



# “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

*Considered Internationally*

By EDWARD A. FILENE



THE times have given a new significance to this ancient prayer. It is a hungry world that has emerged from the war, and how to provide it with its daily bread—by which I mean restoring the world to sound economic health—is a problem that is vexing business man and statesman alike. In fact, how to get this ancient prayer answered, here and now, is the most practical problem before our politicians, our business men, our labor leaders, and, for that matter, all of us.

This phrase was never, even when first uttered, a mere pious aspiration that we be miraculously fed. Never was it less possible for it to mean that than now. The problem of providing the war-weakened world with its daily bread not only runs into world politics, world trade, and world finance; it *is* world politics, world trade, and world finance.

Not as a churchman, but as a business man, I am impressed by the fact that “give us this day our daily bread” has become the prayer of the world’s business no less than of the world’s religion. And, still thinking as a business man, I want to suggest that while the mechanics of its answer will be found in the business of the world’s market-places and exchanges, the motive, the impulse, the power that will insure its answer must be found in the religion of the churches. What I mean

concretely is this: whatever mechanism of international credit and commerce our business men and statesmen devise must be used, if it is to work in time to save the situation, in that spirit of service and sense of moral responsibility which the churches, above and beyond creed, exist to stimulate.

That this is not “mere idealism,” in the cynic’s sense of that term, but hard, practical, common sense, is plain, I think, from a simple survey of the straits in which the world finds itself in this after-the-war period.

## § 2

What are the underlying facts of business conditions in the United States? The basic conditions of our country are good; we are the richest nation in the world; our savings-bank deposits are the largest in our history; there is enough work that needs to be done to keep every man and woman in the United States busy. There is a vast amount of building that should be done to relieve our housing shortage; there is no end of work that should be done on our railroads to make good the deterioration of war-time and to extend their service; there is worn-out machinery of all sorts to be replaced; and an untold amount of labor could well be expended upon necessary public improvements that were held up during the war.

And yet there are more than three millions unemployed in the country, and as I write we have just passed through a financial and business crisis, none the less a crisis because it did not wear the familiar garb of a panic. The danger has not yet wholly passed, nor have the most needed remedies been applied. In the light of the preceding paragraph, this may strike some as paradoxical in the extreme; but the explanation is not far to seek.

The fundamental cause of this paradoxical situation is our inability to export our surplus goods. We not only have on hand a surplus of goods, but, as a result of the war stimulus, we possess a surplus-producing ability that would have been thought impossible in 1913. And up to the moment of writing our exports have continued to fall off from month to month by hundreds of millions of dollars.

This is serious business for us, any way that we choose to look at it. Of course, if we do not solve this riddle of international economic relations and find a way to export our surplus goods, it does not mean that we are going to the dogs. It does mean, however, a far-reaching readjustment of our whole plan of national life and work. Unless we find a way to export our surplus goods, there will come a super-competition between businesses and industries within our own country—a super-competition not only between our producers, but between our distributors as well. If we cannot let off our surplus energy in export trade, we shall use it in fighting one another for domestic business. If such a condition of affairs obtains, this intensified competition will go on for a number of years until the amount of national production will be scaled down to the

volume of what we ourselves can consume, plus, of course, whatever export trade we may have.

This super-competition will mean a domestic battle of price-cutting and, as an inevitable result, of wage-cutting, which will let us in for all sorts of industrial discontent and political unrest. In the end we shall swing to an economy as extreme as the extravagance we have been practising. All this cannot but mean an ultimate lowering of the standards of life in the United States.

But is all this necessary? Why can we not export our surplus goods? We have them, we want to sell them, and the world cannot be restored to its normal economic health nor the peace of the world be assured until we do. The answer is simple: the European nations are for the time too poor to pay for them in gold or in goods. The only way in which the European nations can take off our hands these surplus goods is by the grace of long-term credits extended by the United States.

But—and here is the crux of the matter—long-term credits cannot be extended until there is greater social and political stability in Europe, less danger of revolutions or wars that will make repayment of loans uncertain or impossible.

### § 3

Let us look for a moment at the other side of the picture. In Europe the military war has been followed by a series of economic wars. These wars of trade, if not as dramatic, have been as devastating in their effect upon many European nations as was the military war. Now, normal production is the only thing that can

insure daily bread and daily jobs to the peoples of Europe. Normal production depends upon a steady flow of food and raw materials to where labor is. Until such flow begins, there will never be peace and prosperity in the world.

