

NOBEL AWARD TO HABER.

Source of the Resentment Felt in Allied Countries.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

In today's TIMES there appears a letter from Mr. Hammarskjöld, First Secretary of the Swedish Legation, containing some statements of fact regarding the award of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry to Professor Haber. While most of these statements are correct, not all of the facts are stated, and there are besides some erroneous conclusions drawn. I would comment upon Mr. Hammarskjöld's numbered statements as follows:

(1) Professor Haber's perfection of the commercial synthesis of ammonia from hydrogen and atmospheric nitrogen amply warrants the award of the prize to him.

(2) The production of ammonia is only a step; for the ammonia is mainly converted into nitric acid and nitrates by the Ostwald process. It is true that the Haber process will (ultimately) be of great value to the world at large, and supply cheap nitrate fertilizers; but the patents, secrets, experience and profits were in possession of Germany. Furthermore, the Haber process made Germany independent of Chile saltpetre (sodium nitrate), not only for agricultural purposes, but also for the manufacture of chemicals, dyes and, above all, explosives.

(3) Professor Bernthsen gave an address in 1912 before the eighth International Congress of Applied Chemistry, held in New York City (not Philadelphia), in which he gave much general information regarding the Haber process. This address proved to the world at large that Germany was independent of imported nitrates, and could conduct a war even if the British Navy cut off the Chile supply; but it did not disclose all of the essential details necessary to the successful manufacture of ammonia and of nitrates from ammonia. Like patent specifications, the statements in such addresses, although correct, are usually as broad or misleading as the conditions and law will allow. During the war, one of our large American companies worked out the details of the Haber process in connection with the War Nitrates Board.

(4) The statement that "the Haber plants in Germany were erected with a view to producing agricultural fertilizers" is a half-truth; for though this was an important object (since in war the army and the nation must be fed), even more vital was the necessity of having a supply of nitrates for explosives. No nitrates no explosives, and without the Haber process it is doubtful if Germany would have started the war, for which she carefully prepared. The dye and chemical factories which produced explosives and poison gases during the war also depended largely upon nitrate for their peace-time operation. It is interesting and illuminating to compare Germany's organization of her industries against the probability of war with our own neglect of essential industries and our helter-skelter waste of millions under the pressure of war—our Government nitrate plants, for example.

(5) Although Mr. Hammarskjöld disclaims knowledge of the manufacture of gas masks in Sweden it is probable that Germany got wood or charcoal from Sweden for gas mask purposes, just as she got iron ore. No criticism attaches to Sweden for this, and her fear of Russia and proximity to Germany across the Baltic (a German lake) readily explain her attitude toward her powerful neighbor. The pro-German activities of certain Swedes and Swedish-Americans, and especially the abuse of Swedish diplomatic privileges by such Germans as Count Luxberg of "spurious venenkt" fame, have naturally created among the allied people an atmosphere of suspicion against Sweden; and since Professor Haber is understood to be one of those who advised and helped develop gas warfare, it is easy to understand how many believe that the award of the Nobel Prize to him is at this time ill advised.

JEROME ALEXANDER.

Ridgefield, Conn., Jan. 28, 1920.

Whisky as Medicine.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

At the 1917 meeting of the American Medical Association, an organization which represents the most learned medical talent of the country, a resolution was adopted which read, in part, as follows: "We believe that the use of alcohol as a beverage is detrimental to the human economy" and that "its use in therapeutics as a tonic or stimulant or as a food has no scientific basis." Practically every physician in the United States is a member of this powerful society, and what the A. M. A. does usually represents the desire of the majority of the reputable doctors in the country.

Whisky is no longer official in the Pharmacopoeia nor is brandy. There are no official standards for these alleged medicines. The best thought of a revision committee representing the medical and pharmaceutical professions did not see fit to legalize these liquors by publishing standards for them.

Feeling that the majority of physicians do not care to prescribe liquor and noting that there is no standard for it in the Pharmacopoeia, pharmacists have declared against taking out retail liquor dealers' licenses and are promptly accused of being derelict in their duty to the public. The physician has declared himself opposed to the use of alcohol as a stimulant. Should we blame the pharmacist for declining to handle it? Do the majority of physicians consider it a medicine?

CLYDE L. EDDY.

New York, Jan. 28, 1920.

The Effect in Belgium.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

I have a letter from an old friend in Brussels in which I find the following:

"We hardly know what to make out of the prospects as things look now. What is our hope? It was different last year. Our faith was in President Wilson's program. Great heavens, where are we now America has left us! I for one do not believe it. Let us hope, for life without hope is no life to thinking creatures."

L. R. SANFORD.

Cornwall, Conn., Jan. 28, 1920.

RESERVATION NO. 5.

A Bad Precedent in Its Treatment of Monroe Doctrine.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

Why the reservation on the Monroe Doctrine? The Paris covenant (Article XXI.) declares that "nothing in this covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace." Under this article the Monroe Doctrine, which, of course, remains a political policy—it is not of the nature of law—is specifically recognized and inferentially accepted by the nations signatory. Respect for it becomes as binding as any of the provisions of this instrument or of any other treaty into which these nations have entered. It is a beneficent doctrine, and it is proper that it should be thus recognized. But having secured this triumph in an admirably worded article which ranks the doctrine with treaties of arbitration as tending to maintain peace, what more can we justly ask?

