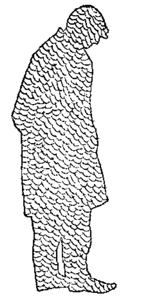
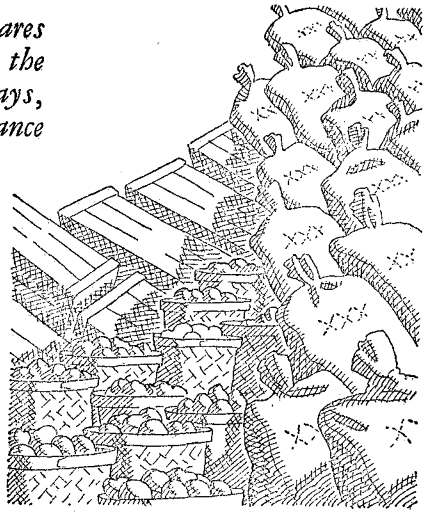
A Few Facts on the Theory of Abundance

By Samuel O. Dunn



The theory of abundance actually perpetuates scarcity, declares the chairman of the Simmons-Boardman Company. Both the New Era and the New Deal ignored economic facts, he says, in indicating his belief in the theory of economic balance



Never did any people pay so dearly for their economic mistakes as the American people during the last five years. A New Era of economic ignorance caused the depression. New Deal policies of government, business, and labor, based upon economic ignorance, have protracted and threaten to perpetuate it.

Exponents of both the New Era and the New Deal have told us that the "orthodox" economics derived from all previous experience was an "economics of scarcity," and must be abandoned. We now, they claim, have the means to provide abundance—in fact, during the twenties provided it too abundantly. Hence we could not or did not consume what we produced. Hence the depression and millions of unemployed. We must proceed in the future in accordance with a new "economy of abundance" which will restrict what we produce to what we can or will consume. Otherwise we shall have chronic recurrence of depression and unemployment.

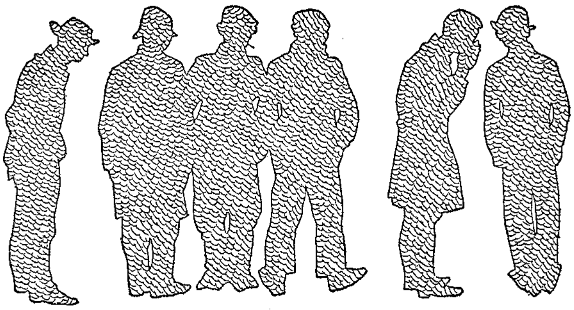
That this economic philosophy has been widely accepted not only by labor-union leaders and the literary protagonists of social-labor policies, but also by business men, is shown by the way both business men and labor rushed into NRA. The truth is that "orthodox" economics never were more signally vindicated than in the United States under both the New Era and the New Deal. Under both, important policies of government and business have violated almost every principle of orthodox economics. This is the real cause of the collapse and of the entirely unnecessary prolongation and deepening of the depression. Recovery awaits a return to economic sanity by government, business, and labor—to policies derived by the now despised orthodox economists from the experience of mankind, especially under industrialism and capitalism.

First let us glance backward at the New Era. The Great War transformed the United States from the greatest debtor into the greatest creditor nation. The teachings of orthodox economics, regarding the changes this necessitated in our national policies, were plain and easily understandable because based upon simple arithmetic. A large debtor nation must export more goods than it imports. Its excess of exports is required to pay the principal and interest of its debts, which must be paid in goods. Hence it was easy before the war for the United States to maintain a "favorable balance of trade," with or without protective tariffs. A large creditor nation, to get paid the principal and interest of the debts owing to it, must import more goods than it exports. It is merely doing a sum in simple addition to demonstrate that if it restricts its imports by protective tariffs it will thereby either prevent the payment of the principal and interest owing to it, or restrict its exports.

Disregarding every principle of economics, and even simple arithmetic, the United States, during the New Era, tried both to collect its debts and to restrict its imports. Even in 1930, after the depression began, we raised our protective tariffs to reduce our imports while continuing to insist upon large payments by our foreign debtors that could be made only in goods. The inevitable effect of restricting our imports was to restrict our exports, which consisted largely of farm products. Hence the increase of certain farm surpluses. Hence the continued and increasing inadequacy of agricultural purchasing power as compared with industrial purchasing power.

