



The editors will be glad to publish brief letters from readers relating to topics discussed by FORUM contributors, or to any views expressed in these columns

Farming and Chemistry

A chemical engineer of California sends us the following letter which is pertinent to the agricultural discussion in the April issue:

Editor of THE FORUM:

The farming industry's largest lesson to learn is efficiency. There is no industry outside that of agriculture, that could exist as inefficiently operated as the farming industry of today.

A farmer works his soil, sows and harvests his crops, and still he only gathers a fraction of the product the soil, the sun, the rain, and his own efforts have produced. This condition was perhaps legitimate a hundred years ago, before the sciences had reached any degree of intelligent development, but today the farmer needs more than all else combined a full realization of the fact that his industry is a scientific one, and essentially chemical, and should be treated accordingly.

The ultimate aim of most crops grown today is to produce human food, and in harvesting the fraction of the crop that is fit for this purpose, the secondary materials, the bulk, are discarded, though they contain in themselves possibilities of untold chemical by-products.

The wheat farmer burns his straw in the field, forgetting that the cellulose contained in the straw, produced during the ninety growing days, carries the potential paper-stock of the country, whereas today paper is produced from timber as old in

years as the straw is in days. The same straw may yield other chemical by-products of commercial value, and even some of the kind that might supply the tractor and the automobile on the farm with the needed fuel.

Again the fruit growers all over the country let hundreds of thousands of tons of fruit annually lie on the ground to rot, since the markets will only take a standard sized fruit, and the grower forgets or is ignorant of the fact that this same fruit, that now goes to waste, contains the very essence, the most richly endowed part of all the products manufactured in nature's laboratory.

All the remedies offered the farmer in legislative and financial ways, are futile and only temporary palliatives, as long as the industry discards the major part of its products, while only skimming the top layer of the cream.

The agricultural industry should avail itself to the fullest of the possibilities bound up in the coördinated sciences, and these only can place it in a position where revenues can be culled from every pound of produce grown off the soil, in the shape of chemical farm by-products. The agricultural industry in availing itself of the sciences, would then rapidly be reaching a position similar to that of the packing house industry of today, where nothing is overlooked in the shape of by-products, but the proverbial squeal.

It should not be a vision in a too distant future that coöperative paper mills will be erected adjacent to the coöperative wheat elevators of today, and that chemica

plants will be seen next to the fruit warehouses, where the orchard products will be changed into valuable chemicals.

And not until the farmer has encouraged and sought the assistance available to him from scientific research, and gained profit from the by-products thus derived, will the farming industry be permanently helped by legislative acts.

J. W. BECKMAN.

Oakland, Calif.

Truth About Indians

Apropos the March Debate:

Editor of THE FORUM:

Mrs. Seymour gives the Indian Bureau an incredibly clean bill of health. She glides over such indications of dangerous inefficiency as the fact that, while we scrupulously protect the country from trachoma at our ports, we lightly permit inland its wholesale and infectious continuance among the Indians.

As to the Pueblo land problem, Mrs. Seymour, not having noticed Fall's crooked finger in the defunct Bursum Indian Bill, appears a little muddled; but so, on the other hand, does Mrs. Austin, who has been lending her name through the Federation of Women's Clubs and the Indian Defense Association, to virulent public and private attacks on such of us as have tried to amend the so-called Lenroot Substitute into a bill justly settling the difficult situation in New Mexico. The Indian Defense Association's belated endorsement of our measure, does not absolve its members from warranting Mrs. Seymour's scorn for sentimentalists. Its recent hectic appeal for funds on the plea that the Pueblos are now starving, is further evidence that misguided friends of the Indians can resort to statements as inexact as some of Mr. Fall's. The Pueblos, though by no means affluent, are no longer starving, and the public deserves better than to be misled. Other Indian Associations fortunately have kept their heads and have stood throughout for a proper and speedy adjustment of the Pueblo land and water problem on a basis of truth and equity. Toward this end they still endorse the amended Lenroot Substitute, now known as Senate Bill No. 726.

As to Indian culture, I agree, on the whole, with Mrs. Austin's position that we need not be so cock-sure of our own ways as to interfere heavy-handedly with an Indian's ways. We might learn a good deal from his religion and its effect on his conduct, as compared with prevalent and notorious evidences of Christian citizenship. It might even do us good to dance now and then before the Lord instead of worshipping Him from our fatted pews.

Very truly yours,

WITTER BYNNER.

Santa Fe, N. M.

Moving the Sea Base

THE FORUM's recent discussion of the transportation problem has evoked a practical suggestion from the Assistant Executive Director of the Great Lakes — St. Lawrence Tidewater Association, who writes as follows:

There is a national transportation problem in which the rehabilitation of the railroads is a subordinate clause; the development of waterways is a subordinate clause; coördination of railway and highway transport is a subordinate clause; the recomposition of railway systems is a subordinate clause. The use of each arm of transportation in its highest economy and the planning of the system as a whole embracing all arms is the true problem.