At the end of the war food and raw materials were used up in Europe. The lack of food and raw materials has plunged Europe into genuine want and created a shortage of work. As was to be expected, this has resulted in great deficiencies in national incomes, and incitement to revolutionary and semi-revolutionary movements that have overturned governments and precipitated military and economic battles between the exhausted nations.

The needs of Europe are so real that in almost every nation the party in opposition to the party in power sees its greatest opportunity for gaining the power itself by pandering to the national and racial prejudices and to the fears and weaknesses of the war-strained masses, who, overburdened and without adequate food and work, demand a change. This results for the most part in opposition parties fighting wise and safe methods of recuperation, which are necessarily slow, and in forcing governments to make even harmful concessions. Thus conditions become worse, taxation heavier, production is more handicapped, the suffering masses are more restless, and there is real danger of irrational radicalism and new balances of power.

It is because of these conditions that business and banking find themselves unable to give long-term credits.

American business men cannot be charged with a cold and materialistic indifference to this situation. Our

business and banking interests have shown their eagerness to do what they can to remedy the situation by creating new and well-thought-out machinery for the kind of credit needed—long-term credit. Under the Edge Law there have been formed corporations—as, for example, the Foreign Trade Financing Corporation, with its credit-giving ability of eleven hundred million dollars—for the granting of long-term credits to Europe. But this machinery cannot work effectively, because the granting of long-term credits has been deemed too risky while European political and social conditions are as unstable, as dangerous, as they have become.

#### § 4

The fact is that the defect is too deep to be corrected by business and banking alone. Business and banking will be able to solve this critical problem only when the United States coöperates in statesmanlike fashion with Europe in restoring social and political stability. We are now facing a situation in which political stability must precede economic restoration.

Everywhere in Europe I found this contention confirmed. The leaders of Europe are under no delusion that American business men and bankers can or will extend the needed long-term credits to a Europe in social and political dissolution. Last year I conferred with business, banking, party, and government leaders in many of the principal countries of Europe, and everywhere these leaders confessed that the necessary social and political stability can be achieved only by the grace of American coöperation. American isolation must in the end make for European dissolution.

Many of the European governments have been and are guilty of sins of commission and omission. A full understanding of these will show, however, that they are mostly a part of the war's natural aftermath and of our failure to coöperate adequately. Even if we emphasize these sins to the utmost, we still are compelled to see that they or similar evils cannot be prevented unless we do coöperate. And such coöperation is essential to our own prosperity.

Our farmers early discovered the truth of this. In the last Congress, you may remember, they asked that a billion-dollar credit be granted Europe, in order that Europe might be able to buy their products. The business interests of the country have found it out, too.

### § 5

Now, what are the practical things we can do to help the world and ourselves out of the plight into which we have fallen? Personally, I think the fundamental need is still to "make the world safe for democracy," but I think that as a cold matter of business procedure that phrase can now be translated to mean that our immediate aim should be to "make the world safe for long-term credits." This alone will insure that flow of food and raw materials which will mean, on the one hand, the restoration of Europe to normal work and wealth, and, on the other hand, set free our surplus goods and stimulate our own business health.

I have only three suggestions to offer, three things we, as American citizens, may and should do now.

First, we should mind our H.'s, and *Help Harding, Hughes, and Hoover*. These three men are in

strategic positions, the three men through whom America must express its political and economic ideas of world-relations.

President Harding needs to understand that the great mass of Americans is with him in making this country an active member of an effective association of nations. We must begin to differentiate between the Americanism of political campaigning and the real Americanism involving our duty to our neighbors as well as to ourselves. I am a Democrat who voted for Governor Cox, but this question is greater than partizanship. It should be the aim of every American now to work with and through President Harding.

Second, we should make clear to our senators our willingness, our determination, to do our part in helping to restore normal production and distribution in Europe and to establish an effective international court.

Third, we should determine by careful study what is necessary to put our millions of idle back at work.

I am apparently making a plea for the league, but I am not intending primarily to do that. I am emphasizing the points that the facts make it necessary to emphasize, and any sincere study of conditions in Europe will force one to emphasize the imperative need of our association with the nations of Europe if there is to be recuperation and lasting peace.

Disarmament agreements are offered by many people as a substitute. Reduction of military expenses is necessary in all nations, because, in Europe especially, they are too great a burden to be borne safely in addition to the huge expenses of the war. But disarmament on an adequate scale is

impossible without some efficient substitute. There is no substitute for war except law—international law. But international law effective enough to be a substitute for war is impossible without an association of nations of which the United States is a member.