Industry and its employees could not prosper indefinitely by taking in one another's washing. American agriculture was their largest and best market. By their government-aided policies of high industrial prices and wages and low farm prices and incomes they steadily undermined and finally ruined their largest market, and thereby helped to destroy their own business and employment.

The New Era was a period of economic racketeering. The great stock market speculation, accompanied by the high pressure selling of billions of securities at grotesquely fictitious prices, and participated in by millions of persons in efforts to exploit one another, was the most gigantic racket of all time. The government and business policies of regulating the railways and not their competitors, and of not subsidizing the railways while subsidizing their competitors, were a New Era racket owing to which transportation is now our most over-expanded industry and the railways are faced with ruin and perhaps



government ownership. But of all the many New Era rackets probably the principal contributor to the depression was the one in which government, industry, and labor joined to ruin agriculture.

With so many huge New Era rackets, violative of heretofore accepted principles of economics, available to explain the depression, no new system of economics seemed needed to explain it, or to pull us out of it. Nevertheless, we are offered the "economy of abundance." Some of the principal New Deal policies of government, business, and labor are based upon it. Therefore, its premises, reasoning, and conclusions are important. I frankly disagree with practically all of it. I believe the policies based upon it have turned the upward trend of business that prevailed during the year from July, 1932, to July, 1933, into the downward trend that prevailed throughout the subsequent sixteen months to November, 1934, when this article is being written. I believe that continuance of these policies will tend to perpetuate the scarcity from which the economy of abundance assumes we have escaped or easily can escape.

I formerly thought that the economists of abundance agreed in assuming as their major premise that in the United States we already had produced, or had become able to produce, a plethora of necessities, comforts, and luxuries, and that failure of anybody to enjoy abundance was due entirely to failure of our economic system to produce the right kind of goods or to pass them along fast enough to the mass of consumers. But the economists of abundance appear to have divided into a potential-abundance school and an actual-abundance school.

In his book, *The Economy of Abundance,* Mr. Stuart Chase undertakes to show, not that we have had abundance or could provide it with our present system and equipment, but that it could be provided, while working hours were greatly reduced, if an "industrial general staff" were empowered to take control and revolutionize all production and distribution, substituting "serviceability" for "vendibility" as their objective. With Mr. Chase's potential-abundance assumption I agree. With his program for providing actual abundance by a government planned and managed economy I entirely disagree. It is based upon the doctrine now accepted not only by socialists, but also by communists and fascists, that all production, distribution, and exchange should be conducted by government or under a government dictatorship for "service" and not by a free private enterprise under private ownership energized by the profit motive. To discuss his program would be to discuss, not whether we have had abundance, or now have the means of providing it, but the issue long ago raised by socialism and more recently by fascism—that of government versus private conduct of business.

I will not discuss in this article a "planned economy," either communist or fascist. I am concerned in it only with the doctrine of actual abundance—the assumption that we already have the means of providing abundance—and with the important government and business policies now actually based, or proposed to be based, upon it in this country.

This doctrine takes two forms. One is that, having the means of producing abundance, we caused the present depression by increasing too much during the recent period of prosperity the portion of the national income invested in "capital goods" and curtailing too much the portion of it passed along to consumers, especially wage earners, with the result that consumers became unable to buy enough of what they produced. Investment in "capital goods" is made directly or indirectly from profits. This form of the doctrine, therefore, argues for lower profits and higher wages.

The other form of the doctrine is that we had a general over-production—that we produced more than our people could or desired to consume. Total supply exceeded total demand. Inadequate demand shut down industries and threw millions out of employment. Resume capacity production and we shall have the same results again. This form of the doctrine argues for reduction of working hours, accompanied by advances in hourly wages, however, to prevent curtailment of consumer purchasing power.

Fortunately, facts have been made available by recent investigations which clearly indicate that the assumptions made for some years by the economists of abundance are not correct and the conclusions drawn by them regarding needed government and business policies are unsound.

