

## THE BRITISH AND GERMAN BLOCKADES

A CHICAGO reader writes us as follows:

Your editorial "America's Duty" (in The Outlook of February 14) is too strong for those who wish to be thoroughly careful before deciding for war. As I read this article how I wish that with the same power of the pen you had also written another article and described how England had violated international law, how she has said to us, "Keep away from Germany with your merchant ships," and while it isn't necessary to send our ships to the bottom of the sea to gain obedience, nevertheless she is the sea bully, and has always been the sea bully, and now that she has met the land bully, militarism, please let them fight it out without our assistance.

Another correspondent sends us a copy of the Cornwall (New York) "Press" in which a summer resident of that town on the Hudson, a well-known and influential American citizen of German ancestry, says that Bishop Gallagher in a recent speech at Grand Rapids, Michigan, exactly expressed his views regarding the German submarine blockade. In his address Bishop Gallagher said:

I disagree that the country must stand behind the President. Wilson acquiesced in the violation of international law when he allowed the Allies to starve out Germany. Why should international laws be forced upon Germany when other nations are not made to abide by them? Germany has the same right to starve out England if she can.

The foregoing quotations illustrate a curious confusion of thought prevalent in this country in the minds of many people ordinarily humane and intelligent. These people, who can quickly distinguish between murder and trespass on land, seem unable to make the same distinction at sea. The fundamental issue in the German and British blockades has nothing whatever to do with international law. The issue before the American people is simply this: Shall we tolerate the ambush and unwarned assassination of our citizens on the high seas? No one denies that Germany has the right in war to blockade England, and by blockade to starve England if she can do so. The North starved the South by blockade in the Civil War, and no one objected either on the grounds of international law or of the common human instincts of the world. But if the North had sunk, without warning, every merchant and passenger ship attempting to run the blockade, and had indiscriminately drowned women and children in this form of assassination, Abraham Lincoln would have been looked upon to-day with horror by the civilized world.

Great Britain in maintaining her blockade of Germany seizes every belligerent or neutral merchant vessel that she suspects of carrying contraband. Let us admit that she herself defines what is contraband, that she is autocratic in this decision, that she opens and examines mail-bags, that she makes it very inconvenient and uncomfortable for non-combatants who wish to ship goods or take passage themselves to Germany. But she does not kill anybody in this procedure. She has not killed a single non-combatant on the high seas during this war. Under the universally accepted rules of naval blockade she captures vessels, takes them into a designated port, examines them, confiscates their goods if she so pleases, and interns the vessel. But the injured party has a means of redress. Suits may be brought, and probably will be brought, at the close of the war, and damages covering all loss of property, of time, and of profits, may and probably will then be awarded. This is what happened in the Alabama claims during our Civil War. England acquiesced in submitting the claims to a tribunal, and when the decision was made against her cheerfully paid an enormous sum of money. In the Alaska boundary case with the United States the case went against her and she submitted. Her past history and her present conduct justify every American citizen in the confidence that if he has suffered illegal damages he will in due time receive full reparation.

But this is not Germany's method. Those who really want to get a visual impression of what Germany does may find a photograph on another page of this issue of The Outlook, showing how she conducts her blockade. While this picture portrays the sinking of a military transport, allowable under the rules of

warfare, it shows exactly what has happened in the many cases of the sinking by Germany of non-combatant passenger and merchant vessels. Over a thousand men, women, and children were drowned without warning on the Lusitania. Scores of other non-combatants have been similarly drowned without warning by Germany since the Lusitania was torpedoed. There can never be reparation for these murders. This is the President's view. He has officially said to Germany that this course is a shocking violation of the commonest moral instincts of mankind, that it cannot be tolerated, that until Germany promises to stop it the United States cannot even maintain diplomatic relations with her, and, if she still persists, we must in defense of our honor and of the lives of our citizens try to stop her by force.

Cannot Bishop Gallagher see the difference between trespass and murder? Does he realize that while he accuses Great Britain of trespass, an offense which can be repaired by paying the damages which the trespass has caused, he is defending Germany in committing murder, an injury which can never be repaired? If Germany will send out her high sea fleet and, by the recognized procedure of naval blockade, prevent food and supplies from reaching the islands of Great Britain, The Outlook will cease to protest. But it will never cease to protest as long as Germany, by methods which are despised even by the professional prize-fighter, shells and torpedoes non-combatants and puts men, women, and children in open boats on the turbulent sea and leaves them to drown or to reach land as best they may.

