this reason there is grave danger of the very magnitude of the war hiding from us its real tragedy. We shall appreciate little the crime of a thousand deaths at the front unless we understand that each single one of these meant the tortures of hell for the man who died, a time of anguish for the kinsfolk, years of struggle for the widow whom the State will put off with a miserable pittance and a long, empty youth for the boys and girls over whom no parental care ever again will be extended.

To be found at the beginning of this conflict were many more tales than now of the individual horrors of the war, but these have simmered down to wholesale reports of casualties and destruction. The simmering down is part and parcel of a well-defined effort to keep the real facts from those who next will be at the front. But we, upon whom devolves the task of maintaining peace at least in our little portion of the globe, must not suppose that the terror of the war has decreased one whit simply because it is not being told.

Soldiers of War

René Benjamin

WHILE continuing to contemplate his feet in the water, moving them about to keep them from freezing, he said again and continually: "God Almighty!"

Bullets. Shells. Explosions. Crumbling. The quarters fell drop by drop, grain by grain in the desperate sandglass of this new, stupifying, horrifying life wherein men with vague minds and sore bodies waited in the fog, the cold, the mud, for Fate to show herself more compassionate. Confused images of home passed beneath their brows, but their flesh was frozen and numb under their stiffened cloaks; dull, awkward thoughts unfurled themselves within their minds, for they did not realize exactly why they suffered, cursing, swearing, freezing, dying, from discipline, from habit, like everybody. . . .

A foggy winter's day is in itself something so fatal that when night falls man is scarcely stirred by it. Gaspard put his wet rug over his head; and Mousse, trembling with cold, huddled up against him. The trench is as restless at night time as during the day. The men sleep, snore and moan, but they shiver and seek for comfort from each other. Seated or crouching, bunched up, their knees tight, their elbows well in as though to withhold the vanishing warmth, they crowd up against their neighbors with beseeching shoulders: physical brotherhood, moving and the most sincere.

The dawn, when it returns to these shiverings, is a wan, far more sinister hour than all the shadows of the night. To die then is no surprise, for it seems as though death's very shroud had grazed your eyes. With an empty stomach and chattering teeth you receive the command to keep ready for the attack and to fix the bayonet in the barrel of your rifle. The little click of weapons sends a shiver down your back. The weapons shine mournfully in the bleak light. And if your name is Mousse you remain silent, reflecting that a leap out of the trench means, no doubt, a leap into the other world. But if your name is Gaspard you simply wipe the hoar-frost off your moustache with the back of your hand and repeat your eternal "God Almighty!"

It's a refrain.

The trench, when you think you are living your last moment, is hard to climb. Then comes the surprise at being no longer buried; you seem to have grown; and, clenching hold of your rifle, you march gravely, your eyes searching for bullets. They come suddenly, sweeping the whole breadth of the atmosphere, and some men fall without a cry; but their fall face-forwards is interrupted by the weapon which slips and digs itself into the ground with the soldier hanging on it, stopped, impaled in a strange, frightful posture—dead and almost standing, half-slaughtered, horrible to see, like all corpses which do not seem at rest.

Mousse, as soon as the bullets began to whistle, said again to Gaspard:

"Eh, you won't forget my letter?"

And almost at once shells began to burst all around them. The enemy was three hundred metres away; they saw him grow out of the earth in little lumps of men which joined one another to form a moving wall. So they were to meet, to strike, to walk into each other. In spite of the bullets the French closed up.

The German wall became denser and approached nearer. A few holes lit it up: fallen men. The pointed helmets were now distinguishable. No one fired, and on each side the men marched on without a cry, gravely. But when the two troops were within fifty metres of each other they could be seen, as though someone from above directed them, inclined the one towards the right, the other towards the left, in a turning movement which seemed to have been agreed upon, or, rather, in a mutual terror to come into contact without having seen each other. They had to feel and look at each other, have time to

hate; they were like dogs scenting and circling about one another before jumping at each other's throats.

But on this tragic calm new shells fell which tore, mutilated, and carried off pieces of the field and of the men.

