

Polk County Observer

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KNOWING HOW TO SWIM.

It is now suggested that many of the unfortunate victims of the Lusitania disaster might have been saved had they known how to swim. The sinking of the ship occurred so soon after the torpedo explosion that little time was given for preparation of any kind, and the final plunge apparently caught many who were not even equipped with life preservers. But the affair occurred in broad daylight, in a sea that was moderately smooth, and there was a large quantity of wreckage to support those who managed to get away from the ship and beyond the vortex of suction as she went down. The vessel's small boats picked up many such, and it was only a few hours before rescuing boats were on the scene searching for survivors.

It would appear, therefore, that the unduly large loss of life was in a measure due to the fact that only a small proportion of those aboard were able to swim and to make use of this art to help themselves. Even when buoyed up by a life preserver the person who cannot swim is under a serious disadvantage at such times, for he does not understand how to get away from the point of danger or to avoid being drawn under by struggling companions. And young Mr. Vanderbilt is probably one who sacrificed his life in this manner, as the dispatches explained he could not swim, and only a few moments before the vessel sank he gallantly surrendered his life preserver to a woman and started to find another for himself.

To those who do swim and who have in a measure mastered that natural horror of water which is characteristically a human weakness, it is always a mystery why others do not learn this most necessary art. This is the beginning of the summer vacation period, and doubtless before long the same old stories of overturned boats and bathing accidents will come from the resorts. Scores of men and women and children will be drowned this summer because of their inability to swim. Yet anybody can learn to swim, and no child's education should be considered satisfactory without instruction in this delightful and valuable art. Parents who are afraid to have their children learn to swim because of their own fear of the water should remember that there may come a time when the issue of life and death will hinge upon this very accomplishment.

YOUNG HUSSER.

The case of young Husser, who is forcibly detained by the Canadian government at Kingston because he is of German parentage, is indeed, a sad one. During incarceration his mother passed away, yet he was not permitted to be present at the performing of the last rites to gaze upon her beloved face before it was hidden forever from mortal sight. Regardless of the fact that his father before him is a naturalized citizen of the United States, and the further fact that he himself was American born, this young man is held upon the mere suspicion that he may sympathize with the Germans in the present struggle for supremacy, and might eventually become a participant in the war against the British if given freedom. Strong appeals made to the Canadian authorities have been without avail, and the probabilities are that this Polk county boy will remain in custody at Kingston for months to come.

To Husser's unwarranted retention is attributed the cause of his mother's untimely passing. After months of endeavor on the part of his friends to gain his liberty came the news that these efforts had been crowned with success, and that the son would hasten back to the old homestead where fond and loving parents anxiously awaited him. Upon receipt of this glad news the mother, a sufferer from heart trouble, was overcome with joy and almost immediately expired, her last thought being of the boy in whom her soul was wrapped. Imagine, if you please, the happiness that reunion would have brought to the mother who had spent long, sleepless nights in worrying over the safety of her offspring. Imagine, if you please, the grief of that imprisoned young man when informed that mother, the best friend he ever had, had suddenly departed this life without his being present to implant a loving kiss upon the pallid lips.

Such instances as this, to a busy and thoughtless world, mean but little in the every-day events of life, but when our own beloved ones are affected then it is different.

SALE OF WAR SUPPLIES.

Late reports covering the sale of war supplies indicate that this line of trade has reached proportions far greater than the general public has suspected. For the first six months of the war, for instance, more than \$400,000,000 worth of such supplies were purchased from American firms, and as the demand has actually increased during the past three months it now is estimated that by the time the war has

run a full year the aggregate of orders placed in this country will reach a billion dollars. The distribution of these purchases among various American industries is interesting. Contrary to a quite prevalent belief, not more than one-fourth of the sales made thus far represent arms, ammunition and explosives. On the other hand the bulk of the so-called war trade consists of goods which, though intended for the use of the armies, are not directly associated with slaughter. They consist chiefly of clothing, shoes, harness, automobiles, steel wire and great quantities of provisions, things that might be needed and used by a nation at peace. It is not altogether pleasant, however, to reflect that most of this material is intended to facilitate the grim business of human slaughter, and still less pleasant to remember that America is also furnishing large quantities of arms and ammunition for the same deadly business.

Of course there is an immense profit in arms and ammunition at present prices, and it is legally justifiable, and even inevitable, that we should fill orders for such merchandise, in protection of our own neutrality and our own future right to buy arms from neutral nations, should such a necessity arise. But just the same we do not view this particular item with the same satisfaction gained from other transactions. This business is bound to go on and to increase, however, so long as the war lasts. As the belligerents use up their own resources they become more and more dependent on us, and to refuse this trade or attempt to alter the rules would give serious offense. And if the war is prolonged and the seas remain reasonably open, it would seem that nothing can prevent this nation becoming the creditor nation of the world.