First, then, is it true that a relatively increasing part of the national income was invested in "capital goods" during the twenties? In other words, was a relatively increasing part of the national income devoted to increasing means of production and a relatively declining part of it devoted to producing and making it possible to buy necessities, comforts, and luxuries for consumption? A study made by the National Industrial Conference Board shows that in the seven years 1923–1929, between recovery from the depression of 1921–1922 and the beginning of the present depression, the production of goods for immediate consumption fluctuated only between 59.2 per cent and 59.7 per cent of total production. These figures do not include expenditures for the construction of homes, which are used by the entire consuming public, not for production, but to live in. Add the production of homes to the production of other consumers' goods, and it is found that the total production of consumers' goods was 67.5 per cent of total production in 1914; 67.1 per cent in 1919; 68.3 per cent in 1921; 64.4 per cent in 1923; 65.6 per cent in 1925; 65 per cent in 1927; 63.7 per cent in 1929; 66.2 per cent in 1931; and 71.9 per cent in 1933.

The years 1914, 1919, 1921, 1931 and 1933 were all years of mild or severe depression. In such years investment in means of production always declines more than production for consumption. This is why relatively the production of consumers' goods was larger in these years than in the intervening years of prosperity. The figures demonstrate that during the years of prosperity there was relatively no substantial increase in the production of means of production as compared with the production of consumers' goods. Furthermore, the production of consumers' goods increased from $14,200,000,000 in 1914 to $26,000,000,000 in 1921, to $33,000,000,000 in 1923 and to $39,000,000,000 in 1929. These figures demonstrate that the demand, and purchasing power and purchases of consumers enormously increased.

As a whole the statistics of the National Industrial Conference Board certainly do not support the assumption that the depression was or could have been due in large measure to a relatively excessive increase in the investment of the national income for productive purposes, resulting in harmful curtailment of consumer buying power. And, in fact, no data supporting this assumption ever have been presented by any of those who have based upon it an argument for revolutionary changes in government and business policies.

What, then, is the largest abundance that the resources, equipment, and labor of the United States ever have produced, or could produce now? The Brookings Institution has recently made comprehensive and detailed studies of the data available and published them in two books entitled *America's Capacity to Produce* and *America's Capacity to Consume*. Total production, and consequently total national income, were the largest in 1929. In that year 27,474,000 families averaging slightly more than four persons had an income from all sources—wages, profits, rents, etc.—averaging $2800 per family. In addition, 8,988,000 individuals had an average income of $1760. This accounts for the entire national income. It was $62.30 per month per capita.

Does $62.30 a month represent an income per person so in excess of the necessities, comforts, and luxuries that the average person wants, as to support the assumption that the people as a whole refrained intentionally from buying as much as was produced, and does it further follow that a general reduction of working hours is necessary to prevent chronic overproduction and unemployment?

Another assumption upon which the demand for a general reduction of work to 30 hours a week is based is that the nation has resources, equipment and labor capable of producing much more than actually was produced even in 1929. To determine the validity of this assumption the Brookings Institution made a survey of the capacity of the equipment and man power of every important industry. Its final general conclusion was that, allowing for "bottleneck" or limiting factors, our economic plant could have produced in 1929 only 19 per cent more than it did. This would have been $74 per capita a month. Would this have represented an abundance of products so great that, even if the people could have bought them, they would not have done so, and that production would have exceeded the demand for goods even more than it is claimed it did?

The studies of the Brookings Institution throw light upon the matter. It divides families into six classes according to their incomes in 1929. It estimates that there were 11,653,000 families in a "subsistence and poverty" group with annual incomes under $1500. Next there was a "minimum comfort" group of 9,893,000 families with incomes from $1500 to $3000. The "minimum comfort" group, although smaller, spent an aggregate 70 per cent larger than the "subsistence and poverty" group for food, housing, attire, and other consumers' goods and services. There were 3,672,000 families in a "moderate circumstances" group with annual incomes from $3000 to $5000. This group, although only one-third as large, spent a larger aggregate amount for food, housing, attire, and other things than the "subsistence and poverty" group. In other words, families with annual incomes from $3000 to $5000 spent three times as much per family as did families with incomes less than $1500.

