

KATHERINE BRUSH HAD THIS IN interesting Sunday column of hers:

"People keep putting an "i" in their pronunciation of 'helicopter' when there isn't one."

So I thought I must be wrong again, for I had always put an "i" in the word. So I looked it up, just to make sure. And, just imagine! I found that Katherine was wrong and I was right. The dictionary had it "helicopter," and no other way. I must write Katherine about that, if I don't forget.

I MAD SUPPOSED THAT "HELICOPTer" was derived from the same root as "helium" having something to do with the sun. I thought perhaps someone had given that flying machine its name because it rises toward the sun. But it isn't that way at all. I found that the root of "helicopter" is the Latin "helix," meaning spiral, or twisted. The Greeks also had a similar word for it. And the helicopter operates as a spiral, boring its way into the atmosphere.

READING LISTS OF SLANG WORDS acquired by men in the armed services and of the manner in which those words are used one might suppose that by the time a man has been in the army, the navy or the marines a few weeks, or at most a few months, he would habitually speak in what would seem to the home folks like a foreign language. But while the boys pick up a lot of slang peculiar to their several branches of service, it doesn't seem to affect their ordinary conversation much.

AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER I have met a good many soldiers, sailors and marines, some of them fifth-or eighth-graders, some of them college men, men engaged in civil life in all sorts of occupations, and I never noticed that their form of speech had been greatly affected by their military experience. I suppose military slang is about like other special slangs, being confined pretty much to the occupation in which it originated, and being dropped when the speaker engages in general conversation.

TAKE RESTAURANT SLANG, FOR Instance. Its names and expressions are something fearful and wonderful, utterly unintelligible to the uninitiated. Yet the restaurant waitress who has cultivated that form of expression and who seems when giving an order to be talking Choctaw or Sanskrit, can drop into ordinary English with the greatest of ease.

ONCE IN NEW YORK I HAPPENED as a matter of convenience to have breakfast at a Thompson restaurant every morning for a week or two. Usually the same waitress took my order. She had a low-toned, pleasant voice—contralto, I'd call it—and her English was as good as anybody's. She would make suggestions concerning the morning bill of fare much as any other human being might have done.

Then she would go to the wicket and pass in the order to the culinary department. And what a transformation! The soft contralto voice became like something out of a boiler factory, rasping, resonant and metallic; and ham and eggs, or wheat cakes and coffee, were translated into gibberish. I used to vary my orders just to see what she would make of it. But she had a weird name for everything on the list, and the amazing thing was that no matter what I ordered, or what fantastic name she gave to the I order, I always got what I ordered, and in delivering it, the waitress subsided into her original quiet personality. Was that a case of double personality, or what?,

By W. P. Davies

THE HERALD'S NEWS COLUMNS contained an account a day or two ago of the gathering at the Scott home at Gilby on November 24 to celebrate the eightieth birthday anniversary of Mrs. John W. Scott, who for many years has been a leader in the life of her community. Years ago Mrs. Scott was a resident of Grand Forks, but for more than a generation she has lived on the Gilby farm, which was made famous by the energy and progressiveness of her late husband. But, while sharing both the struggles and the triumphs of her husband, Mrs. Scott made her own place in community life, devoting herself energetically to the work of education and social betterment, in which fields she has continued her activity until reaching the age of four score. May her remaining years be filled with happiness.

FOR SEVERAL REASONS I HAVE been obliged to omit publication in this column of most of the verses contributed by readers. This is one of the times when I must depart from the usual practice. In honor of Mrs. Scott, George S. Muir, an old friend and neighbor, wrote some lines for her anniversary, and I am giving them herewith:

GLORIOUS YEARS OF LIVING.

By George S. Muir.

Eighty years—a heap of living,
Joyous occasion for much thanksgiving, For hearth and home and all we love—
For Kith and Kin, and Heaven above— For food and raiment, friends galore
Through sickness or health since days
of yore Who learned, in spite of wars' alarms
To respect her talents and her charms. Unstinting helper in word and deed,
Untiring in the hour of need. Faithful alike to church and schools
Playing the game in accord with the
rules. For—every movement to amend,
Uplift and elevate the moral trend. Against—whatever ills debase
And brutalize the human race. 'Twere hard indeed to find another
More model neighbor, wife, friend or
mother. Hewing to the line, with zeal alight
To guide the children's footsteps aright. Respected and admired by all
From adults down to children small. So—huge and gay was the birthday cake
With mirth and song 'till the rafters
shake,
With birthday greetings from far and near
To add goodwill to the day's good cheer And a host of friends to join in Thanksgiving
For four score glorious years of living.

TUESDAY OF THIS WEEK, NOVEMBER 30, was St. Andrew's day, celebrated with appropriate ceremonies wherever a few Scots can get together. One of the viands usually served at gatherings on that day is haggis, generally accepted as the national dish of Scotland, and the subject of a poem by the Scottish bard, Burns.

And in that connection there arose in Canada a knotty problem which had to be solved by Donald Gordon, the Canadian minister in charge of rationing. In Canada, Tuesday is a meatless day, and there arose the question whether or not it would be permissible to serve haggis on that day. It would not do to violate the law, but on the other hand, to observe St. Andrew's day without haggis would be almost sacrilege. There were those Canadians who held that haggis contains meat, therefore it could not be served on Tuesday. Others said that the meat in haggis is merely "offal," and therefore not subject to the Tuesday ban.

What authorities Minister Gordon consulted, and by what process of reasoning he reached his conclusion are military secrets, but as he is a Scot from Aberdeen, his decision was that haggis might legally be eaten on Tuesday, and St. Andrew's day was accordingly observed in Canada in due form.

JUST BEFORE THANKSGIVING Howard Yankel, of Brooklyn, brought home two chickens instead of the turkey that his wife had expected for the holiday. She protested and he retorted. In the heat of the argument, Howard struck his wife, and she had him arrested. But when the case was called a court attendant handed the magistrate a note from Susan, Howard's wife, saying that she wished to withdraw the complaint, as "Thanksgiving would not be Thanksgiving without Howard." It is pleasant to see how the ameliorating influence of such a holiday brings happiness to families.

By W. P. Davies

IN THE DAYS WHEN EVERYONE drove by automobile, and drove it as often, and as far, and at almost whatever rate he pleased, there was prevalent the belief that an engine operated more smoothly at night than in the daytime. This was usually explained on the ground that night air was likely to contain a greater percentage of moisture. While that was not invariably true, it was usually so, and on the basis of the popular belief that an engine performed best on a cool summer night after a hot day some experiments were made in the injection of small quantities of water into the engine's air-stream. Whatever was learned from such experiments seems not to have been thought of sufficient importance to call for changes in engine design that would provide for the use of water in the combustion chamber. At least such changes were not made in the equipment of ordinary cars.

NOW IT APPEARS THAT MANY OF our military planes have their engines equipped with water injectors. Water is not supplied while the engine is operating normally, but when an extra burst of speed is desired the injector, which operates as a supercharger, is brought into use by means of a switch and a small jet of water is sprayed into the air stream. On reaching the hot combustion chamber the water is converted into steam, the expansion of which gives increased power to the engine. Thus, at a critical moment the pilot can increase the speed of his plane enough to escape from a pursuing enemy or to overtake a fugitive.