The Lodge reservation (No. 5) declares that the United States refuses to submit questions relating to the Monroe Doctrine to arbitration or inquiry by the Assembly or the Council of the League. Now, under municipal law, as we know, no one is permitted to act as judge in his own case. A great forward step of the Paris covenant is that in a wide sphere it takes away from nations this dangerous license heretofore exercised by them. Under the covenant the United States does not set itself up as the sole judge of its own conduct where such conduct may infringe international law or violate treaties. Why should we set ourselves up as sole judges in our application of the Monroe Doctrine? Is it inconceivable that we may be tempted to misapply the Doctrine or employ it to abuse our power?

The Lodge reservation practically covers political disputes to which the United States may be a party anywhere in the Western Hemisphere. The reservation is not only inequitable; it is dangerous. With it as a precedent, Japan may well claim like exemption under a supposed Oriental doctrine in her disputes with China. Similarly, England and a re-established Russia might call up the agreement made between them a few years back and assert that no one shall question the justice of their future treatment respectively of Tibet and Mongolia or of their joint handling of Persia.

Recognizing a "regional understanding," as is done in Article XXI. of the covenant, is quite a different matter from exempting from arbitration or inquiry disputes which may arise with other nations in the application of such understandings.

The reservation in question strikes at the very heart of the covenant, greatly impairs its force, and leaves the door wide open for war to enter.

THEODORE MARBURG.

Baltimore, Jan. 30, 1920.

American Authorities on Ghosts.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

If Sir Oliver Lodge really wants to know the last word about ghosts, both heard and seen, he should make stops throughout the South and talk to the old-time negroes. For those old-time "darkies" can tell all about "hants" and "hoodoos." In my youth and immaturity I scoffed at these tales. Imagine my chagrin now to learn—if we are to listen to Sir Oliver and the rest, "all honorable men"—that these old negroes were the greatest "scientists" in this country and so very far ahead of the rest of us.

So I beg to suggest to Sir Oliver that he take a rabbit's foot in his pocket, look up as many of these old negroes as he can find, and get some first hand information about ghosts.

W. D. QUATTLEBAUM.

East Orange, N. J., Jan. 31, 1920.

ONE MAN VERSUS H. C. L.

How He Entered the Fight Single-Handed and Won.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

The potency of Governments, Legislatures and courts in the crusade against that uncanny brute, the High Cost of Living, is insignificant compared to the power of the individual. Every citizen can be a potent force against this trying evil if he will square himself for the fight. He can give it a solar plexus blow, as far as he is personally concerned, if he has a real desire.

I can pay a high price for a dinner whenever I desire, but I believe it is the duty of every citizen to help lay this belly-devil low. To do my bit I have adopted the following simple and workable plan:

When coal reached \$10 a ton I commenced spending my Winters in Florida, where my fuel bill last Winter was \$1 and I regret to say it will be at least \$1.50 this Winter. I save enough to pay my transportation to Florida and return each year and furnish fertilizer for my orange grove besides. Until two years ago I had my hair trimmed twice a month, but when the price jumped to 59 cents I had it cut quite short once a month. This kept the price the same to me as it was before the advance. When shaving reached 25 cents a shave I bought a razor and thus saved about \$5 a month. I keep lights burning only in rooms where needed. I cut out two entertainments a week and find consolation in books, magazines and THE NEW YORK TIMES. I ate two soft boiled eggs for breakfast until hen fruit reached 60 cents a dozen. I then ate one egg and thus kept the price about 30 cents a dozen as far as I was concerned. I spread my bread with a thick layer of butter until butter went up to 60 cents a pound when I used one-half as much and found a distinct improvement in the flavor of the bread. When sugar advanced to 16 cents I cut the coffee portion one-half and found the coffee flavor improved. Then I commenced using salt on grapefruit instead of sugar. I liked the grapefruit better and the grapefruit reciprocated. Instead of eating a hearty luncheon I am eating a couple of apples or some oranges at mid-day and the inner man expresses great satisfaction at the change. A two-course dinner, well-prepared, is all the body requires. Try it and see how much better you feel. I would not suggest a limitation on stimulants. The Government has imperiously suggested that. By cutting down your smoking one-half you will render your throat and heart a real service. There are a lot of good \$6 shoes on the market that will wear just as long as a \$12 pair and look quite as well. I have a tailor who makes my clothes 30 per cent. cheaper than other tailors have charged me and he makes them correctly. He keeps his overhead charges at a minimum. Instead of a chair car I use the day coach and watch the coming and going of the dear people. It is worth more to see them than the cost of the Pullman and I save the price of the Pullman seat. I usually take a simple luncheon with me and save the \$2 cost of a most indifferent meal in the diner and the tip.

Eat every day about one-half what you are in the habit of eating and give your old clothes a further chance to serve you. You will feel better and look quite as decent.

Follow these simple rules and you will solve for yourself the high cost of living problem far better and quicker than can the Government and courts. Government machinery can no more control the high cost of living than a river can flow back to its source. To stop the high cost of living the American citizen must put brakes on the cost of high living. The problem rests with the individual.

J. T. D. B.

Fellsmere, Fla., Jan. 16, 1920.