It is unnecessary to pursue the matter further statistically. The facts simply demonstrate what every observing person knows—namely, that every normal individual or family buys more with a larger income than with a smaller one. It may be said in passing that the other three groups consisted of 1,625,000 families who were "comfortable" with incomes from $5000 to $10,000; 471,000 "well-to-do" families with incomes from $10,000 to $25,000; and 160,000 "wealthy" families with incomes of $25,000 or more.

The Brookings Institution estimates that in 1929 over 19,000,000, or about 70 per cent, of the families of the country had incomes of $2500 or less. If all their incomes were raised to $2500, their total annual expenditures would be about $16,000,000,000 more than in 1929. They would spend about $4,000,000,000 more for food; $4,000,000,000 more for housing; $2,000,000,000 more for attire and adornment; and $5,000,000,000 more for other consumers' goods and services. This would cause an increase in the demand for consumers' goods exceeding the maximum capacity of our industrial plant in 1929. An increase averaging $1000 a year in the consumptive expenditures of all families with incomes less than $10,000 in 1929 would amount to $27,000,000,000, and create a demand greatly exceeding our present productive capacity.

If all the 5,928,000 families having incomes of $3000 or more in 1929 had had all but $3000 of their income taken from them and transferred to the 21,546,000 families having incomes less than $3000, this would have increased the average income of these 21,546,000 families only from $1433 to $2183.

Would this redistribution of income, if it were practicable, provide abundance for all? What is considered abundance depends upon the point of view, and this mainly upon the experience of the family or individual. Many families that previously had incomes exceeding, and even largely exceeding, $3000 have had them reduced to that amount or less by the depression, and certainly none of them regard a family income from $2200 to $3000 as abundance. The Bureau of Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture made a study of the cost of food during the period from July, 1931, through June, 1932, which leads to the conclusion that a liberal diet for an average family at the prices of 1929 would have required an expenditure for food alone of $950. In order to make proportionate expenditures for housing, raiment and other necessities and comforts an average family would require, on the basis of 1929 costs, an income of at least $3000. This might provide comfort. It would fall far short of providing abundance according to the standards of any family that ever actually had abundance. A less unequal distribution of the national income undoubtedly is desirable, but no redistribution of the largest total national income that could possibly be produced with our present equipment would increase the incomes and purchasing power of three-fourths of our people enough to enable them to have anything remotely approaching abundance.

The facts plainly demonstrate that abundance has never been produced in the United States. They demonstrate that we have never had, and have not available now, enough resources and equipment with which to produce abundance. They demonstrate that our people would buy and consume much more if it were produced and if they had incomes with which to buy it. They demonstrate that in order to produce an abundance of necessities, comforts, and luxuries for all it will be necessary largely to increase the capacity of our industries as a whole and invest vast additional amounts of capital and employ millions of workers for that purpose.

But it may be said that we should further reduce working hours because present unemployment shows that our lack of productive capacity is not a lack of labor but of adequate equipment and efficient management. The conclusion reached by the Brookings Institution is that in 1929 we had just about enough unemployed and employable labor to have manned the unutilized capacity of the plant of industry. The average working week was 51 hours. Assuming that since then the technic and methods of industry have improved enough to increase production per man-hour 25 per cent—a very extreme assumption—we could now, with the same amount of employment as in 1929 working on a 40-hour week basis, produce approximately the same amount as in 1929. On the same assumption, a reduction of the working week to 30 hours would render impossible a total production and consumption of goods more than 90 per cent of that of 1929. In other words, the working hours already established under NRA will restrict total production and national income to about the levels of 1929 until increased investment in the plants of industry and improvement in technic and methods have further increased productivity per man-hour of labor; and a general reduction of work to 30 hours a week would, other things being equal, curtail production and the national income to 10 per cent less than in 1929.

But other things would not be equal. The reductions of hours under NRA have been accompanied by advances in average hourly wages. The demand of organized labor is not merely for a further general reduction to 30 hours a week, but also for the same weekly wage as for present working hours. In industries now having the 40-hour week this would cause an increase in the average hourly wage of 33-1/3 per cent. It is argued that this is necessary to maintain the purchasing power of wage-earners. But how about the purchasing power of others—farmers, for example, small business men, professional men?

