

The Stars and Stripes

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Come The Powers That Be now, the same powers which, to save ship space, invented holeless macaroni and square molasses cans, and rule that we are to have sizeless Christmas packages.

Well, it's war, and there isn't much else to be said on the subject. Calculated in seven figures, the parcels aren't so sizeless as they seem.

Whether we would each rather have a Christmas package or a half interest in a three-inch shell going forward to help shorten the war is a toss-up.

So if the folks at home will just supplement that Christmas shipload with nine shiploads of shells—and we know they are going to do that and a whole lot more—we will count all ten as Christmas ships and, with befitting sentiment, exult in the occasion when, for the first time in history, 2,000,000 men, from millionaire to bootblack, were so unprecedentedly democratic that Santa Claus brought each of them the same sized package.

WRITE

The last words that most of us heard when the family's tearful goodbyes were said—there really isn't any reason why we should conceal any longer the fact that they were tearful—were probably these: "Don't forget to write."

Nobody has forgotten altogether. But lots of us have done the next best—or next worse—thing: Put off writing time and again until the days grew to weeks and the weeks to months.

America is in the war now as it never was before. The A.E.F. is fighting; tension here and at home is keyed to the highest pitch.

A letter home today, though it contain but a single sentence, may forestall a month of worry. It is as good as a Liberty Bond, and it accomplishes the same purpose—it helps to win the war.

BELGIUM

Had you asked any one, two weeks ago, where and what the Belgian front was, he would have told you that it was in that little corner of Belgium which Germany's massed legions have never been able to overrun, and that, what with the flooded Yser and the desolate sand dunes fronting the North Sea, you would go far to find such another bleak and inhospitable spot in all the line that stretches away to Switzerland.

Two days after the Franco-American attack on both sides of the Argonne had lighted the flame of battle that spread far and wide in the west, the Belgian Army, under the command of that gallant king without a country, Albert I, struck in a fierce and sudden lash, shattered resistance, captured many towns—and, more important than towns, redoubtable German positions—and, with a British Army on its right, dented in the great bulge in the north that now hangs like a cloud of impending doom over the greater bulge at whose core is Lille, the fourth city in France.

The Belgians now hold more of their country than they have held since 1914. The soil that is now theirs is still a pitifully small corner of the kingdom—perhaps a fortieth. But they have always held a quarter of the Belgian coast, and the German tenure of the rest is no longer so secure as it was.

The Belgian victory is, therefore, not altogether a victory of sentiment. Ask Ludendorff. Nobody ever accused him of being a sentimentalist.

OCTOBER 12

The hardy and far-sighted mariner from Genoa who, on October 12, 1492, sighted the coast of the little island of San Salvador, to his own immense satisfaction and the great delight of his water-wearry crew, would certainly rub his eyes in amazement if he should come back to earth on this approaching Columbus Day. Where his little peanut-shell fleet of caravels made their halting way across the uncharted ocean there now ride day after day great ships filled with fighting men and the stores to keep them fit, unerringly making for the coast of the Old Continent from which he set out to blunder into the outskirts of a New

Columbus would see all this, and marvel; but when told that the ships came from a "mighty and puissant nation" to the north and west of the places of his discovery, a free nation of 100,000,000 souls bent on doing its part to the utmost to heal the ills of the Old World that he left, he would marvel even more at the fulfillment of the work which he unwittingly began.

tingly began. For he started out only hoping to find a short route to India; he helped countless oppressed thousands thereby to find a short route to freedom. However much the newly arrived members of the A.E.F. may curse the memory of Columbus for having proved that the seaway, seascy Atlantic could be crossed, however much they may say that they wish he had stayed at home and juggled with his eggs, the only nation that really harbors any grudge against him is Germany. That is the one great and cheering thought of this Columbus Day. To the Huns, Columbus will always stand out as the one, only and original trouble-borrower of all time.

And we are the trouble. THINGS AT HOME Things at home are all right, despite the contrary impression that an insidious German propaganda is trying to create. The voluntary rationing that our people took upon themselves last year has produced such good results that the meanness and wheatless days are going to be done away with in part. Sugar may be a bit scarce, but the old molasses jar is doing its duty like the good patriot that it is, while the maple trees of Vermont and points adjacent have dripped most loyally this year.

So much for the grub the home folks are getting. We needn't worry about them; they're not worrying about themselves. True, the old man may be a bit sore because Dr. Garfield has requested him not to crank up the fliv on Sundays and take Ma and Aunt Bessie over to call on the relatives at Scott's Swamp, but it will do him good to walk for a change, or to plant the tulip bulbs for next spring. Besides, it will save gasoline for the very necessary business of bringing extra ammunition up to the line.

