

Crook County Journal

BY GUY LAPOLLETTE

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READJUSTMENT SOON IN ORDER

Naturally, a question will now arise among farmers and livestock producers as to what is going to happen to the markets for live stock. A readjustment period will be in order. What will it do to the prices for cattle, hogs and sheep? Will the ending of the war curtail the demands for meats to a point of piling up supplies and forcing lower prices? With the cessation of hostilities there will at once come into the consuming market a population of some seventy millions of people who have not had access to our markets during the continuance of the war—Germany will be a customer for our meats, and Germany will be hungry. The reconstruction period in devastated France will not likely be a period of production to the point of meeting consumptive demand. The allied powers that have won the war will not move all of their soldiers home for several years. It is likely that the United States will maintain an army of not less than a million troops in Europe for two or three, possibly more, years. In our own country the war demands of the past two years have been drawing heavily upon our industrial resources. We need manufactured goods and machinery of every description. We need more railroads and more railroad equipment—have needed these for several years. There may develop a period of nervousness and temporary depression, but there is nothing in the ending of the war that does not spell a big and active demand for all of the meats this country can produce for an indefinite future. There is no question that prices must eventually come down somewhat. All commodities have been selling too high for a long time. The man who remarked some months ago that "this country has gone price crazy" was perhaps not far wrong, but the return to price sanity will likely be slow. There is nothing in the conclusion of the war that threatens profitable prices for live stock—even the bureau of markets will absorb a little common live stock market sense eventually.—Livestock Reporter.

FOR OUR DEAD IN FRANCE

The following is taken from the Saturday Evening Post of recent date and is from the pen of Irvin S. Cobb, from notes made in France very recently. It is reprinted here because of the beauty of the idea embodied and to spread the message it contains to those who have lost some of their dear ones in the great cause. "I should say it was about half past seven when we rode in at the gates of the cemetery and made for the section which, by the French Government, had been set apart as a burial place for our people. For more than a year now, dating from the time I write this down, a good many thousands of Americans have been stationed in or near this port, and many, many times that number have passed through it. So, quite naturally, though it is hundreds of miles from any of the past or present battle fronts, we have had some deaths there from accident or disease. "We rounded a turn in the winding road, and there, before us, stretched the graves of our dead—soldiers, marines, and members of labor battalions; whites and blacks and yellow men; Jews and Gentiles, Catholics, Protestants and Mohammedans—for there were four followers of the faith of Islam taking their last sleep here in this consecrated ground—row upon row of them, each marked, except in the case of the Mohammedans, by a plain white cross bearing in black letters the name, the age, the rank and the date of death of him who was there at the foot of the cross. "Just beyond the topmost line of crosses stood the temporary wooden platform, dressed with bunting and flags, where an American Admiral and an American Brigadier, a group of French officers headed by a major general, a distinguished French official, and three chaplains representing three creeds, were to unite at noon in an hour of devotion and tribute to the memories of these three hundred and odd men of ours who had made the greatest of all human sacrifices. "But it was not the sight of rows of graves and the lines of crosses, or the peculiar devices appearing slantwise at head and foot of the four graves of the Mussulmans, or the brave play of colored bunting upon the sides and front of the platform