## THE WAR ON ALCOHOL

Though entrenched behind ancient custom and law and aided by the instinct of men for personal liberty, the liquor traffic has been driven back by many allied forces. There is no doubt how the battle is going now, and it is almost certain that most of the ground which the liquor traffic has lost will never be regained. The forces opposed to it are too strong. The moral sense of men which was in the fight against alcoholism early has been reinforced by economic self-interest. In the old days the foe was called intemperance, and the weapons of warfare were the sermon and the horrible example and the appeal to the spirit of religious revival. To-day the foe is called alcoholism, and the weapons of warfare have become very much more numerous and varied, and range all the way from regulations by hard-headed corporations, posters displayed by employers for the benefit of employees, and examinations in connection with health insurance and industrial pension schemes, to the most drastic laws.

### "THE TRADE" ON THE DEFENSIVE IN ENGLAND

And the war which once was localized has become world-wide. One thing that has stimulated this war against alcoholism is the discovery by the belligerent nations that John Barleycorn and his fellows are in every case aiders and abettors of the enemy. In England popular interest in the matter of discovering and suppressing German spies has been succeeded by a general public discussion of the folly of harboring so potent an ally of Germany as strong drink. One of the most vigorous leaders in this discussion is the staid and by no means radical London "Spectator." In issue after issue it has been leading the fight against the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks. The "Spectator" disclaims being an advocate of teetotalism. Indeed, it says distinctly that its policy "is not a teetotal policy, but a war policy," and summarizes it by saying that "while the Government insist that we are a beleaguered city it is madness to go on turning foodstuffs into intoxicants." It is a well-intrenched foe that the "Spectator" is fighting. In its organized form this foe is known as "the Trade" with a capital T. All through England women and dependent children and perfectly good clergy who would be horrified at the idea of lending the least assistance to the Germans have their savings invested in breweries and distilleries. It is hard to fight an enemy that has placed non-combatants of this sort on the firing-line. And so "the Trade" gives way slowly, in spite of the heavy guns fired by the "Spectator" and the rapid fire from letter-writers. One Englishman writes to the "Spectator" from a town that has "only one industry—viz., distilling whisky;" and he tells the

following tale: "Into the large distillery one sees strings of carts laden with barley being driven. For more than a month I have been trying to get some coal, my supply being nearly finished; but owing to press of work at the mines or congestion on the railway I have been unable to obtain it. Yet carts from the distillery have during this week been unloading two trucks which have been put in a siding for them. . . . The manager tells me they have never been so busy, and this in spite of high prices."

Not only do these enemies of alcohol object to turning food-stuffs into intoxicants at a time when Germany is trying to starve England, but they object to letting strong drink incapacitate workers who are needed to turn out shells and ships to aid the fight that England is making.

#### RECENT GAINS IN THE UNITED STATES

So war is helping to down alcohol because alcohol tends to weaken the nation's forces and contributes to unnecessary waste of precious resources. If it does this in war time to a belligerent, it is equally certain that it does the same thing in peace time to a neutral. It is not discreditable to the American people that they are seeing the force of this plain fact, and are doing something to prevent the waste and fight the demoralization caused by alcoholism. In over half the territory of the United States the sale of liquor is illegal. The spread of the anti-alcohol idea has started from many centers and worked outward. Town by town and county by county have driven out the saloon. Then whole States, already won by local option efforts, have made the saloon an outlaw. Wherever the elimination of the saloon has come through this normal and well-established development of public opinion it promises to be permanent.

Our form of government, however, has made this fight against alcoholism difficult. The town or county which has voted out the saloon has often found its efforts partly nullified because the traffic in drink has been able to make forays from outside into the prohibited area. As a rule, such towns or counties have had no real assistance from the State of which they are a part until the State as a whole has adopted prohibition.