And how about the purchasing power of industry? This is perhaps the most important and most disregarded question of all. The "capital goods" industries are, excepting perhaps agriculture and residential construction, the most important key to the present economic situation, because they are so vast, are among the most depressed and have so much of the total unemployment in them. A "capital goods" industry is so called because it produces equipment or machinery that is bought by other industries as an investment to be used by them in increasing their production or reducing their costs of production. For example, locomotive building is a "capital goods" industry, because railways invest capital in locomotives to use them for producing transportation. All "capital goods" are bought by railways and other industries either with their profits or with capital raised by the issuance of securities the sale of which is made possible only by current or prospective profits. The railroads, being the largest single customer of the "capital goods" industries, afford a striking but typical illustration of the dependence of these industries upon the profits of other industries.

In the five years 1925–1929, inclusive, the annual purchases of the railways from manufacturers averaged about $1,300,000,000. Their average annual net operating income in the four years 1930–1933, inclusive, was 52 per cent less than in 1925–1929; their average annual purchases from manufacturers, 55 per cent less. The reduction of their purchases was due, and in almost exact proportion, to the reduction of their net earnings. Advance hourly wages generally at the wrong time, or unduly, and you reduce the power of the railways and other industries to buy "capital goods" both by increasing the cost and prices of such goods and by reducing the profits with which, directly or indirectly, other industries buy them. Reduce buying from the "capital goods" industries and you reduce employment in both them and the "service industries," which are largely dependent upon them for business. About three-fourths of all unemployment is in the "capital goods" and "service" industries. Recovery and re-employment are impossible without revival of the business of these great industries. Therefore, untimely or undue general advances in hourly wages are directly inimical to recovery and re-employment.

Under NRA, already reductions of working hours have been accompanied by advances in hourly wages. No doubt this was justifiable in some industries. But its general effect has been to arrest recovery. In this country recovery began in the last one-third of 1932 when, owing to expansion of production and commerce, the increase in railroad car loadings was twice as great as normal. After the banking crisis in the first quarter of 1933 recovery was immediately resumed, resulting in car loadings in May being 2 per cent, in June 18 per cent and in July 28 per cent greater than in 1932. The indiscriminate advances made in hourly wages, causing increases in production costs and prices, and curtailing profits and buying from the "capital goods" industries, have been the principal influence that has arrested recovery. The railways, for example, the largest single customer of the "capital goods" industries, aided by government loans and a large increase for some months prior to May, 1934, in their net operating income, bought three times as much from the "capital goods" industries in the first half of 1934 as in the first half of 1933. Owing to subsequent reduction of their net operating income due to advances in prices and wages and decline of traffic their buying power has been reduced relatively one-half, and their buying has declined accordingly. The total volume of production and commerce was less in July, August, September and October, 1934, than in 1933. Consequently, in spite of reductions of working hours, total employment was less in the fall of 1934 than in 1933.

The so-called "economy of abundance" is a tissue of assumption easily refutable because unsupported and unsupportable by facts. The economic system of the United States has come nearer to producing abundance than any other, and it can be made to produce abundance if readjusted and conducted in accordance with sound principles. But the vital requisite to an adequate increase of production is the establishment and maintenance of balance between the various factors of production.

The most important factors are agriculture and industry. We allowed them during the twenties to become and remain seriously unbalanced. The average income of farm families in 1929 is estimated at $1240 and of town and urban families at $3226. Small wonder that, with the purchasing power of their largest market relatively so curtailed, industry and its employees became unable to sell all they could produce. The establishment of a sound balance between agriculture and industry is probably the most important of our economic problems. It cannot be established by government and business policies that so limit the market of agriculture as to necessitate restriction of its production in order to avoid surpluses. It must be established by policies that enable agriculture to sell, at remunerative prices, in both domestic and foreign markets all it can produce.

Many business men have criticized and ridiculed as economically unsound AAA policies designed to reduce farm production and thereby increase farm prices. These policies would be unsound if there were not other policies that unbalance agriculture and industry by both restricting the market for farm products and restricting industrial production. The foreign market for American farm products is restricted by policies already mentioned in this article which tend to make and keep farm prices low even when general business is good. The production of industry is swiftly curtailed whenever the demand for its products declines. Why should men in industries that have greatly reduced their production during the depression criticize as economically unsound a reduction of farm production? It may be answered that artificial government aid, including subsidies, has been given to reduce farm production. But has not government aid been given through NRA to industries desiring to curtail production? Do not many codes written by business men themselves contain provisions for curtailing production the express purpose of which is to make practicable increase and maintenance of prices?