What with the country clubs closed up and other conserving measures taken, there will be coal enough to go 'round this winter, and none of us need worry for fear that the folks may freeze. And as for the way they feel about this here war—Jeerosh! just watch how they're eating up the six billions of the Fourth Liberty Loan.

CANNING THE RAH-RAH In the midst of these days when friendships between American men are being cemented by the comradeship of arms and being founded on mutual respect instead of birth or environment it makes most of us marvel to see a small group of people trying to keep, rather noisily, alive the ties of colleges, college fraternities and grown-up secret societies, as if they really mattered now. It makes us marvel even more when we learn that at home the colleges are turning themselves over lock, stock and barrel to the work of winning the war, and that the college fraternities, in many instances, are cutting out their activities altogether or at least greatly curtailing them.

College spirit is a fine thing, and the way in which it was fostered helped to build up in the men now in the Army and Navy that intense spirit of group loyalty without which no Army or Navy could hope to succeed. Fraternity spirit, too, is a fine thing, when it isn't carried to undemocratic excess. The same may be said of the grown-up secret societies. But, as some of our readers may have noticed, there is a large, healthy, vigorous and rather absorbing war going on not very far from here, and the chances are that in the years to come a man will prefer to be known as one of those who busted the Hindenburg line than as the man who set fire to dear old Prexy's woodshed or brought the cow into morning chapel.

It is high time that all of us, the young ones particularly, left our frat pins in our bedding rolls, our sheepskins and pass words in our trunks and forgot them. There will be plenty of time to rush Freshmen, initiate Lawyer Stebbins and play tricks on old Doc Goopius after we have gotten through rushing Pritzies, initiating young Bill Hohenzollern and playing tricks on old Doe Ludendorff. So, for the sake of all of us, let's lay off the rah-rah and the lush stuff for the duration of the war.

OUR MONEY There are many solicitous people back home who ask, now and then, what we do with our money. While we can't, of course, account for every sou received and every sou expended, we can give them a fair sample of what the Army does with its spare cash, taking our figures from those compiled for a certain division, served by five canteens, during the month of August.

In four out of the five huts patronized the men sent home more money than they spent on themselves for canteen supplies. In the fifth hut the amount of merchandise sales was only a small percentage larger than the amount of remittances sent home. Taking the five huts as a whole, 125,000 more money francs were sent home than were spent at the counter. One of the huts, whose business in all departments was the biggest of the five, reported that its patrons sent to America almost three times as much money as it received for sales.

These figures are typical of the sound common sense of the American soldier. Neither tight-fisted nor ultra-lavish, he doesn't stint himself on necessities, and yet he manages to remember generously his folks at home.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN Moreover, if the German Government should carry out its threat [to execute American prisoners of war captured with shotguns in their possession] in a single instance, it will be the right and duty of the United States to make such reprisal as will best protect the United States forces, and notice is hereby given of the intention of the United States Government to make such reprisal.

Thus is another German bluff called. The eye for an eye, man for a man doctrine invoked in this reply of our government to the Hun is not to be enforced for its own sake. It is a preventive measure, but it will be put into effect if it has to be. We are in a position to put it into effect. Our captures of Germans are vastly larger than Germany's captures of Americans. If Germany wants her thousands well cared for, she must care equally well for our dozens.

The Army's Poets

"HOMMES 40, CHEVAUX 8" Roll, roll, roll, over the rails of France. See the world and its map unfurled, five continents in your pants. What a noble trip, jolt and jog and jar, Forty we, with equipment C, in one flat-wheeled box-car.

We are packed by hand, From labor to leisure, Four a little oil on us And we would be sardines.

Rations? Oo-la-lal and how we love the man Who learned how to intern our chow in a cold and clammy can. Beans and beef and beans, beef and beans and beef, Will be his, he will win the war, take in your belt a reef.

Mess kits fling the coop, Cups gone with the spout; Use your thumbs for issue forks And pass the bull about.

Hit the floor for bunk, six hommes to one homme's place; It's no fair to the bottom layer to kick 'em in the face. Move the top-rail's feet out of my left ear; Lay out, sailor, you are much too large; I'm not a bedsack, dear.

Lift my head up, please, From this bag of bread, Put it on somebody's chest, Then I'll sleep like the dead.

