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EDITORIAL

Protective Tariff and War.

The saying that it is an ill wind which blows no good may even be proven true in the case of the European war. It is beginning to impress some persons, business men as well as members of other classes, with certain important economic truths. Encouraging testimony to this effect is presented by the American Meat Trade and Retail Butchers' Journal in the issue of March 11. Says the Journal:

In one respect the big war may prove almost a blessing to the people of this country. We mean that the lesson which it teaches as to the interdependence of the commercial nations is of the utmost importance, and if that lesson is so driven home to our people that they will be able to understand how protective tariffs really operate, and realize the possible consequences in international hatreds and wars, the European disaster will be an actual blessing to them.

The Journal offers food for thought to those peace advocates who do not yet see that the easiest way to abolish war is to remove its cause. S. D.



War Prices.

Mars is an ugly customer, no matter what his mood. No sooner are his demands met in one respect than he renews them in another. The British have succeeded in recruiting their army without resorting to conscription, but now the government is at its wits' ends to meet the demands of the people at home. Prices of food and coal have risen to such an extent that it means great hardship for the people, and they are clamoring for relief. The citizen blames the baker for the price of bread; the baker accuses the miller, the miller the farmer and importer, and the importer the shipowners; and there is a general cry for a reduction in freight rates. But to meet this demand is not so easy as some seem to think. It is by no means certain that the government will solve the problem by taking over the shipping or by arbitrarily reducing the rates.

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The law of supply and demand obtains in war as well as in peace. Millions of men taken from the ranks of production, and organized for purposes of destruction, must necessarily change the relation of people to goods. When Great Britain withdrew fifteen hundred vessels from the carrying trade, and devoted them to military purposes, there was an inevitable advance in freight rates. And it should be nothing short of the direst necessity that would warrant the government in restoring the rates to the former level. There is now great risk in the carrying trade. If a vessel be lost the insurance is small compensation, because the ship cannot be replaced for a long time, which deprives the owners of their income during the period of waiting. If the government should take over the ships, or compel a return to normal rates, there would be great confusion in shipping circles. The tonnage available is sufficient to carry only a small part of the goods to be moved. The advance in rates has sifted the freights until only those of most urgent need are forwarded. But if rates were to be reduced to the normal level, with the present tonnage shortage, all manner of things would be offered, and great congestion would result. To fix an arbitrary freight rate would necessitate the government's discrimination in saying what freight should be accepted. To suspend the law of supply and demand during the war would likely engulf the government in more troubles than it cured. Every interest depends upon another, and the changing of one necessitates mending of all. If wages are not sufficient to provide a living at present prices, it were better for the government to arbitrarily increase wages, than to begin meddling with prices. Thus is it becoming more and more apparent that the evils of war are not confined entirely to the field of battle. Mars is a disagreeable fellow, whether at home or abroad.

s. c.



Socialists Finding Their Voices.

There are unmistakable evidences that the Socialists of Europe, who were swept off their feet by the suddenness of the war, are recovering themselves. The recent meeting in London of Socialists from Russia, France, Belgium, and England, formulated resolutions that are likely to receive the endorsement of the German Socialists, when they are free to express themselves. This statement attributes the war to the greedy colonial policies, for which all the governments were in some degree responsible; but it is pointed out that the invasion of Belgium was a disregard

of treaty rights, which, if unrebuked, would mean the overthrow of liberty. But though the members of the London conference insist that the war must go on, they are determined that it shall not become a war of conquest, and demand that all peoples annexed by force, from Alsace to the Balkans, shall have the right to determine their own destinies. The resolutions protest against the oppression of the Finns, the Jews, and the Poles. The demand for a plebiscite to determine what government the various peoples shall live under, is growing in volume. It is urged by the South-German Socialists, and by the Socialists of Munich. There can be little doubt that as the war goes on the Socialists of Europe will join the steadily growing body of men and women who are becoming more and more insistent that it shall be stopped, and stopped in a way to bring lasting peace.

s. c.



The Beam in Our Eye.

No American opposed to immediate Philippine independence can consistently criticize any foreign government for invasion of the territory of another or for forcible annexation of any part of it. So long as independence is withheld from the Filipinos, so long is the American government in no position to preach justice in international matters to foreign nations.

s. d.



Mexico, and Again, Mexico.

Once more the jingoes are buckling on their armor for the conquest of Mexico. Again they have set to baiting the President and the Secretary of State. They demand a Fundamental Policy, a Definite Purpose. Even so sane and sensible a paper as the Chicago Evening Post has joined in the cry for Mexican intervention. In several editorials, showing how futile have been our acts and policies in the past, it demands that we do for Mexico what we did for Cuba. And, as evidence that it has struck a popular chord, interviews appear in its news columns, endorsing its proposed action. One man likens the trouble to a fire next door, which must be put out, lest it extend to our own house. The longer it is allowed to burn, the greater will be the danger. Another, Colonel Henry Lathrop Turner, President of the National Defense of America, is strong for the immediate intervention in Mexico. "There is no one in the United States now," said Colonel Turner, "who is not convinced that immediate action is imperative. We have simply got to go in there." And then he falls to lament-