The conditions which have brought this situation about are such, however, that few serious minded Americans are inclined to gloat over it. On the other hand, there are many Americans who secretly feel it is a shame to take the money and thereby win commercial and financial advantage over the nations closed in a death-grapple. But we can hardly help ourselves. The belligerents are even more eager to buy our goods than we are to sell them. The situation is not of our making. We had nothing to do with starting the war, and have taken no mean or calculating advantage of it. And so we can tolerate with more or less equanimity the sneer of "blood money" from nations which have trampled, and are still trampling, on international law and human rights as old as civilization.

WHOSE BELL IS IT?

The Philadelphia newspapers are wrangling over the shipping of Liberty bell to the Panama exposition, and one publication characterizes it as a junketing trip for a bunch of politicians. Of course, this grumbling is intended wholly for local consumption, but it gives a bad impression to outsiders. As a matter of fact, it is only in keeping with the importance of the occasion that an official and distinguished guard should accompany the venerated relic across the continent, and the people of Philadelphia should be the last of all to criticize or make complaint concerning this detail. A certain degree of reluctance at parting temporarily with the sacred relic is appreciated, and some anxiety on account of the physical dangers incident to such a trip is quite reasonable; for some disastrous accident might occur, despite all precautions that could be taken to prevent it. Such an accident, however, would be only the possible risk taken on any railroad journey, for every safeguard which patriotic diligence can adopt will no doubt be thrown around the precious freight.

At the same time it is quite fitting and appropriate that the bell should have its guard of honor, and it is manifestly out of tune with the spirit of the occasion for the journey to be represented to the American people as a mere "joyride" undertaken mainly for the purpose of enabling a lot of politicians to get a free trip at public expense. Of course, the millions of people who will pay homage to the historic souvenir on its triumphal progress between the two oceans will not know of or care for the local or sectional narrowness which inspired the criticisms referred to. They will rightly regard the bell in its national significance as theirs quite as much as Philadelphia's, and they will appreciate the opportunity of looking upon the visible symbol of Americanism which has been revered for nearly a century and a half.

WALL STREET AND WAR.

Wall street, we are told, is exhibiting a pronounced warlike spirit these days—a sentiment so unusual for Wall street that one at first is nonplussed for a suitable explanation. It is found, however, in the suggestion that the speculators and bankers of Wall street feel they would have more to gain than to lose in the event of this nation going to war, and especially a war which they believe would not visibly disturb home industries and business. In fact, the so-called Wall street crowd seems to anticipate that a kid glove war would prove a real stimulus to activities in this nation, thus helping business to get out of the monotonous rut which it long has followed and giving employment to much of the idle capital which is becoming a source of worry to Wall street. Also there is probably a secret hope the same influences would mean a fine harvest for Wall street itself, and probably none will dispute the suggestion that Wall street "needs the money."

But Wall street is only a small spot,



in this country, with correspondingly small influence on general public sentiment. In the case, moreover, Wall street is entirely out of harmony with the wishes and sentiment of the people generally, for the latter have no desire for even a "make-believe" war, much less for one that might give this nation a taste of the bitter experiences now being shared by the belligerent nations of Europe. Nor is it likely that Wall street itself wants anything of this kind—all it is thinking about is something that will jar things loose, set the wheels to humming, and the dollars to jingling. The motive of Wall street, in other words, is purely a selfish one—as usual. And a sentiment based on such a motive will not get very far or cut much of a figure.

POLK IS WAKING UP.

Polk county is wisely turning its attention to better highways. And this undertaking will do more toward developing the country than any other single movement. Contemplating settlers who come here from states where they have good roads hesitate to buy land, even though they know how productive the soil is, because many of the roads are in deplorable condition during winter months. This good road question is so important that it should appeal to every citizen of the county. Our automobile people are interested because good roads will add to the efficiency of their machines, and incidentally to their pleasure, which is just as important as any object that may be attained. The farmers want good roads, because they will facilitate the moving of their crops and increase their earning power. Good roads are like money put out on interest. Every time they pull a load over a good road, there is a net saving to time, of wear and tear of energy, and the investments made in good roads are to a great extent permanent.

It has been estimated that of all the freight that finally reaches the market, 95 per cent must be first hauled by wagon over the public roads. Good roads mean that throughout the year the markets are regularly supplied with farm products, sufficient to meet the uniform demand. Bad roads mean that there are weeks at a time, when the markets are poorly supplied and prices are high, consequently the rich lose, and the poor often suffer.