yonder which caught my attention. For at that hour the whole place was alive with French people—mostly women in black, but with a fair sprinkling of old men and children among them. All were busy at a certain task—and that task was decorating the graves of Americans. "As we left the car to walk through the plot I found myself taking off my cap; and I kept it off all the while I was there, for even before I had been told the full story of what went on there, I knew. I stood in the presence of a most high and holy thing, and so I went bareheaded, as I should have done in any sanctuary. "We walked all through this God's acre of ours, the general and I. Some of the women who labored therein were old and bent; some were young; but all of them wore black gowns. Some plainly had been drawn from the well-to-do and the wealthy elements of the resident population; more, though, were poor folk, and evidently a few were peasants, who, one guessed, lived in village or on farms near the city. "Here would be a grave that was heaped high with those designs of stiff, bright-hued immortelles which the French put upon the graves of their own dead. These are costly, too, but there were a great many of them. Here would be a grave that was marked with wreaths of simple field flowers or with the great fragrant white and pink roses which grow so luxuriantly on this coast. Here would be merely great sheaves of loose blossoms; there a grave upon which the flowers had been scattered broadcast until the whole mound was covered with the fragrant dew offering; and there, again, I saw graves where fingers patently unused to such employment had fashioned the long-stemmed roses into wreaths and crosses, and even into the form of shields. "Grass grew rich and lush upon the graves. White sea shells marked the sides of them and edged the narrow graveled walks between the rows. We came to two newly made graves. Their occupants had been buried there only a day or so before, as one might tell by the marks in the trodden turf, but a carpeting of sod cut from a lawn somewhere had been so skillfully pieced together upon these two mounds that the raw clods of clay beneath were quite covered up and hidden from sight; so now only the seams in the green coverlets distinguished these two from graves that were older by weeks or months. "Alongside every grave knelt a woman, alone, or else a woman with children aiding her as she disposed her showing of flowers and wreaths to the best advantage. Mainly the old men were putting the paths in order, raking the gravel down smoothly and straightening the borderings of shells. There were no soldiers among them; all were civilians, and for the most part humble appearing civilians, clad in shabby garments. But I marked two old gentlemen, wearing the great black neckerchiefs and the flowing black broadcloth coats of ceremonial days, who seemed as deeply intent as any in what to them must have been an unaccustomed labor. "Coming to each individual worker or each group of workers, the general would halt and formally salute in answer to the gently murmured greetings that constantly marked our passage through the burying ground. "When we had made the rounds we sat down upon the edge of the flag-dressed platform, and he proceeded to explain what I already had begun to reason out for myself—only, of course, I did not know, till he told me, how it had started. "It has been a good many months now," he said, "since we dug the first grave here. But on the day of the funeral a delegation of the most influential residents came to me to say that the people of the town desired to adopt our dead. I asked just what exactly was meant by this, and then the spokesman explained: "General," he said to me, "there is scarcely a family in this place where we live that has not given one or more of its members to die for France. In most cases these dead of ours sleep on battlefields far away from us, perhaps in unmarked and unknown graves. This is true of all parts of our country, but particularly is it true of this town, which is so remote from the scenes of actual fighting. "So, in the case of this brave American today is to be buried here among us, we ask that a French family shall be permitted formally to undertake the care of his grave, as though it were the grave of one of their own flesh and blood who has fallen, as he has fallen, for France and for freedom. In the case of each American who may hereafter be buried here we ask the same privilege. We promise you that so long as these Americans shall rest here in our land, their graves shall be our graves, and will be tended as we tend the graves of our own sons. "We desire that the name of each family that adopts a grave may be registered, so that should the adults die, the children of the next generation, as a sacred charge, may carry on the obligation which is now to be laid upon their parents and transmitted as a legacy to all who bear their name. We would make sure of this, so that, no matter how long your fallen braves rest in the soil of France, their graves shall not be as the neglected graves of strangers to us, but symbolically at least, may be as the graves of our dead sons. "We wish to do these things for more reasons than one: We wish to do them because thereby we may express in our own small, poor way the gratitude we feel to America. We wish to do them because of the thought that some stricken mother across the seas in America will perhaps feel a measure of comfort and consolation in knowing the grave of her boy shall always be made beautiful by the hands of a French woman whose home, also, has been desolated. And finally we wish to do them because we know it will bring peace to the hearts of Frenchwomen to feel they have a right to put French flowers upon the graves of your heroic dead, since they can never hope—the most of them—to perform that same office for theirs." The general cleared his voice which

had grown a bit husky. Then he continued: "So that was how the thing came about; but it doesn't altogether explain what you see happening here today. You see, the French have no day that exactly corresponds in its spiritual significance to our Decoration Day—our Memorial Day. All Souls' Day, which is religious rather than patriotic in its purport, is their nearest approach to it. But weeks ago, before the services contemplated to-day were even announced, the word somehow spread among the townspeople. To my own knowledge, some of these poor women have been denying themselves the actual necessities of life in order to be able to make as fine a showing for the graves they have adopted as any of the wealthier sponsors could make. "Don't think, though, that these graves are not properly kept at all times. Any day, at any hour, you can come here and you will find anywhere from ten to fifty women down on their knees smoothing the turf and freshening the flowers they constantly keep upon the graves. But I knew that at daylight this morning all or nearly all of them would be here, doing their work before the crowds began to arrive for the services, and I wanted you to see them at it in the hope that you might write something about the sight for our people at home to read. If it helps them to understand better what is in the hearts of the French you and I may count this time as having been well spent." He stood up, looking across the cemetery all bathed and burnished as it was in the soft, rich summer sunshine. "God!" he said under his breath. "How I am learning to love these people!" "So I have here set down the tale; and to it I must add a sequel: Decoration Day was months ago, and now I learn that the custom which originated in this coast town is spreading throughout the country; and that, in many villages and towns where Americans are buried, Frenchwomen whose sons or husbands or fathers or brothers have been killed, are taking over the care of the graves of Americans, bestowing upon them the same loving attention they would visit, if they could, upon the graves of their men-folk.

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