THIS USE OF WATER AS AN EMERGENCY propelling power is no crack-brained inventor's dream, but something that has been so thoroughly tested, and with such satisfactory results, that the great Pratt and Whitney company, in whose laboratories the experiments were begun about a year ago, manufactured 1,000 of the injectors on its own responsibility, pending approval by the military authorities. Such approval was presently given and the injectors are now in mass production. A representative of the firm was sent to England and he has already installed the superchargers on many American planes, especially those of the fighter type. Knowledge of the device was maintained for some time as a military secret, but apparently the need for secrecy no longer exists and the facts have been made public.

IN A HARDWARE STORE THE OTHER day I picked up a little wooden dust pan and asked the proprietor why they were making them of wood. The answer was, "Because we can't get metal." I was told that the little metal dust pan that sold for a dime was more serviceable, but, said the hardware man, "We have to take what we can get." And the price—it was several times a dime. I suppose that a dust pan, while a convenient thing to have around, is really not one of the indispensables. With a little ingenuity the sweepings can be maneuvered onto an old newspaper, or perhaps swept out of doors. But, in its own way and up to a certain point the dust pan is symbolic of a certain standard of living. Argue as we may about it, we have stepped down a rung from our accustomed standard of living, or living costs more, or both.

THE NUMBER OF THANKSGIVING traffic deaths was smaller this year than last, and smaller than was expected on the basis of last year's results. Holiday accidents are likely to be more numerous than on other days, not because there is anything malignant about the holiday but chiefly because under ordinary circumstances there are more cars on the road on a holiday than on other days. The law of averages applies there, and there is the further fact that the more cars there are the more congestion there is, consequently the hazard is increased. Also, bad road conditions may increase the number of accidents. If the roads are just a little slippery, there are likely to be more accidents, but if they are so bad that no one will venture out, accidents will be fewer.

By W. P. Davies

I HAVE ALWAYS HAD A HIGH REGARD for the National Geographic magazine. Its descriptive articles are both informative and entertaining, its pictures are superb, and the maps which it issues from time to time are of great help in these days when the scene changes so rapidly. I was shocked, therefore, in looking over the map of the world accompanying the December Geographic to find that although it is stated that principal railways are shown in red, and the United States map is traversed by many red lines, there is nothing to indicate the existence of the Great Northern railway unless the red line running east of the Red river to Winnipeg is intended to represent the St. Vincent branch of that road.

NATURALLY A MAP OF THE World, drawn on the scale of 632 miles per inch cannot show all the minor railways of the world, but most of us have supposed the Great Northern to be a road of more than minor importance. It is as "transcontinental" as the Union Pacific or any of the other roads reaching the Pacific. Its builder was recognized as one of the railway geniuses of his era. Historically, industrially and commercially the road takes high rank, and the territory which it serves is one of the richest on the continent.

AS A RESULT OF THIS OMISSION Grand Forks, Williston, Havre, Kalispell and other Great Northern towns are shown without railway connections. Duluth, at the head of the lakes, is shown without a railroad. Minot is shown with one road running diagonally from the Northern Pacific main line into Canada. Only the Soo does that, and the Soo is its subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific, and not a "principal railway."

THE MAP, OF COURSE, IS NOT INTENDED as a railway map, but without greater care in the selection it would have been better to leave out the railways altogether. The present treatment is misleading. While unfortunate, this omission does not detract from the value of the map in its presentation of the several territories of the world in their relation to each other, and I have no doubt that this feature is in keeping with the merited reputation of the Geographical Cartographers for accuracy.

THERE HAVE BEEN COLLECTED for the use of our service men and women some 25 or 30 million books. What is to become of that collection after the war? Many of the books have passed into the hands of individual soldiers and sailors, and in the exigencies of war many of them will be lost. But a great number are placed in post and other libraries, reading rooms, and so forth, and after the war such collections will be more or less intact. There will be a vast amount of reading matter, of varying quality, which could still be useful if it could be made available to those in a position to use it.

A CIRCULAR LETTER FROM Joseph Couter, 191 Arsenal St., Watertown, Mass., calls attention to this situation and offers some constructive suggestions. Mr. Couter writes that there are 35,000,000 of the population of the United States who have no library service whatever, and that 457,414 of the people of North Dakota are without such service. He suggests the creation of a "National Veterans Memorial Library," with branches in every state and sub-branches in every community without library service.

INVITING CORRESPONDENCE ON the subject Mr. Couter writes:

"We believe the most practical library for any community, outside of any large city, is a small properly housed, collection of carefully selected books requiring very little cash for its maintenance, and that can, by frequent exchange of books with a central depot in the state, be guaranteed a constant supply of good reading matter at all times. In the smaller sections free rent, free light, free heat, and free service is possible. Through being a "Veterans Memorial" it will receive a support and a loyalty of a majority of our people that will contribute largely to its support. Thus making it unnecessary to place any tax on the people."

By W. P. Davies

SELF HELP VERSUS PATERNALISM.

In the early days of foreign missions much time was lost and much earnest effort wasted in the task of imposing on the heathen theology which they could not understand and customs wholly contrary to their experience. The results in many cases were similar to those which might be expected from the transplanting of a tree by wrenching it from the ground, stripping it of most of its roots and shaking loose from it all the familiar earth in which it had grown. A tree so treated might retain the appearance of life for a brief time, but soon it would wither and die.

BY NO MEANS DID ALL OF THE early missionaries fall into this kind of error. But those who did failed uniformly to achieve more than temporary and superficial results. New and strange forms, made attractive by gifts of material things and promises of further benefits were adopted and practiced, and whole tribes were thus "converted," only to revert to their original beliefs and practices when the influence which had induced them to change were withdrawn.

MODERN MISSIONS AS A RULE are conducted on a different basis. In their operation less emphasis is placed on the element of paternalism and more on that of self help. Those whom it is desired to influence are shown that the religion to which their attention is directed is one of universal breadth and depth, applicable to every constructive way of life and to every humane tradition. Those to whom it is offered are invited, not to accept a sudden transformation imposed from without, but to make the most of the best that there is in themselves and thus to promote their own healthy growth through their own roots and from their own familiar soil. Results achieved in this manner have been less spectacular than some of those of the past, but they have been more wholesome and more enduring.

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT IS AS Strong today as it ever was, perhaps stronger. It has entered the field of economics and international relations. There is the same desire as before to improve the lot and raise the standards of peoples who are considered backward, and there are many among those who are moved by that desire who have not yet learned the lessons which leaders in the religious field learned long ago. They have yet to learn that what we choose to call civilization cannot effectively be imposed from without, but must be built from within.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THIS IS found in the experience of several managers of American enterprises established in some of the Latin American countries. In employing the native labor that they needed they were shocked to learn of the insignificant wages, sometimes only a few cents per day, ordinarily paid such laborers. Generously they doubled the wage. The workmen, earning what had been two weeks' wages in one week, remained idle every other week. They saw no reason to work while they had money on which to live. Such devices failed because they did not take into account the whole background of the peon and his customary way of life.