The fact is, that until the great drouth government co-operation enabled industry and its employees to advance their wages and prices too much in proportion to the advances in farm prices, with the result of increasing the disparity between agricultural and industrial purchasing power and putting the brakes on recovery. The policy of artificially curtailing production is absolutely unsound economically, excepting in a few natural-resources industries; but those who already have unbalanced the economic system by this and other selfish policies are not in the best position to criticize it.

In any industry and in industry as a whole the factors of production are management, capital, and labor. In order that industry may maintain or increase its production there must be established and maintained a sound economic balance between the compensation of management, the profits of capital, and the wages of labor.

Increased production per worker and per capita requires increase in the facilities of production. This requires increased investment. Increases of investment are made only in the confident expectation that profits will be earned upon existing and additional investment. Therefore, the profits made in every industry, where increase in production is desirable, must be sufficient to induce additional investment in it.

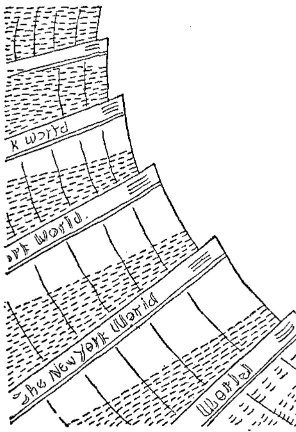
Increased production is useless, however, and cannot be maintained unless the national income is so distributed among farmers, wage earners, and all other classes as to increase their purchasing power. To contend that wages should not be unduly advanced in a period of depression, when the immediate result will be curtailment of the already inadequate profits and purchasing power of industries, is far from being the same thing as to contend that wages should never be advanced at all. The problem of prosperity is constantly so to readjust the relations between the various factors in production and distribution as to maintain a balance between them that will increase production and prosperity. This was not done in the twenties, when the income of agriculture did not increase with the income of industry and its employees, and wages in most industries did not increase as much in proportion as profits. The problem of depression is to establish relations that will balance the various factors and thereby restore production and prosperity.

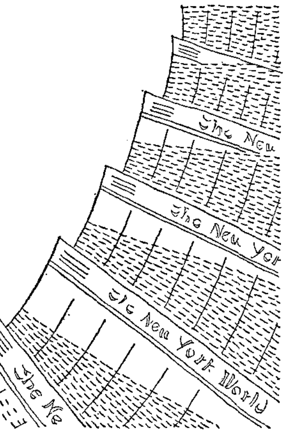
The so-called "economy of abundance," as usually expounded, is actually an economy of scarcity because by advocating, especially in a period of depression, undue reductions of working hours accompanied by advances in hourly wages to increase the leisure and purchasing power of wage earners, it disregards the fact that the purchasing power of industry itself is of vital importance. Wage earners buy only consumers' goods. Many industries buy "capital goods." They must have increased profits to increase their buying enough to revive business and employment in the capital-goods industries. There must be a very large increase of investment in capital goods to make possible the large increase of production essential to the future provision of actual abundance. Any policy ostensibly in the interest of labor which will restrict profits and thereby restrict production in a period of depression will protract the unemployment of labor and indefinitely postpone the provision of the real abundance for labor and all other classes of the people.