§ 6

To bring order out of chaos in Europe there is mainly need of the understanding by our people that we are really neighbors of Europe, that we are intimately concerned in Europe's fate and must act as good neighbors. Lloyd George, speaking in the House of Commons, recently said: "People forget that countries are interdependent. 'Love your neighbor' is not only sound Christianity, but also good business." And where the power of business is limited, religion, the churches, can help much. Religion has no more important mission to fulfil than to make its doctrine of "love thy neighbor" come to the world's aid in this crisis. International neighborliness, international friendship, is religion in action, applied religion. We are not good neighbors if from a position of comparative safety we use our superior strength selfishly while we see our neighbors fighting with their lives to keep intact the dam that stems the threatening flood of destruction. We can be good neighbors to Europe only if we lend our strength to save her from the flood of want, unemployment, and anarchy that threatens her.

Besides the business and material reasons, it seems to me there are real ethical and spiritual reasons why we have got to go into Europe and help. We pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." Would any of us confine this

prayer to bread for Americans alone? And daily bread cannot come in time to Europe unless we in the United States make it possible not as a palliative through alms, but through real international friendship. Organized religion can help by giving leadership and voice to the understanding of our countrymen. This is the great opportunity for religion.

The road back to peace and universal daily bread will indeed require all the world's best qualities—the best qualities of business and of religion combined. The surest way to make these qualities effective is through international friendship. Invention and progress have made our nation the physical neighbor of every other nation, have brought London and Paris nearer Chicago than the thirteen States were to one another when we made our United States. Nationally, we must think and act in a neighborly fashion like good neighbors or fight like bad neighbors.

The church's fundamental ideals are justice, mercy, brotherhood. These are the foundations for international friendship, the foundations for international coöperation. The measures needed for the restoration of our material prosperity are the same as those needed for our spiritual salvation.

We have so far failed to restore the world through the processes of partizan politics, and we are beginning to see that we cannot restore the world through the processes of business alone. There must be stirred in us something of the religious motive of social responsibility before we can shake off the incubus of partizanship and clear the way for the effective use of our business energies in the task of organizing the peace of the world.





# The Crystal Heart

By PHYLLIS BOTTOME, *Author of "THE DARK TOWER," etc.*

*Drawings by* NORMAN PRICE



SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS I-XI. From the beginning Joy Featherstone smiled unexactly at a universe that she loved. She was nine when Rosemary, last of a large family, was born, and Joy knew she could never love anything so much again, not Maude, her companion sister, or Nicolas Pennant, who loved her better than any one else, despite Maude's desire for first place in his affections. Rosemary developed a rare and incurable wasting disease, and the long task of caring for her lay chiefly in Joy's devoted hands. She gave herself completely to fighting the child's unbearable pain, and after her death, she refused to marry Nicolas because of her horror at the thought of having a child who might suffer as Rosemary suffered. Nicolas thinks her horror is for him as a lover, and while Joy visits his married sister, Julia Ransome, he allows himself to become engaged to Maude. Julia, to whom Joy has confessed her vanishing fear, writes him an explanation, but Joy and Nicolas agree on the impossibility of hurting Maude. After the wedding Joy goes to help Julia, who has fallen mysteriously and broken her leg. Nina Mullory, Owen Ransome's secretary, hints at trouble between Owen and Julia, but Joy refuses to believe it possible.

## XII

Joy did not dislike Miss Mullory any more. It was quite impossible for her to dislike any one who had not a home of her own, and she had found out that Nina lived in a hostel. She sat at Miss Mullory's feet by the library fire and heard all about the life of hostels.

But Nina had now had glimpses into a life which seemed built for a pleasure beyond the temporary one of getting the better of somebody else. She said to Joy, with a sudden outbreak of wistfulness:

"You can't think how I like this bath here, enough hot water always, and good firm soap, and never having to do things for yourself, or sleep in sheets that look gray. I could n't believe it when I first came here, and no-

body snapped your head off. It's odd how things strike you. I was brought up in the country, and when Owen took me down here, I thought this house was like a bunch of mignonette."

Joy nodded.

"It is like that," she said. "It's Julia, you know; everything she touches is clean and sweet."

"Oh, no," said Miss Mullory, impatiently; "it's not Mrs. Ransome and it's not Owen. It's money, and don't you forget it. You can't be what you'd like when you're poor. Unless you keep as dull as ditch-water, you can't even be what you ought. I'd have liked to be like other girls myself, the kind that can take their fun without paying for it. But you can't if you're poor; you've got to choose."