SIMILARLY, IF SOME OF THE NUMerous plans for uplifting the foreigner after the war are carried into effect they also will fail. The Russian peasant, the Chinese tiller of a few square yards of land, the Latin American peon, the Sicilian mountaineer, each has a way of life and a set of traditions which are his, and which he will not willingly relinquish. If he is paid enough for doing so he may suspend them temporarily, but when the purse from which he is paid is empty or closed, he will revert to his old ways.

NATIONS THAT ARE RICH AND powerful, that have made amazing progress in making the forces of nature minister to their comfort and the gratification of their tastes have a responsibility toward those who have not made like progress. But their responsibility is not that of imposing their customs on others, either by force or by donations. It is rather in the creation for those whom they would benefit of opportunities for the kind of progress that can be achieved only by the labor and through the will of those who are to advance.

By W. P. Davies

ESTIMATES HAVE BEEN MADE BY the federal fuel-rationing agency of the percentage of fuel oil required for the season which would normally be used by the end of different periods in the season. These estimates have been adapted to the Red river valley, being based on expectation of average weather conditions. The county ration board has issued a statement presenting those estimates as applied to this area. According to the computations made the householder should have used by December 3 not more than 20 per cent of the oil which will be required for the entire season, having, of course, 80 per cent still available. Other percentages are given for different periods during the winter.

I WAS SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTED in the published statement, to check against it my own actual experience in 14 seasons of oil consumption. An exact check is impossible, as I do not keep a day-by-day record of oil consumption, but a fair approximate is possible.

Mine is a 260-gallon tank, and I buy in 200-gallon lots as the supply in the tank nears exhaustion, making a record of the quantity and date of each purchase. Naturally, purchases are not made on the same day of the month, the time often varying by a week or more, but I have made as close an estimate as possible in order to bring consumption in year to December 1.

I find that my percentages for the period up to December 1 or thereabout are materially higher than those of the government, that is, except for one year, I have always used more of my season's oil by December 1 than the 20 per cent which the government thinks would be about right. This may be due in part to the fact that whereas the government begins its fuel season on October 1, I begin mine on September 1. The government's estimate, therefore, is based on October and November, whereas mine includes September, October and November.

ON DECEMBER 1, 1930, I HAD USED **In** the three preceding months 26 per cent of the oil which I used during that entire fall, winter and spring season. Percentages for the corresponding date each year follow:

1931, 20; 1932, 28; 1933, 25; 1934, 25; 1935, 29; 1936, 25; 1937, 25; 1938, 31; 1939, 23; 1940, 25; 1941, 35; 1942, 31; 1943, 29.

The percentage for this season is based on the allotment made by the ration board for the year. For all the other years actual consumption for the period and the year is used in making the calculation. The average for the 14 years is within a small decimal of 27 per cent.

IT WILL BE SEEN THAT THERE IS wide variation in the consumption for the fall period in the several years, the range being from 20 to 35 per cent. The record also shows similar differences in consumption for corresponding periods, winter, spring, or month by month, in the several years. Such differences are due to varying weather conditions which cannot be foreseen and which may occur at any time of the year, regardless of charts and statistics.

NOT ONLY DO CORRESPONDING periods in different years vary greatly in their fuel demands, but there are similar variations in total demand year by year. I find that in one year my fuel consumption was 25 per cent greater, and in another 15 per cent less than the average for the 14 years. This was in the same house, with the same heating plant, and which no factors other than weather which would create demand for more or less fuel. We may be reasonably certain, however, that it isn't safe to be lavish with fuel because the weather at the moment happens to be mild. A mild January may be followed by cold weather which lasts into June. It did just about that last spring.

By W. P. Davies

MRS. JEROME EVANSON, DIRECTOR of the department of junior education of the North Dakota Farmers Union, who served as secretary of the Youth conference recently held at Fort Totten, writes that the conference did not, as reported, resolve that "provisions should be made for equal distribution of the world's wealth in post-war planning." The subject discussed, Mrs. Evanson Eays, was "more equitable distribution of the world's wealth in goods and services" in a post-war world.

COMMENT ON THE SUBJECT which was made in this column was based on a previously published news report of the conference proceedings which contained the phraseology "equal distribution of the world's wealth," and which was published just as received. The correspondent may have confused the words "equitable" and "equal."

IN A MAGAZINE ARTICLE ONE DR. Petersen of Chicago, is quoted on the subject of the influence of weather on health. When a cold spell passed over Chicago, says Dr. Petersen, it caused a definite, though different reaction in several of his patients. One patient's acidity increased; a woman suffered a strong emotional disturbance; a man complained of mysterious fatigue and headache; another patient suddenly gained weight; another had a fainting spell; a severe infection suddenly flared up in still another; and a tuberculosis victim suffered a hemorrhage.

ALL THE ABOVE REACTIONS DR. Petersen attributes to the weather change. But why? How does Mr. Petersen, or anybody else, know that the weather had anything to do with them? Seven individual cases are cited, all of different types. The symptoms in each might have developed from any one of many causes totally independent of weather, and such symptoms are developing all over the country in all kinds of weather. I suppose that any physician on any day might notice that one patient had nose-bleed, another's ulcers gave him unusual trouble, and another broke a leg, regardless of whether the day was hot or cold, clear or cloudy.

THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT weather has no influence on health. There are many evidences that it has considerable influence. But whatever that influence is cannot be established by the record in isolated cases, each of which may have been governed by causes other than weather and which are duplicated in all sorts of weather.

DR. PETERSEN'S METHOD OF reaching conclusions reminds me of the story of the man who stacked hay on Sunday. He had a big field of hay which he was anxious to get stacked before rain fell. But Saturday night came with the last stack only half finished. Sunday morning rain was threatened. The farmer was a strict observer of the Sabbath but he felt that he couldn't afford to lose that hay. With great misgivings he began stacking on Sunday. But the weather cleared, all signs of rain vanished, and the work was suspended until Monday, when the stack was finished.

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HAPPENED? The bottom part of the stack kept perfectly. So did the top. But the middle, that had been stacked on Sunday, spoiled. Naturally the farmer interpreted that as a warning from Providence not to stack hay on Sunday, and he never did it again. Why did the hay spoil? I don't know. Perhaps that lot was too damp. Perhaps a miracle was performed. But that isolated case was not sufficient to warrant a general conclusion to be drawn from it. And perhaps the thing never happened; I wasn't there.

By W. P. Davies

BROWSING THROUGH A FILE OF the Herald for the winter of 1892-93 in search of an old story I came across several other bits of information which recalled Grand Forks as it was half a century ago. Among other things there were accounts of meetings of the Chamber of Commerce of that time. The organization had been effected a year or two earlier, had languished and had been reorganized, with Geo. B. Clifford, president; Geo. B. Winship, vice president; W. A. Gordon, treasurer and D. R. McGinnis, secretary.

