

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

An interesting feature of an exhibit in Washington to demonstrate the value of American dyes was a contrast between cloth colored with American and German dyes; in every case the result showed the superiority of the American product. "American dye-makers are now making dyes equal in every respect to those of German manufacture," declared Dr. Louis Matos, of the National Aniline and Chemical Co., who is in charge of the exhibit.

It costs \$2000 to train a man for a second lieutenancy, said Gen. P. C. Harris in a speech before representatives of the Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States in session at Washington recently. Upon the military schools of the country depends in a large measure the future American army, Gen. Harris said. Gen William Verbeck, of the Manlius, N. Y., military training school, was elected president of the association.

Word that all civil service employees who gave up their jobs to enter the army or navy will be reinstated in their old positions as soon as they are discharged was given out by the civil service commission. In recognition of the services rendered by Uncle Sam's employees who entered the military or naval service during the present war, the commission stated, special effort will be made "to assist these men in securing suitable positions in the government service rather than leave upon them the entire burden of finding suitable vacancies."

The Periodical Cicada, commonly known as the 17-year locust, will appear in large numbers in parts of the United States during the year 1919, the department of agriculture warns. The states particularly affected will be Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin and District of Columbia. The department predicts that the coming year will be one of the worst locust years on record.

The department of the interior, with the co-operation of the war and navy departments, is conducting a general investigation of the attitude of men in the service toward the plan of providing them with work and homes on reclaimed lands after their discharge. Booklets containing questions and answers which give a complete and concise description of the plan are being sent to the various camps of the army, navy and marine corps throughout the country. Post-card questionnaires are attached which men who are interested are asked to fill out and mail to the department.

Secretary Lane proposes to use these replies in presenting to congress a request for an initial appropriation of \$100,000,000 on which to begin the work together with other improvement projects.

The time is not far distant when flights by airplane from New York to London will be accomplished in 24 hours, in the opinion of Col. W. A. Bishop, a Canadian aviator who has 72 German planes to his credit. "I foresee the formation of an aerial merchant marine in America," he said. "I foresee the time when airships will cross each other's paths by night or by day in that vast expanse between the sky and the Atlantic. I foresee a time when the airplane industry in America will not be confined to making planes to shoot down Huns, but for passengers to travel to distant parts. I foresee the time, and soon, too, when it will take not more than 12 hours to reach London from Newfoundland by airplane. American aviators are endowed with incomparable fortitude. The country adapts itself to flying because of its wonderful climate. The distances are long and enhance the probability of superabundant interest in future flights."

THE THIMBLE

The thimble which is worn on one of the fingers in sewing and used for pushing the needle through the cloth is quite an ancient invention, though no-one knows just when or by whom the idea was first conceived. It is said that such a device was found in the ruins of Herculaneum and it is known that the Chinese made and used it long ago.

According to tradition, the thimble was invented in Europe by Nicholas van Benschoten, a resident of Amsterdam, in the 17th century. In 1693 John Lofting, a Dutchman who had established himself in London some years previously, obtained a patent on a thimble-making machine. He set up an establishment near London and with his machine turned out thimbles on a commercial scale, making them from various metals. His business in time came to be quite a profitable one.

Thimbles are usually made by machines from brass, steel, aluminum, gold, silver or some other metal. Ordinarily they are simply caps that fit over the end of the finger, with depressions stamped into the outer surface to engage the eye end of the needle and prevent its slipping. The more expensive ones of gold and silver, are often beautifully engraved and chased.

The English at first called the instrument a "thumb-bell" because it was worn on the thumb as sailors still wear the thimbles they use in sewing sails. Gradually the name was changed to "thumble," then it became "thumple" and finally "thimble."