Roll, roll, roll, yammer and snore and fight, Traveling zoo the whole day through and bed-lam all the night. Four days in the cage, going from hither hence, Ain't it great to ride by freight at good old Uncle's expense? Stuart M. Emery, A.E.F.

TO THE CHILDREN OF FRANCE I wish you, children, playing round On this too-rudely trampled ground, Only the good, the good, I would send To all the children I befriend.

But one wish circles all: To know Little of what your elders do, And somehow into the sunlight grow Out of the mists they stumble blindly through. Pvt. R. R. Kirk, G-2, S.O.S.

AS THE TRUCKS GO ROLLIN' BY There's a rumble an' a jumble an' a bumpin' an' a thud, As I wakens from my restless sleep here in my bed o' mud, 'N' I pull my blankets tighter underneath my shiverin' fly, An' I listen to the thunder o' the trucks rollin' by.

They're jumpin' an' they're humpin' through the linkin' gloom o' night, 'N' I wonder how them drivers see without a glim o' light; I c'n hear the clutches roarin' as they throw an' the radiators bollin' as the trucks go rollin' by.

There's some a-draggin' cannons, you c'n spot the sound all right—The rumblin' ones is heavies, an' the rattly ones is light; The clinkin' shells is pointin' up their noses at the sky—Oh, you c'n tell what's passin' as the trucks go rollin' by.

But most of 'em is packin' loads o' human Yankee freight That'll slam the o' soft pedal ontuh Heine's Hymn o' Hate; You c'n hear 'em singin' "Dixie," and the "Sweet Bye 'N' Bye," 'N' "Where Do We Go From Here, Boys?" as the trucks go rollin' by.

Some's singin' songs as, when I left, they wasn't even ripe (A-showin' 'at they's rookies wet ain't got a service stripe), But 'ere's the same they're good ole Yanks, and that's the reason why I likes the jazz 'n' barber shop o' the trucks a-rollin' by.

Jus' God and Gen'ral Pershing knows where these here birds' light, Where them bumpin' trucks is bound for under camouflage o' night, Where they can't hit no pitchers with their 'Fokkers in the sky, Of our changes o' location by the trucks a-rollin' by.

So, altho' my bed is puddles, an' I'm soaked through to the hide, My heart's out with them doughboys on their bouncin', singin' ride, They're bound for nuthin' o' glory, or, p'raps, to fight 'n' die—God bless that Yankee cargo in the trucks a-rollin' by. L. W. Suckert, 1st Lt., A.S., U.S.A.

UNTIL— Rain and mud with a spray of blood, A moaning wind through the shattered trees; Rain and mud and the endless thud And crash that comes from the big H.E.'s. It isn't for fun and for fame We plunge to the big advance; But it's all in the game—it's all in the game 'Till the Hun gets out of France.

A rain soaked night and a bitter fight, Where the dripping trees sing a dismal song; Where the flash of guns give the only light The Yank can use as he drives along; It isn't the light that the Hun might claim, Over the bloody soil, But it's all in the game—it's all in the game 'Till the final "Kamerad."

BILLETS I've billeted in old New York, I've billeted in Maine; I've billeted in Sunny France, And billeted in Spain. I've billeted in the cars new, I've billeted in old; And some were as neat as a royal court, And some were green with mould.

I've billeted in grand hotels, With dazling 'lectric light; I've billeted in haunted caves, Where I dwell not day nor night. And so to me has clearly come To know what billets are—How billets, never a la mode, A man's delights will mar.

Yet, though I like my 'lectric light, And lounge and spacious hall, The billet that I like the best, Doled out in the car at all, The billet that I like the best, Nor window has nor door, And yet it brings more welcome warmth Than 'lectric bulbs galore.

The billet that I like the best! What thoughts and memories dear! It brings to mind the cheerf' warmth, 'Mid hours bleak and drear! The billet that I like, O love, Brings warming cheer from you, Because its born within your heart—The simple Billet Doux. Fra Guido, F.A.

THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES They pick their way o'er the shell-pocked road As the evening shadows fall, A man and woman and a gleam With awe at war's black pall. The straggling strands of her snowy hair Are tossed in the wind's rude breath; His frail form shakes as the whistling gusts Sweep o'er the fields of death.

With straining eyes, hearts beating fast, They seek to gaze ahead To where they left their little home When from the Hun they fled. 'Neath the heights of a hill o'erlooking the vale, Half-hid in a purple shade, The dim outline of the town comes to view, And they hasten down the glade.

At last the town, the street and home! But God! Can it be this? This pile of stones, this hideous hulk, This gaping orifice? The sun has set. The evening star Sends down its soothing light. Gone are the days when the stars are strong—"For God, for France, and Right!" Sgt. Frederick W. Kurth, M.T.D.