ONE OF THE SUBJECTS TO WHICH the old Chamber of Commerce devoted attention was improvement of the waterway from Duluth to the ocean Duluth interests were actively promoting the St. Lawrence waterway. Grand Forks business men were interested in getting an outlet from the lakes to the ocean, but ifi consideration of the subject the perennial controversy over the respective merits of different routes resulted in spirited argument One element favored the St. Lawrence route, while another supported the plan for an "all-American" route by way of the Erie canal. The Grand Forks body adopted resolutions favoring completion of a waterway capable of accommodating ocean-going vessels, but did not commit itself in favor of any particular route.

IT WAS AT THE LEGISLATIVE SESsion of that January, that a United States senator was to be elected, the term of Senator Casey being about to expire. (Senators were then elected by the state legislators). The Republicans controlled both houses by large majorities, but in caucus after caucus they were unable to agree on a candidate. While the Republicans caucused at night the two houses balloted, also without result. After many ballots it appeared probable that a Democrat would be elected by a combination of Democrats with one or other or the warring Republican factions. The Fargo Republicans were reported to be ready to vote for John D. Benton, a Democrat, and elect him. At the last moment Jud LaMoure performed one of his tactical moves and rounded up Republicans from Grand Forks and other northern counties in support of W. N. Roach, a Larimore Democrat, and elected him.

THE ELECTION OF ROACH, ALthough he represented a new state and one with small population, proved of real importance. Cleveland had been elected for a second, but nonconsecutive term at the preceding November election, defeating Harrison. A Democratic house of representatives had been elected. But the Democrats lacked one vote of enough to control the senate. Roach's election gave them that one vote. The Democrats organized the senate, dominated the committees, and were able to pass the tariff bill which Republicans held responsible for the later depression.

THE OLD CHAMBER OF COMmerce, which was exceedingly active for a brief time, dissolved. Two or three other organizations of similar nature were formed, flourished for a short time, and died. Then a Commercial club was formed with E. J. Lander as president. That organization, with some changes in form and in name, has been in continuous existence ever since. It is now known as the Civic and Commerce association, and it bids fair to be permanent. At one time it absorbed the Pioneer social club, bought its furniture and took over its quarters, which were then on the top floor of what is now the Red River National Bank building. It moved from there to the Elks building on Fourth street, and thence to its present quarters, discontinuing its "club" features and becoming a strictly civic and commercial organization.

By W. P. Davies

SPEAKING OF WORDS, WHICH I DO occasionally, there is something about the word "tolerance," as it is frequently used, that sets my teeth on edge. Engineers often use the word, and with them it means acceptance of some variation from perfection. In actual practice perfect measurements are not expected. A bearing may be as nearly true as it is possible to make it, but with the greatest possible skill and tools of the greatest possible precision the work will fall a little short of absolute perfection. Hence specifications sometimes require that measurements be true within some minute specification of an inch. The variation thus permitted is often described as tolerance.

AS THUS APPLIED, IN MECHANICS and in many other fields, the word seems completely appropriate. Applied to human relations it has a certain sinister significance. We are urged to cultivate a spirit of tolerance toward each other, race toward race, color toward color, faith toward faith, and so on. The intent is excellent, but there is an unfortunate implication in the word used. The implication is that those whom we are urged to tolerate, while inferior to ourselves, are nevertheless to be charitably endured. Perhaps the fact that they do not quite measure up to our standard is not their fault. They may have been born that way, or unfavorable environment may have fixed their place in life. But what ever their imperfection, we should for give it and try to act as if it did not exist.

IF EVERYONE CARRIED INTO HIS behavior and his thinking what the word "tolerance" implies, the human race would be a collection of insufferable prigs and Pharisees, each considering himself superior to his neighbor, for no two human beings are alike in every detail, and to each of us any difference would be evidence of inferiority. Fortunately, that difference does not extend into all our relations. We live among our fellows, who are in many ways different from ourselves, and usually we do not think of them as inferior. We accept them as neighbors and friends, sometimes challenging their political theories or arguing with them over matters theological, but it doesnt occur to us that they are less perfect than ourselves. We do not "tolerate" them.

VERY WELL. YOU MAY ASK, IF I don't like the word "tolerance," what is the right word? Frankly, I don't know. Perhaps our language doesn't contain just the right one. If anyone has one I'd like to know what it is.

A MOMENT AGO I REFERRED TO the impossibility of having mechanical measurements come out perfect. Years ago I knew an old carpenter who, if he could, would induce a newcomer to the job to bet a quarter that he, the newcomer, could cut two 10-foot poles and make them exactly the same length. The two sticks were to be measured independently with a square. Occasionally the challenge would be accepted, and invariably my old friend won his bet. No matter how accurately the sticks were measured and how skillfully they were cut, always there would be some hairbreadth of difference. Similarly, two surveying crews, going over the same ground and under identical conditions, will differ ever so little in their measurements.

AN INCIDENT WHICH MIGHT BE held to be a variation from the rule occurred 61 years ago while I was attached to a surveying crew that was about to lay out an addition to the townsite of Sanborn, Dakota territory. (Did you know that an addition had been made to Sanborn townsite?) On that job I happened to be at the transit. A line was given to the chain men, who were to measure to a point where there should be an old stake marking a street corner. Each corner stake, sunk almost flush with the ground, had driven into its top a tack marking the exact corner. That was to be our starting point. Having measured the required distance the head chain man was about to set his flag on the line and then search for the stake which he expected to find within a few inches of the spot. The steel spike on the tip of the flag struck something hard, and on brushing away the dirt the chain man found that he had set the tip of the flag right on the head of the tack. The original crew and ours had measured well, but the precise accuracy was pure luck, which I never saw duplicated.

By W. P. Davies

THERE WAS AN INCIDENT AT THE postoffice the other day, of no particular importance, but which set me thinking. A soldier with two stripes on his sleeve, evidently from the flying school at the University, was about to enter the building. Just back of him was an old man, a stranger to me, roughly dressed, and hesitant in manner. The soldier opened the door, held it open, and courteously motioned to the old man to enter. The old man shook his head, and the soldier went on in. Inside the building another old man dropped a glove and was about to stoop to recover it, but the soldier, quick and precise in his movements, was ahead of him. He picked up the glove, restored it to its owner with a nod, and was gone.

WHAT OF IT? NOTHING MUCH. Such trifling things are happening right along. They are so common that we think nothing of them. But there came to me the thought of a contrast. I thought of what I had read of soldiers in Germany, not merely during this war or the former one, but through the years, under the kaiser and whatever military regime happened to be in control. I had read statements by the dozen, made alike by professional correspondents and by casual travelers, of the erection in Germany of the army into a superior and privileged caste, a caste whose members were encouraged to assume toward all civilians an arrogant and contemptuous attitude.

I HAD READ OF WOMEN BEING crowded off Berlin sidewalks by sauntering soldiers, of soldiers casually holding up waiting crowds at theater box offices while they took places at the front, of soldiers demanding and receiving first and best service at stores, restaurants and other public places. I thought of some of this as I watched an American soldier, with stripes on his sleeve, holding open a door that an obscure old man might precede him, and pausing to pick up and return another old man's glove, and doing those little things quietly and casually as if they were his ordinary custom, as, evidently, they are. And I was conscious of a feeling of thankfulness that however he is trained, the American soldier remains a citizen and a human being.