One of them threw Gaspard and Mousse violently down.

When the thick, stinking cloud of its smoke had vanished, Gaspard, stupefied, endeavored to rise. He fell again, saying:

"Oh, my leg! . . . God Almighty!"

His right leg was broken beneath the knee and hung limply, the trouser being torn and blood-drenched; and he stared in front of him, dulled, while his companions hurried on, head foremost, shoulder high, without taking notice.

He called in hollow tones: "Mousse . . . where are you?"

A voice answered:

"He's there, on the ground, his head opened, like a pie."

Gaspard jumped: "What? Is he done for?"

The voice answered, grumblingly: "More than likely."

Gaspard had not the strength to say any more. He was losing blood, and saw it flow and form a black spot on the ground. French and German were murdering each other; savage cries were heard. A new shell whistled by, fell, burst; the field opened, then rose, and an enormous wave of earth crumbled over Mousse's body. He was seen no more. The German guns had killed him: they buried him. The shell had made a hideous wound: it had at once dug his grave, laid him in it, and covered him. He returned to Earth without the aid of human hand. The war had struck him and kept him. Rest, following on death, at once. No fingering of the corpse, no pockets emptied, no groans, no words. Private Mousse: missing.

Gaspard began to moan.

"Ah! ah! William . . . if I could get at that pig!"

Two stretcher-bearers approached who took him quickly, one under the back, the other by the arm-pits.

"Don't stiffen yourself. Allow yourself to be carried."

"Yes, yes; you're good coves; but if I held him, that pig!"

In spite of the shells bursting all around they rolled him on a wheeled stretcher as far as the road, where others undertook to take him to the ambulance. This had been fitted in a house in ruins, in a big cellar ripped open by shells. Gaspard, who was beginning to suffer and was suddenly raising himself on his stretcher, was laid down here.

Two surgeons approached. They said at once:

"My poor fellow, it'll have to be cut."

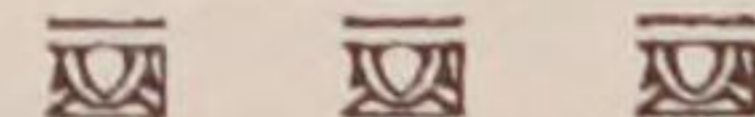
"Cut?" repeated Gaspard automatically.

"Yes, there," said the first surgeon.

"I don't think so: it had better be cut here," said the second surgeon. "Why there?" said the first. "Just as you like. Cut there," said the second. "No, no; I don't mind. We'll cut here," said the first surgeon.

Gaspard stared at them with his whole eyes, making an awful face and clenching his fists. Then he let his head drop and murmured once more: "God Almighty!"

His winter campaign has just lasted two-and-twenty hours.



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A. B.

Young Folks

WHAT is Government?
 Something that governs.
 But what is it, a machine?
 No, men. Just men with power.
 Has power of some men over all
 men ever been separated from ty-
 ranny?
 Never.
 Do the influential feel this tyranny?
 Never.
 Why not?
 Because they make government.
 Who are the influential?
 The rich.
 Who feel the tyranny?
 The poor.

OH, papa! See the ragged man!
 Yes, my son; that is a working
 man.
 What is a working man?
 A man who makes things; lots of
 things like clothes, houses, automobiles,
 furniture and good things to eat.
 Then why does he look so ragged?
 That's because he is a working man.
 But don't working men make lots of
 things? Why don't they have some-
 thing?
 That, my son, is a deep subject. The
 working man hasn't got anything but his
 labor power. The capitalists own the
 machines.
 Why, who made the machines, papa?
 The working men.
 Then why don't they own the ma-
 chines, papa?
 Because they don't want to.
 Why, papa? Wouldn't that make things
 better?
 Yes, but they seem to prefer to let the
 capitalists own the machines and the
 industries while they own nothing but
 the patches on their overalls.
 Isn't that foolish, papa? I'd imagine
 they wouldn't like to have the capitalists
 take everything when they themselves
 can have lots of nice things by produc-
 ing for themselves.
 Yes, my son, you seem to understand
 sociology much better than the working
 people.—Ex.

