

of autocracy which allows a Czar or a Kaiser to say "I declare war!" There is the fire of militarism, which must, absolutely must, burn through to the powder every so often to justify those who have kindled and fanned it. Why should we ask God to prevent the explosion of the powder and say nothing about the fires? If peace were to come to-day, the powder would explode again upon some early tomorrow, if we are to leave the fires. Are we trying to make a fool of God? Worse than either of these fires is the fire of economic injustice. The desires and aims and interests of all those warring peoples are identically the same. The people, whether they are peasants, laborers, or tradesmen, Latins, Slavs or Teutons, their interest is to dwell in security with the chance to earn a living, support their families and achieve a little happiness. It is all so simple. All they need is ready access to the resources of their own lands; their own, for they are buying them with their lives as they have bought them before, and the chance to mingle freely with each other through trade channels. But instead they are bound by false political and false economic laws foisted upon them from time immemorial by their masters, and bound by those chains they are hurled against each other and use their chains to beat out each other's brains! And we are asked to pray God for peace.



Mr. Cooke's letter is more than the protest of a truly religious man against the impiety which it makes clear. It lays bare the fact that responsibility for war belongs to those who oppose democracy, who demand armies and navies, and who uphold laws and institutions that make an opportunity to earn a living something to be scrambled after and fought for. He shows that these can not escape responsibility for the natural consequences of their acts, by praying that these consequences be miraculously averted. Those who pray for peace, but fail to vote as they pray, have only themselves to blame when wars come.

S. D.



Statistics and Liars.

One apologist for Big-stick statesmanship undertakes to show that a world-war after all is not such a terrible thing. All the men killed in battle would have died anyway in the course of years. And besides, great as the total is, it is not really so great as it seems. The present death rate it seems is merely twice that of the normal rate. But while the total deaths may be only twice the ordinary number, what a difference in the kind. Of the normal death rate in times of peace, 30.5 per cent are of children under fifteen years of age, and 41.5 per cent are of adults above fifty, which leaves 28.0 per cent to come from the soldier age, fifteen to fifty. Thus, to double the

death rate by war means to give a man between fifteen and fifty for every boy or girl under fifteen, and for every man and woman over fifty, in addition to these between fifteen and fifty. Yet, a man may be so enamoured of the strenuous life that he can say in all seriousness that this war is not as bad as it seems, because it is merely doubling the normal death rate.

S. C.



The Arbitrament of Arms Must Go.

The maintenance and extension of militarism has been justified in Europe in much the same way that the maintenance and extension of slavery was justified in America; that is, as a necessary means of protection against the commercial and political jealousy or antagonism of neighboring states. The obvious evils and immorality were in each case denied, or else deliberately ignored as an impossible consideration in view of the demands of "practical" statesmanship; and each evil system was finally brought to issue, with the usual mystifying complications, before the arbitrament of arms. Chattel slavery was wiped out, though at a cost which staggered humanity. The outcome of the present appeal remains to be seen. It is consoling to think, however, that the wiping out of militarism, which means of the barbarous arbitrament of arms itself, would make worth while any cost involved; and that the promise of doing it is encouraging. With each side blaming the great catastrophe on the militarism of the other, failure of present governments to provide for doing away with it must apparently result in doing away with such unbearably incompetent government.

W. G. STEWART.



"The Privilege of Every Man to Work."

In a circular sent out by a committee of Colorado's coal mine managers appears the following statement of the issue involved:

Shall we preserve law and order, and shall we maintain the constitutional privilege of every man to work where, for whom and upon such terms as he sees fit?

In comment on this a prominent educator and economic expert has written as follows:

I wonder if the I. W. W. or the Western Federation of Miners have published anything more drastic in the direction of securing supremacy of the employe over his job and his employer than this! Of course, I understand that the talent employed by the coal mine managers to draw up this circular, did not say what they meant, but is simply a piece of verbal bungling. In attempting to create a favorable impression he so far overshot the mark as to be supremely ridiculous. It is only an illustration

to my mind of the incompetence which is frequently characteristic of those accustomed to think extremely well of themselves and to wield much power. I doubt very much if even the I. W. W. would assert that the terms of labor should be entirely a matter of dictation on the part of the employe. I believe even they would be willing to admit that the prospective employe should be subject somewhat to the law of supply and demand! It pains one of a judicial temperament to see such a careless thing coming from the pillars of society and constitutional liberty. Perhaps they are equally muddled in some of their other "fundamental ideas," and perhaps security of constitutional institutions does not after all rest exclusively in their hands.



Of course the coal mine managers' committee does not mean what it says. To its members the "constitutional privilege of every man to work," etc., means nothing more than the privilege of a crowd denied their natural rights, to scramble for whatever jobs may be left open for a few of their number. Every attempt in Colorado to take any step towards opening to all labor the unused natural resources of the state has failed to get anything but bitter opposition from the interests represented by the coal mine managers' committee

S. D.



Suppressing Freedom of Debate.

There is no more effective way to stimulate interest in a subject than to prohibit its discussion. So the Seattle Board of Education, in prohibiting school debates on the Singletax, probably accomplished the reverse of what it intended, if it was moved by a desire to suppress knowledge concerning that subject. In spite of the teaching of experience, it seems very hard for bourbons to grasp the fact that suppression does not suppress.

S. D.



Driving Wealth Away.

The conscientious Indiana assessor who listed at \$20,000 a blooded stallion that had been imported at an expense of \$20,000, by a horse-breeder, and saw the animal taken to an adjoining county where a more discreet official listed him as a "horse," is not the only man who has discovered that zeal may be tempered by wisdom. In commenting upon the ceremony in New Orleans that marked the hauling down of the English flag on an American-owned ship, and the raising of the American flag, the Times-Picayune said that since the vessel was plying between that port and Central American points, it was to be regretted that its American registry had not been taken out in

New Orleans instead of New York. The explanation offered for this humiliating fact was that New Orleans taxed ships like other property, while New York exempted them. The Times-Picayune expressed the opinion that the advertising value to New Orleans from having the vessel hail from that port would be worth more to the city than the amount of taxes that might be derived. The ship plies regularly between that city and Central American points, and to have its name read "Cartago of New Orleans" would give Central Americans a better opinion of that city, than to see the name reading "Cartago of New York."



It is a mark of the stupid conservatism of present day business men that the leading citizens of New Orleans, who are so eager to recover for their city some of its lost prestige, should cling so tenaciously to one of the chief causes of its undoing. That they are not insensible to the effect of taxation as a means of encouraging or discouraging enterprise is shown by the fact that when a few years ago a steamship line was proposed between New Orleans and Brazil, a special law was passed by the legislature exempting the company from taxation for a term of years. Yet, in spite of this momentary interval of sanity, and notwithstanding the fact that its Chamber of Commerce numbers among its members men who understand the incidence of taxation, and who have been tireless in trying to open the eyes of their fellows to the light of reason, the city persists in its folly. If a single legitimate reason could be offered for its course in driving industry from its doors, and tying its own hands in its struggle with competitors it would not seem so strange. That there are narrow-minded and selfish persons who are willing to lay the burdens of government upon one set of citizens, while another class receive the benefit, may not seem strange under our topsy-turvy industrial system; but that the major part of the community should persist in a policy that defeats its avowed purpose passes understanding.



The Indiana assessor who sought to penalize his enterprising neighbor for devoting \$20,000 to improving the breed of horses in his community, not only did not receive the tax on \$20,000, but he lost the tax that he might have received on a "horse." And in addition to that he was the means of depriving his community of all future gains from blooded stock. It would have been an act of sound business policy had that town-