A NEAT LITTLE BOOK OF VERSE entitled "Rhymes for Every Season" comes from the author, Mrs. Lydia O. Jackson, of Grafton. For several years Mrs. Jackson has contributed to literary magazines, newspapers and anthologies. She is a member of the North Dakota Poetry society, the Midwest Federation of Chaparral Poets and the Midwest Poetry league.

THE PRESENT COLLECTION OF her verses is appropriately named, as all the selections relate to particular seasons, respectively to spring, summer, autumn and winter. Each season is given a group of verses, all of them brief, sometimes simply descriptive of the season's physical beauties, sometimes expressive of sentiments aroused by that beauty. This being winter, I quote the closing poem in the book:

BOOK MAGIC. By Lydia O. Jackson.

When winter breathes with frosty breath Upon the flowers, leaving death, And clutches in his icy grip A barge, a boat—a mammoth ship, And loosens winds that fairly shriek Across the peaceful winding creek— I sit beside a roaring fire, Unmindful of his lashing ire, For through the medium of books, Ensconced in all convenient nooks— I am transported magically Beyond old winter's tyranny.

By W. p. Dovies

IN THE OPINION OF SENATOR Clark of Missouri the epoch making flight of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk 40 years ago "is probably the greatest disaster that has ever happened to mankind." The senator's statement was made while the senate had before it a resolution in anticipation of the anniversary of the flight, December 17, expressing to the Wright brothers "gratitude and respect for this signal and astounding contribution to the progress of the world."

ON DECEMBER 17, 1903, THE Wright brothers, only one of whom now survives, demonstrated at Kitty Hawk the possibility of human flight. For centuries men had speculated on that possibility. Scientists had devoted intensive study to the subject and had brought to bear on it all the knowledge they had. Innumerable experiments had been made, by scientists, by practical engineers and by crackpot inventors, but the centuries had passed without flight being achieved, and many earnest and accomplished students had dismissed the subject as a dream impossible of realization.

IT REMAINED FOR THE WRIGHT brothers to demonstrate that what had been held impossible could be done, and their achievement was the forerunner of scientific and mechanical development more remarkable in many respects than any other in the history of mankind. Within these few years travel through the air has become one of the commonplaces of civilization, and in practical effect the globe has shrunk to a mere fraction of its former size and distances are traversed in a few hours which once required days or weeks or were impossible altogether.

SENATOR CLARK'S ESTIMATE IS based, of course, on the fact that the airplane has become an instrument of war and that by means of it devastation on a scale heretofore impossible has become one of war's ordinary accompaniments. No argument is needed to justify the horror with which Senator Clark observes the uses to which human flight had been put, and we may be sure that if war is to continue that which had already been experienced is but a foretaste of what is to come. But, is the invention of the workable airplane really the curse that Senator Clark thinks it is. If so, what shall be thought of other inventions which mark the path of humanity through the ages?

LESS THAN TWO CENTURIES AGO steam was first harnessed and made to serve the purposes of man. Since then steam has been an important agency of war. It has carried armies and their equipment across continents and seas, and has extended battle lines from mere leagues to thousands of miles. It has made possible the building of factories in which little children have been employed for long hours under shocking working ture of implements of war on anything conditions. Without its aid the manufac-like the present scale would have been impossible.

YET STEAM HAS BEEN ONE OF man's most industrious and useful servants. It has extended his markets and brought him goods from afar. In our own country it has made the products of the soil available in every locality, no matter how distant from the point of origin. It has made possible the furnishing of our homes and the clothing of our bodies in comfort and luxury of which the kings of old never dreamed. It is not the fault of steam or of those who have aided in its development that it has sometimes been put to wicked uses by wicked men.

SIMILARLY, THE SAME ELECTRICity that runs our sewing machines, separates our cream, drives our lathes and enables the physician to diagnose our ills is indispensable in the torpedo that sinks a ship and kills a thousand men. The explosive that demolishes cities also mines our coal and builds roads across mountains.

WHEN MEN CHOOSE SO TO USE IT the airplane is an instrument of death, but it is also an agency of real human progress and good will. It has made possible exploration on a scale never before known. It has made contributions of inestimable value to commerce. It has helped as no other agency could do to make men conscious of their common manhood and to demonstrate their need of common understanding and common friendship. And, in common with many of man's other achievements, it is a symbol of his thirst for knowledge and his passion for exploring the unknown without which man would be a mere mass of quivering jelly.

By W. P. Davies

IN A LETTER RECENTLY RECEIVED by a friend, Neal Mitchell, merchant seaman, former University student and son of Mr. and Mrs. William Mitchell, University avenue, tells of the unexpected reunion of Grand Forks men in London, England. He writes of the incident as follows:

"WHILE SITTING IN A BARBER shop while an American soldier was having his hair singed, his buddy remarked: 'Things were never like this in South Dakota.' Determined to find out something about the boy I said: 'I'm from Grand Forks.' Immediately both of the fellows said: 'You're in luck. Three Grand Forks men just got together at the North Eastern hotel. One of the names mentioned was Fladland.

"WHEN I WALKED INTO THE HOTEL, I found Lieutenant G. L. Fladland, Staff Sergeant Arnold Fladland and Lieutenant Merle Rood. None of the fellows had seen me for several years, so the visit was a good one. To all Grand Forks friends the men sent their best regards and asked that I convey them by letter.

"At the time of my visit Arnold Fladland had already taken part in more than 21 missions and wore the air medal. Most of his bombing missions were over France, Belgium and Holland."

Lieutenant Fladland and Sergeant Fladland are sons of Mr. and Mrs. John E. Fladland, of South Third street. Lieutenant Rood is the son of Mr and Mrs. O. D. Rood, 1410 Sixth avenue North.

SEAMAN MITCHELL'S SHIP IS ENGAGED in convoy duty, and on one occasion it was rammed in collision, but the damage was slight and the ship was empty, so there was no cargo to be injured. While waiting for a return trip Neal had an opportunity to visit London for the second time, enjoying, among other things, an Irving Berlin show with Berlin himself as an attraction. Neal writes that "The production is just what American fellows needed. The response and element of spontaneity made the atmosphere of London's palladium almost electric."

OUR WEATHER BEHAVIOR OF late has been such as to indicate that real winter is with us. There have been mild days, but the forecasts for several days have been "colder," and the thermometer has dipped below zero. Most of our winter weather comes from Saskatchewan, and the weather up there has been cold, and growing colder. The East has had its taste of low temperatures, minus 24 being recorded at one New York station. That may have been in the mountains and not a proper indication of the state's general temperature. But it seems that a great cold wave is traveling eastward. Presumably it will cross the Atlantic, if it has not already done so, and the men who have been fighting in mud and some fronts will have better footing. Which side will be more greatly benefited remains to be seen.