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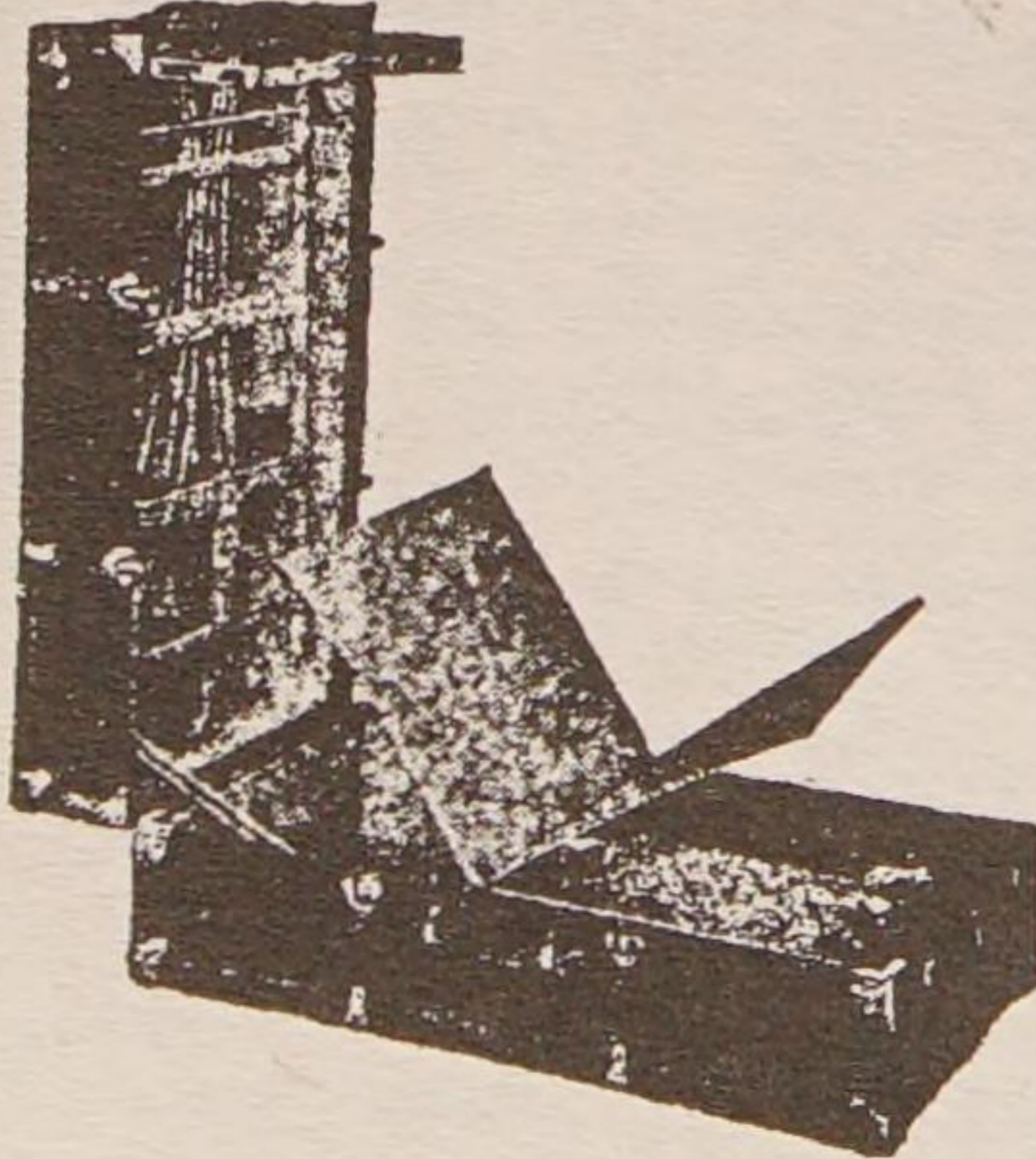
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