The Newspaper Man as an Artist

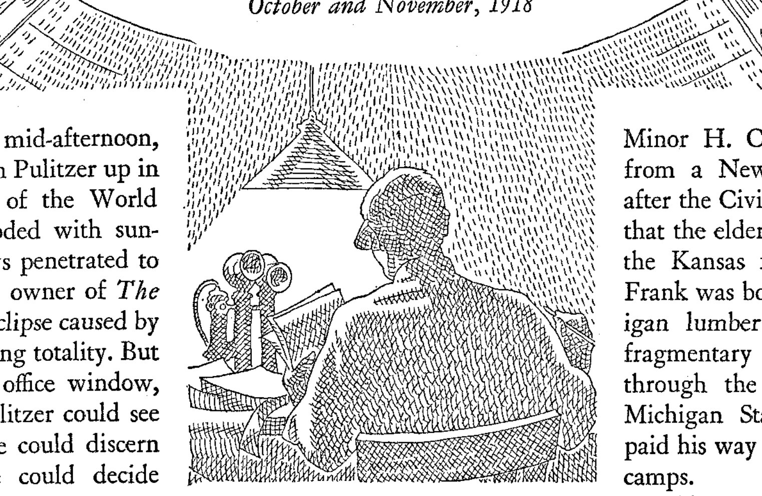
FRANK I. COBB

By Henry F. Pringle





Frank Cobb left few papers. Little has been written of him. Mr. Pringle was granted access to all available material, and in this third article of his series on great American editors he presents historical material of the first importance—the hitherto unpublished diary kept by Cobb during his mission to Europe in October and November, 1918



Sometimes, toward mid-afternoon, the offices of Joseph Pulitzer up in the golden dome of the World Building would be flooded with sunlight. Only dim shadows penetrated to the consciousness of the owner of *The New York World;* the eclipse caused by blindness was approaching totality. But if a man stood at the office window, against the sunlight, Pulitzer could see a blurred silhouette. He could discern a feature or two. He could decide whether the man had a strong or a weak profile.

In the summer of 1904 a new man had come to work for *The New York World*. He was an editorial writer, and Joseph Pulitzer viewed the breed with misgivings. "Every reporter is a hope; every editor a disappointment," he would say. Even Pulitzer, though, had hope that Frank Irving Cobb would be the man to carry on the Augean labors of the fighting newspaper which he owned. So he would lead Cobb over to the window and peer eagerly into his face. Then he would run his fluttering blind man's hands over Cobb's features. He would admit that the man had good bones. He liked Cobb's square jaw and mobile mouth.

Frank Cobb was thirty-four years old in the summer of 1904. By 1911, when Pulitzer died, he was supreme commander of the editorial page, which was certainly the most quarrelsome and forceful, possibly the most brilliant, in the history of American journalism. Cobb was rarely constructive. He was a prosecutor, from whose pen poured indictments. A Cobb editorial was a scorching bill of particulars against the corrupt banker or industrialist, the jingo, the high tariff zealot or, merely, the Republican Party and its wicked works. They were effective indictments, which often brought convictions at the bar of public opinion. Before Cobb's premature death in 1923 he had become, in professional circles, the most distinguished editor in the country. His name, however, rarely appeared in print. He seldom made speeches. He wrote only one or two magazine articles and no books. Although a potent member of the Fourth Estate, he was otherwise quite unknown. And of this he approved without qualification. For Frank Cobb, among all editors and reporters, typified the newspaper man as an artist.

Cobb left no letters. He declined to write more than a few lines for any edition of *Who's Who in America*. He talked steadily and well when he was with friends, but the rush of his conversation rarely touched on birth, parents, home, or education. So the biographical facts are sparse. He was born on August 6, 1869, on a farm in Shannon County, Kansas. His father was Minor H. Cobb who had emigrated from a New York farm some time after the Civil War. It may be assumed that the elder Cobb did not prosper on the Kansas farm. A few years after Frank was born he moved to the Michigan lumber fields. The son had a fragmentary education. He went through the public schools and the Michigan State Normal College. He paid his way by working in the lumber camps.

Cobb seems to have vaguely debated a legal career; no doubt some teacher told him that he had a keen mind and would prosper in the law. At twenty-one he was superintendent of a high school at Martin, Mich., and was reading law at the same time. Soon afterwards he was offered a larger school and went to the town to begin work.

"You're qualified, I guess," said the head of the Board of Education. "But I thought from your letter you were at least thirty years old."

"If I were thirty," Cobb answered, "I wouldn't work for you for $1800 a year."

He decided that he did not want to work, in any event, for people who confused ability with age. Instead he went to Grand Rapids and became a reporter for *The Herald* at eight dollars a week. Three years later he shifted his talents to *The Eagle* and remained there for one year. Detroit was the biggest city in Michigan and therefore the best newspaper center in the state. Cobb went to Detroit, wrote politics for *The Evening News* and editorials for *The Free Press*. It was while he was doing the latter, early in 1904, that