THE DAYS ARE NOW WITHIN A week of their shortest, which reminds one that time flies. I have often heard it said that for three weeks before Christmas and three weeks after the change in the day's length is scarcely noticeable, and I suppose there is something in that. Also, there is an old saying that "as the days begin to lengthen the cold begins to strengthen." There is more truth in that than in many other popular sayings, for almost always we have our most severe weather in January or early February. By that time our end of the earth has lost a good deal of the heat accumulated in summer and our reserves are depleted, just as one's bank account is when one has been drawing on it steadily,

By W. P. Davies

DR. J. M. GILLETTE OF THE UNIVERSITY sociology department has made many interesting observations about the weather and has compiled numerous statistics concerning it, partly as a hobby, and partly because weather has an important influence on human life, and it is with human life that social science is concerned. Dr. Gillette has just assembled some facts relating to the time of sunrise and sunset, of which he writes as follows under date December 11:

"IN OUR ALMANACS, THE MOST northerly time of each is given for the latitude of Boston. This does not fit our much more northern situation. Our forenoons are nearly 10 minutes shorter than those of Boston at this time of year and our afternoons about 50 minutes shorter. On this date, December 11, our sun rises at 8:08 A.M., as compared with the calendar 7:18, and our sun sets at 4:34 in contrast to 4:28 of the almanac. So our days are about an hour shorter than those of Boston now. There will be a reversal in June.

THE TIME OF SUNRISE AND SUNSET is calculated as of the midtime of each time belt. Grand Forks is well toward the western limit of its time belt. This puts a skew in the occurrence of our shortest forenoons and afternoons. Our forenoons get to their shortest point by December 26, when the sun rises at 8:18 A.M., while our afternoons become shortest at December 11, when the sun sets at 4:34 P.M. The calendar shortest day of December 21, is only an average between time of sunrises and sunsets or length of forenoons and afternoons. The 10-day period of shortest forenoons is from December 26, to January 6, during which period there is a variation of not more than a minute. Our afternoons begin to get a little longer at once and by January 6, they will be 16 minutes longer. Forenoons begin to shorten a little January 1, but by January 6, they have shortened but a minute. So we have a month of lengthening or stationary forenoons and a future of lengthening afternoons.

"MY DATA FOR GRAND FORKS ARE from tables Professor Chandler had estimated (calculated) many years ago for degrees of latitude 46 and 49. I have made the necessary adjustments for our own latitude, 48 and for our place in the time belt."

AS DR. GILLETTE SAYS, THE TIME calculations in the almanac are for the center of each time zone, or in other words, they are for sun time, regardless of the divisions which have been made as a matter of convenience. The meridian on which Central time is based is the 75th, running almost through Madison, Wis. Hence the almanac's figures for that latitude would be correct for a few miles from Madison. At our northern latitude we would strike the same meridian east of Duluth, just about where the international boundary touched Lake Superior. Grand Forks being close to the western edge of the belt, its standard time would be nearly half an hour ahead of the sun. Detroit is near the eastern edge of the central zone and its standard time is therefore about half an hour behind sun time. Allowance must be given for such facts in comparing the time given in the almanac with that indicated by the clock as we have our clocks set.

AT THE EQUATOR, ALL THE YEAR around, the sun rises exactly at 6 A.M. and sets exactly at 6 P.M. at no other place on the earth's surface is this true. At all other points the sun rises and sets at 6 four times a year, about the 21st, respectively, of March, June, September and December. At other seasons the greater the distance from the equator the greater the variation in time.

THAT IS WHAT GIVES US HERE in this northern area our long days in summer and shorter nights in winter. What effect, if any, -the long winter nights have on vegetation is not clear, but it is the long summer days that make agriculture possible for us in summer. We have here in the growing season more hours of sunlight than is enjoyed by those farther south. That effects not only the growth of crops but the quality of many of the products. Northern grown fruits and vegetables are better flavored, and away up in Alaska, where there is almost continuous daylight in summer, native small fruits are far superior to those grown further south. If it were not for the tilting of the earth's axis we should have neither a potato industry nor a sugar beet industry here.

By W. P. Davies

YEARS AGO IT WAS OFTEN SAID by persons engaged in the vigorous war on intoxicants that alcohol is not a natural product, but one of man's evil inventions. Nowhere in nature, it was said, is alcohol produced spontaneously, therefore it must be an evil thing. That statement was disputed by some who cited the familiar fact that when canned peaches "work" alcohol is produced in perceptible quantity without human interposition. It is now some years since I have seen the statement that nature, Unassisted, does not produce alcohol.

ARTHUR STRINGER, WELL KNOWN poet and writer of popular fiction, who lives in New Jersey, reports an interesting case of natural production of alcohol in his own experience. Sometime this last fall, when most of the summer birds had left for the South, he noticed a small flock of robins which remained after all the others had gone, and gathered daily about a Japanese crabapple tree on his grounds and ate of the fruit which remained after all other fruit had disappeared. The birds behaved in a most peculiar manner. They would peck at the fruit and seem to enjoy it. Then they would appear excited, flying erratically and uttering strange sounds, and when on the ground they would move unsteadily. Their performance strongly suggested intoxication.

STRINGER COLLECTED SOME OF the fruit and submitted it to a friend who was chemist in a near-by college. The chemist analyzed the crabapples and found their pulp strongly impregnated with alcohol. The birds had been having their daily spree. Ordinarily those crabapples were not edible. They were small and hard, and encased in an exceedingly tough skin. The chemist explained that alternate freezing and sunny weather had mellowed the pulp and separated the juice, which had fermented during the warm days. The tough skin had kept the contents sealed up until all the sugar had been changed to alcohol. Hence the spree of the robins.

IN METHODIST CIRCLES THERE IS an old story about the late Bishop Quayle, a brilliant man and a strict teetotaler. At dinner in the home of a friend the desert was peaches which, unknown to the hostess, had worked to a high alcoholic percentage. During the dinner the bishop tasted the peaches while still busy with the main course, and he tasted them so often that soon they were gone. After he had cleaned his plate of a liberal helping he was asked if he wouldn't have some more chicken. He leaned back with a sigh of satisfaction and declined with thanks. "But," he added, "I wonder if I might have some more of those delicious peaches." He had them and enjoyed them, but never was told what it was that made them so delicious.

IN A STRAY NEWSPAPER PARAGRAPH the other day I saw a slighting reference to the old baseburner stove, around which members of the family crowded to burn their faces while their backs froze. That is an atrocious libel on a useful, comfortable and thoroughly enjoyable piece of home equipment. There were base burners which were completely encased in metal, with the fire not visible. Properly designed as some of them were, they were efficient distributors of heat, though not ornamental. The base-burner that I have in mind was the one with mica all around, through which the fire shone with a cheery glow. The outstanding member of that family of stoves was the "Radiant Home," which not only warmed the room but stimulated, the imagination.