To illustrate: railroads are trying to haul the bulk products of a continent across the greater breadth of the continent to the seaboard. From a large section of the Northwest they parallel an unused marine highway, that of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence, — busy in each of its sections, scarcely functioning as a whole. To connect those sections which is the gist of the St. Lawrence project, to turn that frustrated route into a great avenue of commerce, will not only serve the prime purpose of giving to the deep interior an outlet now denied to it, but will confer upon the railroads west of the Great Lakes the incidental benefit of populating the territory they serve now sparsely settled, and benefiting their revenues now insufficiently nourished.

Moving the sea base to the terminals of these western roads will give them opportunity to function thriftily. That is a first class illustration and perhaps the best illustration of an economic principle that strengthening one arm of transportation will reinvigorate other members of our continental system of communications.

JOHN S. PARDEE.

Duluth, Minn.

Making War Impossible

Among belated letters anent our January debate on the Outlawry of War is a communication from the Editor of "The German-American World," vigorous in phrase and conviction, of which a short extract reads as follows:

Editor of THE FORUM:

So long as the world suffers half a dozen politicians, resting their privilege on the support of international bankers, exploiters, oil syndicates, lot-jumpers, and the world associated press, to decide the question of war or peace by secret understandings, you may hurl the curse of Rome, the Presbyterian Church and of civilization at the head of the system without creating more than a hollow reverberation.

The very first practical step toward stopping wars is to clip the wings of those to whom war is a source of profit — by a universal law enabling the people to vote yes or no on the question, barring invasions. Take out of the hands of the politicians and diplomatic stool-pigeons of the Big Interests the power of making war unavoidable and allow the people to decide whether they wish to risk their necks and their savings in a war, and the first material progress toward reducing war to a minimum will have been made.

FREDERICK F. SCHRADER.

New York City.

Strindberg and Dogs

Editor of THE FORUM:

In her delightful essay called "The Idolatrous Dog" in the February number of your magazine, Miss Agnes Repplier says: "Goethe, indeed, and Alfred de Musset detested all dogs, and said so composedly." Another great man of letters

who detested all dogs and said so repeatedly, with varying degrees of composure, was August Strindberg.

JOANNA BROOKS.

North Adams, Mass.

Steinmetz

Miss Hun's tribute to Steinmetz in the February issue met with such sympathetic response that we have obtained permission to quote a poem by Lucia Oliviere, published in "The New York Times," which is strikingly in keeping with it:

We, whom he daily walked among,
Wondered that godlike head and majesty of brow
Were bound so meanly in the flesh.
But he, supreme in soul, disdained complaint.
Serene he lived, his only thought
To probe the wonders of God's universe,
Himself the greatest wonder of it all.
Yet he, who hurled the thunder bolts
And flashed his lightnings forth,
Could not divine the human destiny
Or pierce the pall of death.
Smiling he walked among the hyacinths
Whose flowerets fringed his garden path
And often lingered in that room
Where strange fantastic cacti grew —
With rapture watched their thorny stalks
Burst into gorgeous flower
Strange symbol of that master mind
Towering above ignoble flesh.
But much he toiled, dreaming the while
That mankind yet would rise to heights
His soul could vision.
His great heart loved all things,
But mankind most of all.
All titles, class conditions, baubles
That men love, to him were naught,
He was Steinmetz — that was enough,
The peer of kings and gods.
He passed in morning hour we know not where
To work with whom — perchance with God!

More About Spirits

The interest aroused by THE FORUM's debate on spirit communication has encouraged the editors to include further articles on the subject which will be published in future issues. Many letters were received too late for inclusion in the symposium. The following are of interest:

Editor of THE FORUM:

Psychic research seems to me the most important, the most fascinating, and the most hazardous field of exploration which man has yet attempted. Its importance is obvious, and can scarcely be exaggerated. If, through this means, existence after death could be demonstrated as a fact,

and the way made plain by which this present life and the next might be brought into harmony, it would revolutionize — or *evolutionize* — the world.

Of its fascination I can speak from experience, and this very fascination is perhaps one of its greatest drawbacks. It attracts the light-minded, the emotional, the erratic, for whom it holds a new thrill, cheaply to be acquired. Ill equipped for a field of inquiry wherein angels might fear to tread, their ventures can but retard the discovery of precious truths for which the heart of humanity is eagerly longing.

Its danger, in my opinion, is chiefly to one's mental integrity. The man who can carry on this work without being swept off his feet by unreasoning over-credulity, or else assuming the intellectually dishonest attitude of determined unbelief, is rare indeed. The oftmentioned "will to believe" jumbles fact, foolishness and fraud into a useless mass from which the truth is practically inextricable. The *will to disbelieve* shuts the door in disgust upon it all, without even a fair examination of the facts that have been painstakingly collected.

Between these two equally potent enemies of truth stands the small body of trained, scientific researchers with open, impartial mind. If to these we would entrust our means, our enthusiasm, our disinterested assistance, and let them be our pathfinders, another generation might see this world of warring creeds welded into one mighty brotherhood by the *certain knowledge* of a life to come.