COLD COMFORT



All-highest: "Cheer up, my good fellow, I will never desert you!"

A PATIENT'S PRAISE

The doughboys have a pretty rank sort of an existence at times, don't you think? When they're going right over open country into the face of machine gun fire and when they're down in shell craters, ducking the chance of another one hitting the same spot, or when they've received orders to move just as their old pedal extremities were about all in and they needed a rest, or when they are bombed from above and when they see their bunkies carried from vigorous life to eternity in less time than the telling takes, and all the rest of it—ain't it hell?

But there's another bunch of fellows, and their job's no cinch, and there's mighty little relief for them. Sometimes they meet with all the fuss of an attack or an advance, but get away from it. And the boys I mean are those who are keeping the hospitals of the S.O.S. going, and at many times they go rather keenly.

Life up front is a very unstable sort of affair, at best, and death is so common that it loses some of its sting through familiarity, and when a bunkie falls, doesn't it make the survivor more set in his purpose, and isn't there that ever-present feature of adventure and action to help pacify the appetites of the men which the insufficient supply of bully beef and spuds failed to appease? Many of our hospitals have no women nurses in them, and there a man lacks that motherly tenderness found in women and that being patient and attentive to the wants of others which has ever been very much a part of his life.

Just now I'm in such a hospital, and my ward is run by a sergeant and about six orderlies. There are beds for 27, and these men keep things going and frictionless day and night, and it's no piker's job. There's only one ward in any hospital which is a meager place to work in than the place filled with patients suffering from dysentery. And here these big, healthy men are diligently, carefully and patiently making it easier for the men who have become so weak that they cannot control the action of their organs.

From early morning till late at night the same faces may be seen moving about the ward washing men, changing foul bandages, emptying urine cans, taking temperatures and pulses, passing out medicine, bringing in food for the men on liquid, light and regular diets, and hearing them all ask for more, cleaning the dishes, heating water, tidying the ward or filling some fellow's water glass.

Why, there's one poor devil a few beds from mine who is just about a skeleton and is in need of constant attention, and the sergeant spends most of his time with him, and is on the spot when the fellow calls his half-hearted and strengthless "Sergeant, Sergeant!" and he's as well treated as he could be by his own folks, and so it is with the other fellows.

Nothing seems to be too much trouble for them, and they never hear one of them growl at the rankest, rottenest job a man can picture. They seldom smile, but they never frown. And some day, when this game has been played, and we're all back home applauding the movies of our advance over Jerry's lines, I hope they'll find some way of honoring these fellows who were one to make room for another, who work harder than most of the rest of us, and who are men to their backbones, but are seldom lauded.

Sgt. ARTHUR H. LYNNII, A.S. A WAY TO HELP To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: A few days ago I went into a store and found two Americans and a shopkeeper trying to arrive at an understanding across the counter. They were most certainly not arriving, in fact, both sides of the counter were in a state of exasperation at the imbecility of the other. It was a matter easily made understood to the ultimate satisfaction of all concerned.

THE SINS OF BASEBALL

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: If baseball is to continue to be the national game in America, there must be a thorough housecleaning which shall remove those who aroused a patriotic prejudice against it by asking for the exemption of players and those who have avoided service by becoming shipbuilders and in other ways showing themselves unworthy of being called Americans. I have found among the Americans in service in France a prejudice against the national game that was started when President Bun Johnson of the American League asked for the exemption of major league players, a prejudice which is steadily growing.

There are plenty of grounds for such feeling. It would have been just as reasonable for the billiard hall owners to have asked for exemption for pool players or for the National Tennis Association to have asked for exemption for tennis players. Baseball will never be the national game again as it was before this war until those who have been the cause of the prejudice that caused THE STARS AND STRIPES to drop its sporting page have been removed from the conduct of the game. The minor leagues will not again consent to a governing body's being composed of any part of a body of men who brood about such prejudice.

When Provost Marshal General Crowder issued his "work or fight" order, the minor leagues decided to suspend play, so that not one man might be kept out of the service who might be helping to win the war. The major leagues continued to play.

For the benefit of those who may not be familiar with the workings of professional baseball, I will explain that the minor leagues have an association of their own that acts as the governing body, known as the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues. The two major leagues have a governing body known as the National Commission. The commission acts as the final court of appeal, and thus dominates both the majors and the minors.