I DON'T KNOW WHEN THE "RADIANT Home" stove was first made, or who made it, but I have a distinct recollection of it, running back more than 70 years. Among other places there was one in the tavern where, in the adjoining barn, we stabled the horse after driving to town in the cutter on a brisk winter day. In the main room of the tavern was a bar, in which I wasn't interested. To me the main feature was a Radiant Home stove, full of glowing coal, and when one came in, chilled from a cold drive, that stove was a gorgeous and most welcome thing. One could bask in its warmth and at the same time watch the little blazes flickering among the lumps of coal, and could see all sorts of beautiful pictures in the combinations of blaze and red coals.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT STOVE WAS a Radiant Home? Because on the wall near by there hung a colored lithograph picture—perhaps with calendar attached—of a room which had as its centerpiece just such another stove while around it stood four men, quite like Mr. Pickwick, who, with cheerful faces and hands joined were singing in praise of the stove. Above them was a fragment of a bar or two of music, and underneath the words "Radiant Home, Oh, Radiant Home." The few notes of music were unintelligible to me, and I never knew what the rest of the words of the song might be, but I checked the lettering on the stove with the name on the picture and knew that the real stove, which I so greatly enjoyed, was a Radiant Home.

By W. P. Davies

IN A SMALL GROUP OF MEN THE other day there was conversation about inflation, taxation, wages and so forth. It was agreed that the greatly increased incomes that are now received by many persons as a direct result of the war are bound to create inflation unless something is done about it, and that inflation is bad for everyone. It was agreed also that there should be, as there is, a tax on excess profits of corporations. It was agreed also that it would be equitable and desirable to apply a similar rule to the excess incomes of individuals when such excess is due to increased wages or salaries caused by the war. But there was a feeling that application of such a rule to individual earnings would be attended with such complications in reporting and accounting as to render the plan next to impossible of operation. One participant in the discussion couldn't see any great difficulty in applying such a rule, and outlined a plan which ran about as follows:

"IN THE FIRST PLACE," HE SAID, "I would apply to all personal incomes the present regulations for normal taxes and surtaxes, with such changes as may be made by congress. Then I would require from each taxpayer a statement of his present income from wages and salaries and also of such income averaged for two or three pre-war years and would levy a fairly heavy tax on the present excess, if any. But I would exempt from this excess tax all whose present incomes are not more, say, than \$2,500, or perhaps \$3,000 per year, and for those whose pre-war earnings were less than that sum I would permit them to deduct that amount in figuring the excess. If pre-war earnings were more than the \$2,500 or \$3,000 the amount of the earnings would be deducted.

"IN THIS WAY ALL THOSE NOW earning the smaller incomes would be exempt from the excess tax, and those whose earnings have been greatly increased would be allowed a liberal deduction. If the deduction were fixed at \$2,500, the person who earned \$1,800 before the war and is now making \$2,500 would pay no excess tax. If he is now making \$3,000 he would pay an excess tax on \$500. If he made \$4,000 before the war and is now receiving \$6,000, he would deduct the \$4,000 and pay an excess tax on the \$2,000 increase."

"I CAN'T SEE ANY GREAT DIFFICULTY in making the calculations under such a system," continued the fellow with the pencil. "The man whose income before the war was so small that he was not required to make a report could just claim the \$2,500 exemption and let it go at that. If his earnings were greater and he did make reports, presumably he has copies of them, and the treasury department certainly has them on file, so that they may be checked. A plan like that would impose no hardship on the little fellow whose wages have been increased. But it would take from those who can afford to pay a share of the excess incomes that they are now receiving as a direct result of the war and would place in the treasury for war purposes an immense sum that is now lying around loose and being spent in ways that are bound to increase everybody's living costs."

AT THAT POINT THE DISCUSSION ended. Some such plan as that suggested may or may not be the best way of dealing with the problem. But there is a problem, and a grave one, every thinking person knows, and it is clear that unless the inflationary process is checked not only will those with small and stable incomes suffer, but the sensational wages now received by many of the war workers will be eaten up in extravagant living costs.

By W. P. Davies

AS THE GREAT HOLIDAY OF Christendom approaches, there will be readings innumerable of Dickens' "Christmas Carol". John Selby, book editor of The Associated Press, has an article on the "Carol" and its author which he introduces thus:

"Down in North Carolina a celebrated professor will soon be reading Charles Dickens, 'A Christmas Carol' to a dozen or more audiences, and over the air as well."

The "celebrated professor" whom the writer does not mention by name, is, of course, Professor Frederick H. Koch, for many years with the University of North Carolina and at one time with the English department of the University of North Dakota. It was here that Dr. Koch began the series of Christmas Carol readings which he has continued ever since, and which, through the years, have been enjoyed literally by millions. The Selby article continues:

"ALL OVER THE COUNTRY preachers will quote the work. Parents will dig out thumbed copies, and children will be told about Tiny Tim, and Old Scrooge, and the rest of the immortal story.

"And people will depict Dickens as he wrote it 100 years ago—a kindly, charming gentleman whose mind was filled with sentiment, whose heart overflowed with fine, milky human kindness.

"It's the wrong picture.

"Dickens was as sour as only a disappointed author can be. He was stuck between two installments of 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' which was appearing serially in London and was doing much worse than its predecessors—the immortal Pickwick's adventures and 'Oliver Twist.'

"HE WAS IN DEBT, TOO, AND HIS relatives were hounding him on all sides. They made ridiculous requests for fantastic sums, and Dickens wore himself out granting them, or dodging them. And he was in the midst of a fight with his publisher.

"The firm was Chapman and Hall, and Forster's standard Dickens biography describes the battle in detail. Dickens left the firm, but not without a few well-aimed blows. One of these is immortal, just like the 'Carol.' He made Samuel Carter Hall into Pecksniff, in "Martin Chuzzlewit." The nice thing is that, according to Forster, Hall didn't recognize himself.

"BUT SHORTLY BEFORE CHRISTmas of 1843 Dickens was seized with the idea of doing a special Christmas story- it was a habit with the authors in those days. He got his idea, and he was transported by it. He wept, it is said, and laughed, and in the dark of the London night he left his house and took repeated walks of 15 and 20 miles, oblivious to London fog and footpads.

"It was published just before Christmas, and sold 6,000 copies the first day, and 4,000 more almost immediately. But Dickens had expected £1,000 and he actually got less than £700. It soured him on the 'Carol' for quite a time, although not so much that he failed to write other Christmas conceits for succeeding Christmases.

"And in the end Dickens won, for the 'Carol' never has stopped selling, no not in 100 years."

LIKE MANY OTHERS WHOSE work has won popular favor, Dickens has been the subject of hero worship which has attributed to him all the excellencies of spirit and behavior of his most admirable creations, which is rather unfortunate, for such worship is apt to experience reaction sometimes to the opposite extreme. Dickens had a hard boyhood, and the memory of its harshness never was pleasant to him. He won success by unremitting work against great obstacles. He encountered selfishness and greed as well as devotion and generosity. He was gifted with poetic imagination, but he was also a craftsman who earned his bread and butter with his pen. He was as human, probably, as most of us, and he had his share of business and other disappointments. It is not strange that he reacted to such influences much as others do.

