

Winnetka Weekly Talk

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FRIDAY, JULY 20, 1917

It Works at Both Extremes.

There are none too many blessings to expect from a war of the dimensions of that which is now absorbing the attention of nearly all the nations of the world, but there are a few, among them the complete cure of those conditions which arise from unemployment. War makes work for all, more than there are hands to do, fully and properly.

A country at war sees no breadlines, composed of able bodied men and hopeless women, standing awaiting the charity of the more fortunate members of society. There is work for all, work with good wages, work which demands little preparation or training, work which offers the spice of danger to the adventurous, work which gives to women some of the freedom which men have enjoyed. The prosperous condition of the people of England points to the advantage, industrially speaking, which the war has been to England.

At the other extreme of society are those who have never known the exhilaration of doing something essential to the welfare of anyone else, the leisure class of the countries at war, both women and men, who have failed to find in the quiet ways of peace that satisfaction which comes from having a fixed task to perform at a set time. There need be, in war time, no suffering from ennui among the idle rich. War finds work for rich and poor, work which is worth doing, which must be done, whose doing reflects honor upon the doer.

Enforced and too extensive leisure is the bane of the very rich and the very poor. War has removed that curse from both.

Disintegration at the Core.

The significance which Germany places upon the disruptive power of internal discontent is evident from the assiduity with which the Central powers have sought to stir up trouble in the intimate affairs of the nations at war with them. Hence the evidence of dissatisfaction in the German empire is the more encouraging to her enemies because of the assurance which has been given of the German attitude of mind towards such a condition.

We cannot be sure that the suggestion of trouble within the German empire is significant of an early disruption, but it does suggest disintegration beginning at the center, which, progressing slowly but irresistibly outward, means the end of Prussianism and all that that implies to the world now fighting against that spirit.

Money to Spend in War Time.

Prophecy from men who have followed conditions in the business world since the beginning of the war in 1914 is to be considered with respect, as based upon facts rather than upon private opinion, the foundation of much of our war philosophy. Men like John G. Shedd who have watched the progress of business abroad, who have studied the conditions which have produced the present state, who have looked for the cause of developments, are to be listened to as to those speaking with authority. When Mr. Shedd says that there will be a period of prosperity in the United States following our entrance into the war, we should expect prosperity to come. For he knows what has brought prosperity to shop keepers and other business men in England and France and sees the same conditions here.

It is an interesting revelation that Mr. Shedd has made in his statement of the business situation in England and France, that the sale of luxuries and finery has increased materially since the outbreak of the war. Instead of being an era of great personal economy in a general sense, the years since the war

began have been marked by indulgence by the women in the frivolities which are dear to the feminine heart. The condition is, however, probably due to the war only incidentally, being the result of the placing in the hands of women of far larger amounts of money than they have ever handled before.

The taking of the millions of men out of the country for war services has put many hundreds of thousands of women in gainful occupations and given them money to spend to which they have been entirely unaccustomed in the past when they were dependent upon the men of their households. The payment of the portion for the support of the wives of soldiers, the habit of men in the army to turn their pay over to their wives, as well as the new experience of receiving money for their work, have given the women funds with which to indulge their natural love for pretty things. One surmises that the prosperity of England and France has somewhat the character of American prodigality of money, that it is due in some measure, at least, to the reposing of the ready money of the country in hands unused to dispensing it.

"It Is Forbidden."

Early in the war J. B. adopted a French soldier and furnishes him with a monthly allowance of tobacco. Incidentally, he is also lubricating his rusty French by carrying on a correspondence with his "filleul de guerre," who writes him from the

trenches, "somewhere in France."

In a recent letter, the soldier informed his American benefactor that "hier j'ai tue deux Boches. Ils sont alles a l'enfer." The censor wrote between the lines, "Il est defendu de dire ou est l'ennemi."

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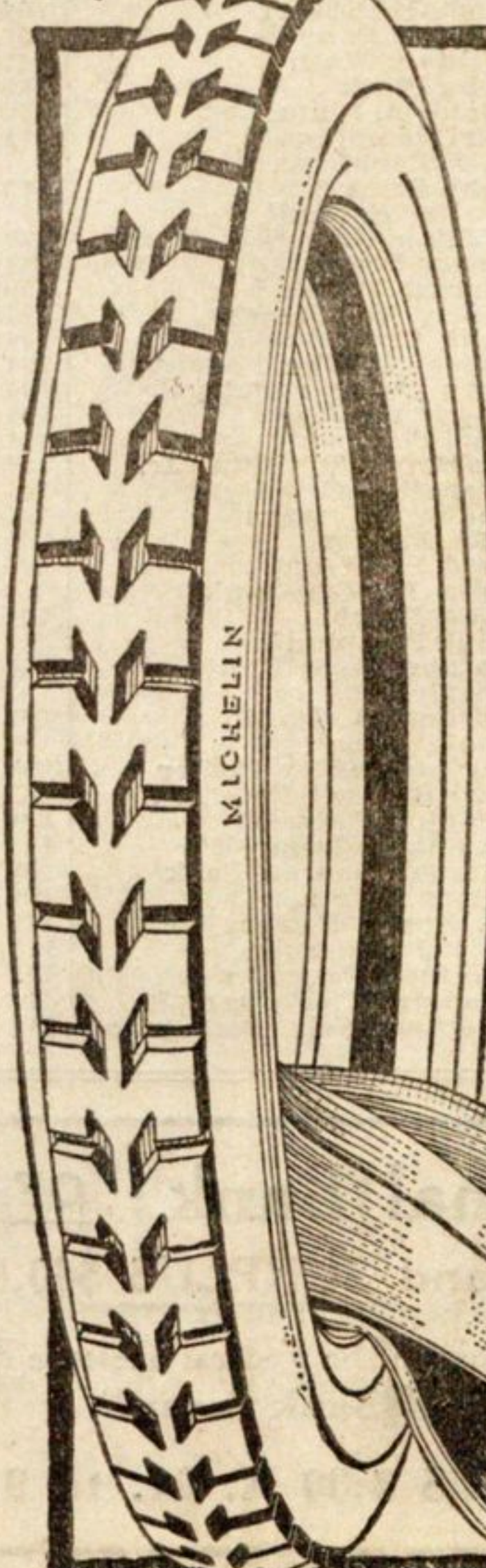
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