The value of farm land does not depend entirely upon its fertility, for land, however fertile, has small value if its products cannot be taken to market. And again, roads often control the kind of crops that the farmers may raise. If they are unimproved and his farm is several miles from his market, it will be necessary for him to raise a crop that produces a small tonnage per acre. Investigation shows that the average cost of hauling per ton for one mile is, on stone roads, \$ to 12c; on earth in ordinary condition, 25c; on sandy roads, 33 to 44c. Therefore, if a farmer lives five miles from his market and his roads are ordinary earth roads, it is costing him about \$1 per ton more to deliver his products to his market than it would if he had hard roads. If he has sandy roads then it is costing him \$2 to \$3 more per ton.

You can convey a bushel of wheat from New York to Liverpool, three thousand, one-hundred miles for one and six-tenths cents less per bushel than it will cost a farmer to haul nine and four-tenths miles to a station. By making permanent roads, we can reduce the present cost from 29c. per mile to 8 and 16c. per ton per mile. Good roads blaze the way to progress and are a boom to civilization. They mean much to every citizen of Polk. They mean more to every land owner and farmer.

The state fair board is subject to severe criticism for employing a band of musicians from the metropolis of Illinois, instead of patronizing "home industry." There are many bands innumerable within the state of Oregon, and why the people, whose fair it is, should bring musicians from distant Chicago at a cost of \$1860 for fair week is beyond the comprehension of the fair-minded. A ladies' band may be an added attraction, but the home article should suffice for home people. Those who send up the loudest cry about building a fence around the

home dollar are oftentimes too much disposed to preach and not practice. And this is not only true as regards the case referred to, but throughout all communities as well.

While we are "watchfully waiting" to see what happens in Europe, former President Huerta, of Mexico, has apparently settled down in the United States, and for some reason there has been a sort of spontaneous enthusiasm for the old Indian who caused us so much trouble in Mexico. Chauncey M. Depew has made known the fact that he is still among the living by declaring that Huerta is the "ablest Mexican alive." The indorsement of Chauncey seems to have been seconded by many other enthusiasts whose presence heretofore had not been discovered.

Mark Sullivan of Collier's says: Don't accept statistics that seem to show that prosperity follows the booze wagon. Prosperity can't be tapped at any bar at all, and never could. Statistics that prove the contrary are, to put it kindly, pifflicated. If you live in a prohibition township, and don't know what "pifflicated" means, well, just substitute juggled, soaked, stewed, bleary, pie-eyed, or pickled. These are all good words in the gin belt. To make this epithet of adjectives complete we might add "soused" and "loaded."

Insurance men have figured out from their mortality tables and from war statistics that even in this most deadly of wars, the soldier has better chances of living through a year of actual warfare than the civilian has of living from his twenty-fifth to his thirty-sixth year, or from his fiftieth to his fifty-sixth or his sixtieth to his sixty-third. Such statistics serve the purpose of impressing upon us the uncertainties of mundane existence, if nothing more.

The McMinnville News-Reporter rushes into print with a story about an automobile that went over a bridge without injuring the occupants of the car. Nothing strange about that. Same thing happens in Polk county every day. It is absolutely impossible for automobiles to go under our bridges, and pretty hard to go around most of them.

The Newberg Graphic having registered a protest against the double column editorial fad of newspapers, that style has been abandoned by The Observer.

There's just one thing that some fellows would rather do than fish and that is, to stick around the car and watch the bait.

CLAY WORKER PATENTS IDEA.

Williamina Man Has What is Believed to Be Good Thing.

For several years Marvin A. Nicol was a mechanic in the Pacific Face Brick company's plant at Williamina. While working he noticed that the operation of the Muller wheel in the process of grinding the clay, had a tendency to wear out the center of the wheel much faster than the outside. Accordingly he began work on an invention to remedy this defect.

His invention consists of a twin tire for the wheel, made of heavy steel and so arranged that it can be put on and taken off. The tires are held in place by a lug device, which is also patented. In this way when the tires become worn on the inside they can be taken off and reversed, which practically doubles their life, as well as making the wheel run more smoothly.

A patent has been issued by the U. S. government and Nicol is now trying to place his invention on the market. The clay industry is one of large proportions and men competent to judge are of the opinion that his invention will materially benefit clay manufacturers.

Sells Interest in Laundry.

Mr. W. L. Hughes of the City Steam Laundry has sold a quarter interest in that institution to Miss Stella McNutt, who is an expert shirt and collar laundress, and this lady is in charge of this department. Miss McNutt came here from The Dalles when Mr. Hughes opened the new laundry.

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