And the State in turn has confronted the same difficulty. At first the State that prohibited within its borders the manufacture or sale of liquor got from the Federal Government nothing but hindrance. We have had in this country the absurd anomaly of a State government prohibiting liquor and a Federal Government granting a Federal license for dealing in liquor within that State. One of the ways by which violations of State law have been discovered has been by looking up these Federal licenses. The first step of any significance to lend Federal aid to the States that wanted to keep clear of the liquor traffic was the adoption of the so-called Wilson Law of 1890, which took away the alleged right of a person after shipping liquor into a prohibition State to claim exemption from the State law if he sold the liquor in the original package in which it was shipped in inter-State commerce. The next important step was taken by Congress twenty-three years afterwards. On March 1, 1913, Congress enacted the so-called Webb-Kenyon Law. This provided that the shipment from one State to another of any intoxicating liquor intended "to be received, possessed, sold, or in any manner used, either in the original package or otherwise, in violation of any law of such State" was prohibited. This act was entitled "An Act divesting intoxicating liquors of their inter-State character in certain cases." Until that law was passed, liquor, like any other commodity which was carried from one State to another, was regarded as being transported in inter-State commerce until it reached its destination. So, for example, if the State law regarded possession of liquor as *prima facie* evidence of intent to sell, liquor could be seized in transit; but if the liquor was brought from outside the State it could not be seized until it reached the person to whom it was addressed. So the Federal Government was, so to speak, giving to this liquor a refuge from the operation of the State laws. This refuge the Webb-Kenyon Bill removed.

#### NEW TACTICS PLANNED

The foes of alcoholism in this country are not, however, satisfied with this. They are proposing another law more strict than this. The bill in which their proposition is embodied has

been attached as an amendment in the Senate to the Post-Office Appropriation Bill. In this form it is obnoxious, for it is thus endowed with power to determine the fate of a bill appropriating money for a great department of the Government. Such a measure ought to be adopted or rejected for its own sake. This stringent provision makes it a criminal offense for any one to transport intoxicating liquors—except for sacramental, scientific, medicinal, or mechanical purposes—in inter-State commerce to any State or Territory that prohibits within its borders the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquor for beverage purposes. This is a very much more drastic measure than the one which Congress passed four years ago and which the Supreme Court has recently sustained. That law permits the State to take legal action to enforce its own prohibitory laws. This provision lends the power of the Federal Government to aid in the enforcement of the State prohibitory law. It even goes further than that. It announces to every State: "If you prevent the sale and manufacture of liquor within your borders, you will under no circumstances be permitted to import it." In other words, as was remarked in a conversation the other day, this so-called Reed Amendment "wishes on the State something it might not wish for itself." The Webb-Kenyon Law was a reinforcement of local and State action. This amendment is an added reinforcement accompanied by an added limitation. It is as if the Federal Government were saying to the several States: "You needn't deny yourselves at all; but if you do deny yourselves, we are going to insist on your making that self-denial teetotal."

Still further, the foes of alcohol are pushing as hard as they can the proposed amendment to the Federal Constitution making prohibition National. This amendment has been reported favorably by a committee of the House of Representatives. If the predictions of its supporters are fulfilled, it will have been passed by the House itself before this issue of *The Outlook* reaches our readers. In order to be effective, however, this amendment would have to be adopted by the Senate before the 4th of March, and there is no expectation of that. It does not seem at all incredible that within a few years the Legislatures of the various States will be facing the responsibility of voting for or against an amendment that would make prohibition Nation-wide.

There is much to be said for National prohibition that cannot be said for State prohibition; but it seems likely that, as the spread of county or town option has been an essential step to effective State prohibition, so the spread of State prohibition will prove to be a requisite step to effective National prohibition.

#### A SUGGESTION IN CONCLUSION

In this discussion we have here but one suggestion to offer for consideration. We shall put it tentatively in the form of a question. In most of the laws that have been adopted the distinction between alcoholic liquor that could be legally made and sold and that which could not be was a distinction of purpose or object. This has left the way open to subterfuge, confusion, evasion, and abuse. Would it not be better to make that distinction one purely mechanical, by setting a certain percentage as a limit beyond which the presence of alcohol in any potable liquor would be illegal?

### THREE PACIFISTS

Peter.

From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." But he turned and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

When duty calls, but danger threatens, the motto, "Safety first," has the flavor of the devil.

Caiaphas.

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If