MARY LOUISE INMAN.

New York City.

From the Director of the American-Swedish News Exchange:

During the past few years I have found many opportunities to investigate cases of alleged spirit communication in this country and in Europe, and I am bound to state frankly that in at least ninety per cent of these cases I have come across nothing in the way of conclusive evidence. But, in a few instances I must say that I have found what is to me definite evidence

of actual communication between incarnate and discarnate minds. The contents of these communications has mostly been of a strictly personal nature and therefore of value as evidence to myself only. To be honest I must therefore personally believe in these manifestations, but I wish to add that I have never been able to fully convince even my best friends, and I know of no case where anyone has arrived at a personal conviction in these matters by secondhand evidence, — personal experience is the only thing that counts. I cannot forego to bring up a few points that may be well-known to most of your readers but that should at least make non-believers take this problem seriously:

Telepathy, that is, wordless thought transference between two carnate minds, now seems to be a proved fact. Most of us believe in the continued existence of the human soul or mind, divested of its fleshly garb and therefore most probably spiritually intensified. Why then should mental telegraphy between a discarnate and an incarnate mind, correctly tuned, not be logically possible or even probable?

It cannot be denied that the Bible records numerous instances of communing between the spheres of the living and the dead. Why should those who base their religious convictions on the Bible inconsistently refute those instances while accepting others?

Some of the keenest minds trained in scientific analysis have, after long and careful investigation, pronounced spirit communications to be a fact. This should at least make us think twice before flatly denying the possibility of these phenomena.

Permit me to express my gratification that you have taken up this engrossing subject for discussion in your splendid magazine, as this will no doubt contribute materially in throwing more light on this phase of psychic science within which the present generation will undoubtedly live to see some very startling revelations.

BÖRJE H. BRILIOTH.

New York City.

Lenin—Scourge or Prophet?

A SYMPOSIUM

Summarizing or quoting many divergent opinions on this subject which was debated by Anna Louise Strong and Pitirim Sorokin in the April issue of THE FORUM

Napoleon, Bismarck, Nero, Caligula, Alexander the Great, Attila, Marat, Lincoln, Christ, and Satan,—to all these figures Lenin has been compared by the Editor's correspondents. Any man who can evoke passionate eulogy from one class of political thinkers and unbridled denunciation from another must be a great man, according to some definition of greatness. "By merit raised to that bad eminence," suggests a representative of the former class, quoting Milton's tribute to Satan; "one of the noblest of martyrs," declares a representative of the other class.

The average American observer of world events who has not visited Russia during the last few years, listening to the conflicting choruses, takes the attitude average people must always take, that the truth lies somewhere between the two exuberant estimates. Walt Mason, arch-type of the average American, expresses this attitude in the following doggerel: "And now that Lenin's in his grave, I ask these questions quaint: Was he a hero or a knave, a satyr or a saint? The human puzzle lies asleep; so strange is his renown, I know not whether I should weep or kick his headstone down." And he concludes, as most of the Editor's correspondents conclude, that we must leave the verdict to history: "We'll have to see dark Russia rise, or sink to lower deeps, before we call this Lenin wise, or damn his name for keeps."

Perhaps it is natural that those who condemn Lenin should be more vocal and more prompt to respond to THE FORUM's debate than those who believe in him, for it is easier to point a finger at a man's shortcomings than at his virtues; the shortcomings are usually more obvious. In Lenin's case they were for a time almost the only facts visible to outsiders; the havoc surrounding his régime was patent enough, and only his well-wishers could see the idealistic goal toward which his policies were heading. Not only that,

but Lenin himself, after trying out his Marxian theories, seemed to have admitted his failure, and his opponents lost no time in seizing upon his compromises as evidence that his system was rotten at the core.

An impartial observer cannot but feel that these opponents have not quite proved their case. No one can say for sure that there would have been less chaos, less suffering, and less slaughter in Russia if some man other than Lenin, with some system of government other than the Soviet experiment had been in charge of the political fortunes of the Russian people directly after the Revolution. The reign of terror following the French Revolution still makes us shudder, yet in many respects the situation in the France of that day seems to have been simpler than the situation in Russia at the close of the Czaristic régime. No statesman in history could have taken up the responsibilities that Lenin shouldered and come through with a perfect record.

On the other hand there are many who believe that no end, however noble, justifies the arbitrary and cruel autocracy that is associated with Lenin's rule, whether he was personally accountable for the crimes and injustices of the last few years or not. The opinions which we quote below are selected from scores of letters received by the Editor. If the denunciations seem to outweigh the praise, it is simply because we have selected opinions in accordance with the proportion of pros and cons in the letters submitted. As in the debate between Professor Sorokin and Dr. Strong, we present the indictment first.

THE KING BACILLUS

The most scathing letter is written by Miss Isabel Florence Hapgood, who lived for many years in Russia under the Imperial régime. It is worth quoting in full:

"May I say a few words about the hysterical defence and exaltation of Lenin, which have risen to a piercing