The minor leagues have suspended play until after the close of the war and have sent hundreds of players into service who otherwise perhaps might have continued playing until called by draft. The major leagues have

shown no such disposition, and the minors do not feel that any organization showing such an unpatriotic disposition should hereafter govern them to the extent they have in the past. When the millions of young men who are now wearing khaki and helping to win the war that is being waged to make this a decent world to live in return to America, they are going to carry prejudices with them that will make baseball an altogether different business proposition than it was before they left. Unless their sentiments change, very few, if any, leagues will be able to operate at a profit. It is for this reason that the minor leagues propose the following drastic measures:

A boycott on all players who quit baseball to go into some other occupation simply to escape service. A refusal to accept as the final court of appeal any board which continues on its membership one who asked for the exemption of players or traded upon patriotic sentiment to the extent of declaring through the public press the intention of entering in government service without thereafter showing the least disposition to live up to the promise.

The National League is without a head at the present time. The minor leagues feel that it should, for the good of the game, select a successor to John K. Tener, a man whose attitude has reflected patriotism of the highest order, and who has not allowed himself to be dominated by the American League, as National League leaders have allowed themselves to be dominated.

The minor leagues propose a housecleaning that will remove from their councils men who have shown lack of sportsmanship, for those seem to have been the men who also have by their attitude stood in the way of progressive measures which have been along patriotic lines. THE STARS AND STRIPES deserves praise for its stand in regard to baseball, and I present these conditions to place the minor leagues in the position they deserve to be placed so that the boys may understand. E. W. Dickerson, President, Western League, and Member National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues.

MR. BAKER LOOKS IN

With a gasoline can as a rostrum, Secretary of War Baker, in the course of his recent inspection tour of the S.O.S., addressed an audience of some 2,000 negro Stevedores during their lunch hour. The speech, as well as the entire stage setting, was highly informal. Part of his audience lay sprawled upon the roof of a half-finished warehouse overlooking the focal gasoline can, and nearly all of them went on munching the contents of their mess kits, as it was intended they should do.

The Secretary told them how proud the people at home all were of them and of their work—both their own people and the whole rest of the nation at large. He gave them a couple of good short stories that quickly surrounded him with an amphitheater of shining white teeth all set in a huge grin. And when he wound up by saying that he was going to work on the docks at home, how well they had been doing, and how glad they all would be to have first hand news of them and the shove they were giving to the Army's supplies, he got such a hand as only strong and honestly calloused palms can give a speaker.

Both before and after the speech the Secretary visited with the men in the warehouses, asking questions right and left and getting much first hand information as to how the jobs were swung. In similar manner he covered another one of the ports and gave a brief talk to a group of white Stevedores there.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of his trip was that on his visit to the classification camp at Blois. There a battalion of Class B and C men, all of whom had been wounded in action and many of whom bore the ribbons of the Croix de Guerre or the D.S.C., was lined up for his inspection, together with their hand, also formed of B and C men. The Secretary wouldn't hear of their being introduced to him as he put it, he felt it an honor to be introduced to them.

From the middle of the boxing ring and handstand combined, that is the glory and pride of the Blois camp, Mr. Baker told them how much their efforts had been appreciated by the nation, how greatly the nation stood in their debt, and how they would be marked men in their communities throughout all the next generation. In after years, he said, men would come home to their families and tell with pride and with a glow on their faces how they had met men who had fought at Belleau Wood, at Chateau-Thierry, at Soissons and

PACKAGES AGAIN

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES: I am writing to you about a very much argued subject; and that is "Packages from Home." Please tell me why it is necessary for Mr. American Soldier to go through such a formality whenever he wants a package of goodies or tobacco of any kind, or anything that is within reason. That it is an impossibility to buy on this side of the water? Why is it necessary for us to have to go to the colonel of our regiment to get an O.K. on our orders? There are times when we are miles apart and unable even to see him, much less so to him personally.

Don't you believe that the colonel has enough to do without us fellows trailing after him, and then not getting a chance to see him at all? Do you not firmly believe that the company C.O.'s can handle the matter? I believe they would gladly do it for the boys in their own companies.

Please make an inquiry into this matter and publish it in your paper, as I know it is a very vital subject to all the A.E.F. fellows, especially the boys up here in the line. Henry M. Secor, Pvt., Inf.

[The primary object of the regulations requiring the approval of regimental or higher commander on packages from home was to conserve space in our transports. The decision was taken at a vital time when the question of rousing men, food and munitions to France was paramount. There is much to be said in support of your contention, but don't forget that our first duty is to whip the Boche, and the packages can come after.—Ehron.]