



Published every Thursday by  
**The Northman Publishing Co.**  
 Offices and Publishing House  
 Labbe Building Phone, Main 796  
 227½ Washington Street, Portland Oregon

Subscription Rates:  
 In the United States.....per year \$3.00  
 To Foreign Countries.....per year \$4.00  
 Single Copies 10 Cents

Advertising Rates on Application  
 Remittances may be made by U. S. Postal Money  
 order or Bank drafts.

H. J. LANGOE, Managing Editor  
 H. S. SWENSON, Editor

Portland, Oregon, Thursday, April 29, 1920

#### TO READERS AND PATRONS.

The publishers of The Northman are pleased to announce that Mr. H. S. Swenson, whose ability is well known to many, if not all, of our readers, will be associated with the publication in the capacity of editor, with Mr. H. J. Langoe as managing editor.

Mr. Swenson comes to The Northman with years of experience and practical knowledge in American newspaper and magazine work, and in the particular field which this publication enters, he is unhesitatingly pronounced, by those who know him and his work best, to be without question the most able and best equipped man in the country.

The managing editor of The Northman, during the years he has been editor of the Pacific Skandinavien, has been deeply interested in the idealism and strong American quality of Mr. Swenson's work, and on determining to adopt the American language immediately moved to enlist his co-operation. In this he has been successful, supplying an important link in the organization of the enterprise. With him comes also the strength of the constituency of the American Scandinavian, formerly published by him.

Thus equipped the work is taken up in perfect confidence that merited success is assured.

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#### LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE is properly the servant of thought and the vehicle of expression, though it is sometimes made the master and the driving force. It is in a perpetual flux and accumulation so that there is a slight but constant change.

The Pilgrim Fathers brought the English language to America but the lingual progress of three hundred years ought to be considered a sufficient course of naturalization to entitle it to be called AMERICAN.

As a matter of fact the language of America is no longer English. This discovery was made by the boys of the A. E. F. when they encountered placards in the business houses, hotels and restaurants of France setting forth:

ENGLISH SPOKEN  
 AMERICAN UNDERSTOOD

America's language is her own as well as her government. Why not call it AMERICAN instead of English.

While the American language has grown to be our own, and we are proud of

it, it has developed much the way of expression in its untrammelled growth that bears a resemblance to long, uncombed hair and bushy beard—picturesque perhaps, but decidedly suggestive of neglect and slovenliness. Boston, perhaps, should not be included in this statement.

It is true, also, that our language has run so strongly to slang and fanciful and capricious expressions that it is quite possible for the accomplished in this respect to carry on conversation without the use of any of the upwards of three hundred thousand words appearing in Mr. Webster's handbook, beyond now and then an article or conjunction. Ornamented with expletives after the style of some states, not excluding Oregon, it has the jibberish of an ourang outang "skinned to the finest frazzle on the fag-end of fareyouwell," which is going some, as they say.

However, with the feeling that America's language is her own and should be kept reasonably well groomed even in its every day labors, a current of public opinion against slovenly language ought to make itself felt. The boisterous Billy Sunday in "giving the devil a run for his money" probably has done more for the cause of dignified language than any other man in America.

By urging that care be exercised in language it is not meant that we should employ the lilly and heliotrope expressions, but plain, pleasant, distinct and straightforward American. We are, in fact, building a language as well as a community, a state and a nation, and it should be given that care and attention necessary to make it a language beautiful that it may fittingly serve as an embellishment of the better citizenship of the future.

#### OBJECT TO REGULATION.

FROM ALL SIDES come the wails of the foreign language press protesting against regulation in any degree and frantically contending that it should be left sweetly and completely alone to work in the ambush of its position as it inclines.

The Scandinavian section of the foreign language press served a good purpose when the tide of immigration was at the flood and for a full generation later, but the field has been steadily narrowing for twenty years past and once prosperous and influential publications have shrunk into pale, attenuated ghosts of their former selves. The pioneer newspapers were sound to the core. Their editors were men of virile thought and action—Americans from the time they set foot on American soil. In the trying days of the civil strife of the sixties they rendered this country great service through their appeals to people in the old home lands—appeals which were round-robin, going from hand to hand and home to home and which brought thousands of young men to America who immediately enlisted in the Union army. There was no discount on the Americanism of these newspaper pioneers.

While the charge of disloyalty may not be rightfully brought against the greater part of the foreign language press aside from the German, a decided change has crept into the spirit of many Scandinavian as well as other publications. They are full of notes which do not ring true—nothing glaring which the law might make ground for action, but things insidious, crafty, shifty and viperish, freely lending

itself to syndicated unAmerican propaganda as editorial matter.

This condition is not a natural development. The succeeding generation took to the language of the country and to its newspapers as well as other literature. Few aspired to literary careers in the language of their fathers and the result was that journalistic positions came to be filled by men with the cult of the old country upper crust—political and academic longhorns, who were unable to get along at home and yet whose material circumstances made it necessary for them to become industrious—came to this country and found that about the only thing their ideas of genteel occupation would permit them to do was perpetrating something in the literary field and they attached themselves to the press. They never have been Americans and never will be. They are dangerous because they contribute their bit to a decidedly dangerous whole.

No man of liberal thought will contend that the foreign language press should be eradicated, but it should be placed in the arc of the searchlight and rendered harmless. These disciples of a cult of iconoclastic criticism have exposed the yellow streak and cloven hoof of something that is not an attribute of constructive citizenship and roused suspicion against them. Regulatory measures will undoubtedly be passed by all the states where it is in the smallest degree a factor.

#### ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICAN PRESS

IF the daily press of Portland is indicative of the sentiment of the country on the subject of Americanization in its relation to the foreign language press, The Northman will be received with high favor from ocean to ocean as a force for progressive action. Under the caption, "United By One Language" the Morning Oregonian says:

If all editors of foreign language newspapers took the same stand as H. J. Langoe, hyphenism would not long survive in the United States and no long time would elapse before the foreign-born population would become thoroughly unified with the native-born. A single language, spoken and written by all the people, no matter what other languages some of them may at times use, is essential to national unity. That is the moral of the legend of Babel, in which the deity is said to have caused confusion of tongues in order to divide the people.

The purpose of the Oregon law requiring publication in parallel columns of an English translation of all matter which appears in a foreign language newspaper is clear and unassailable. It is to promote knowledge among the foreign-born of the language of the country to impress on them that they are expected to become in the full sense members of the nation, not strangers among the people; and in these days of alien revolutionary agitation as a precaution against spread of seditious matter under cover of a foreign language. Though the first purpose may somewhat increase the cost of publishing newspapers in foreign tongues, it will be approved by all immigrants who have in good faith taken the oath of citizenship, resolved to observe it in spirit as well as letter. Having become loyal Americans, they will readily support a law which has the effect of stamping out one form of alien revolutionary propaganda.

This is not to say that on coming to America immigrants should be cut off from all the memories of childhood and all the treasures of literature which are associated with their native tongue. These may be preserved, and the language may be spoken in the family and among friends of the same race, and children may be instructed in it at home, provided always that the language of the American people is that of the school and of daily intercourse with citizens in general. It should have first place, while the mother tongue should be chiefly for the home circle and should pass out with the next generation except as a matter of culture.