BUT UNDERNEATH THE MAN'S EXterior, which sometimes was harsh and forbidding, there must have been something fine and tender, otherwise we never should have had such creations as Pickwick, and Little Tim, and Peggoty, little Paul Dombey and Little Nell. Nor could a man only selfish and self-centered have gone into the inwardness of the school system and the debtors prison of his day as Dickens did. His writings had numerous defects, as whose writings have not, and in person he had his failings, but he has given us some beautiful and enduring things, and for that we have reason to be grateful to him.

By W. P. Davies

FOLLOWING THEIR EXPERIENCE in three or four coal strikes which have resulted in coal shortages in many parts of the country, the people of the United States are now confronted with the prospect of a railway strike which, if carried into effect, will usher in the new year with rail transportation tied up, goods urgently needed for immediate use lying untouched in warehouses or in cars standing idle in railway yards and millions of people unable to make necessary journeys. This strike is called for December 30, Christmas week, when passenger travel is at its peak, and in the middle of winter, when the need for prompt movement of goods is greatest.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT that a strike has been called, it is confidently predicted in several quarters that there will be no strike, but that some arrangement will be made to insure uninterrupted service pending further negotiations to reconcile differences over wages between railway managements and their employes. Doubtless it was in this expectation that the operating employes voted some time ago to authorize the calling of a strike. Many of those employes, probably a large majority, do not wish to strike, and would not willingly subject the public to the tragedy of one in order to obtain benefits for themselves.

THE STRIKE VOTE MAY BE INTERPRETED as a means of applying to railway managements and government agencies the kind of pressure that has so often been effective without actual resort to the strike. In cases in which strikes have been called, as in the coal industry, the government has yielded and operators have been forced to comply. In the light of that experience, so often repeated, members of the railway operating unions probably were warranted in believing that it brought face to face with the prospect of complete demoralization of the nation's major transportation system the government and those subject to its control would submit, as had been done time and time again.

NOTWITHSTANDING THE FACT that the coal controversy was permitted to go to extreme length, and that production of coal from the nation's mines was actually suspended for weeks, inexcusably interrupting war work and subjecting millions to the hazards of illness and suffering, those who voted to authorize a rail strike doubtless believed that in this case the government would yield before a strike was actually called and put into effect. Nevertheless, we had a rail strike 50 years ago. We had general coal strikes this year, and we are threatened with a rail strike now.

NORMALLY THE RIGHT OF THE workman to quit his occupation is unquestioned. But there are conditions in which he has not that right. There are crises in which the man must stick to his job, no matter at what sacrifice to himself. But the operating employes of the railroads have no thought of quitting. Their employment means too much to them. They are commonly described as the aristocrats of labor. Their earnings are greater than those of any other group of wage earners. Their positions are secure and the rules under which they work give them rights of promotion which most others do not enjoy. They receive retirement pensions which are generally considered liberal.

THE STRIKE ORDER WHICH HAS just been issued places them in the position of holding a gun at the nation's head, threatening the nation with dire calamity at a time when all its resources and all its energies are needed to perform the tremendous task in which it is engaged. That order permits those who have authorized it and expect to be governed by it in the position of being willing to prolonging and rendering more difficult and dangerous the tasks of those who are already risking their lives in the nation's service and whose material compensation is a bare subsistence. And the strikers, if they strike, will be doing so in order that they may receive a few dollars per week in increased pay.

IF THE DEMANDS OF THE UNIONS are granted, in whole or in part, with or without strike, from what source are the necessary funds to be obtained? Union leaders talk of "swollen railroad earnings," the implication being that increased wage payments are to be met out of such earnings. It is a fact that railway earnings generally are greater than they were through the depression years. It is true, also, that railway costs are far greater than they were. But those who are impressed by the fact that passenger trains are now loaded and the volume of freight shipments is high should remember that we have just passed through several years when the railroads of the country, as a whole, were operated at a loss; when only a few of them made profits or paid dividends, and when many of the others were in receivership. They should remember, too, that railway equipment and rights of ways are rapidly deteriorating; that replacements and repairs are impossible except on a minor scale; and that when the war is over the roads will have before them a tremendous job of reconstruction, and that, reconstruction must be paid for out of present and future earnings.

By W. P. Davies

AN ARTICLE IN THE SATURDAY Evening Post deals with the Christmas tree industry in northern Minnesota. The writer is Jesse Rainsford Sprague, who, for many years has specialized in articles relating to the development and conduct of business enterprises of many types. His present article starts, off with this paragraph:

"Last January a crew of some 50 persons—30 of them young women—working in the frozen swamps of northern Minnesota, began cutting Christmas trees for this Christmas. They've been at it ever since, except for the three summer months when the trees were budding."

IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE FACT that Mr. Sprague is known to be an experienced writer, careful to obtain exact facts concerning the subjects of which he writes, I should have said after reading that paragraph that he was dreaming, for I had no idea that Christmas trees were ever cut except in the fall and winter preceding the holiday in which they were to be used. But Mr. Sprague has investigated the subject, and I haven't, so perhaps it is I who have been dreaming. At any rate, there is his statement

THE ARTICLE IS DEVOTED PRINCIPALLY to the work of one man, Roy Halvorson, of Duluth, who, from small beginnings, has developed a business that is nation-wide in scope and that was expected to market a million Christmas trees this season. Halvorson, it is said, soaks the butts of the little trees in a liquid preparation of his own to prevent the needles from dropping prematurely, but whether he carries them all through the season that way or not we are not told.

I WAS SURPRISED ALSO BY THE statement that the bulk of Halvorson's business is in 3-foot trees. In the stocks brought to Grand Forks there are very few trees so small. I should say that here the bulk of the trade is in trees ranging from 5 to 7 feet, the smaller ones being in demand only for table or window dressing.

UNTIL A FEW YEARS AGO ALL the Christmas trees used here came from Minnesota. Then a few trees were received from Washington or Oregon, and presently shipments by the carload from the west coast became the regular thing. This year we have few, if any, western trees, but for the first time, so far as I know, we have been getting trees from Canada. Perhaps labor conditions have something to do with this change. Meanwhile, we are receiving truck loads of trees from the original source of supply, northern Minnesota, and the business gives the state considerable revenue, as a tax of two cents per tree is collected on all trees leaving the state.

THIS WILL BE ANYTHING BUT A merry Christmas in Germany. Because of disasters to their armies and the bombing of their cities the people have abundant cause for gloom, and the absence of Christmas trees this year will be a further and forcible reminder of their situation. For centuries, Christmas has been the great German family holiday and its observance with lighted Christmas trees has become an established tradition. This year Christmas trees are banned and lighted candles will be permitted only if they are carefully screened from outside observation.

ONE TRADITION ATTRIBUTES THE use of lights on Christmas trees to Martin Luther. The story is that while traveling one winter night Luther was "imstimulate the twinkling of the stars. It the foliage of the evergreens, and that thereafter he had the Christmas trees at his home to be lighted with candles to pressed by the twinkling of stars through may be true that Luther did that, but I have seen references to the prevalence of a similar custom long before Luther's time. As to the origin of the use of Christmas trees, nobody knows much about the facts. It is known that long before the Christian era, many of the northern tribes used evergreen trees as important features at their midwinter festivals. As in many other cases the ceremonial form, but attached to it a new significance. Holly and mistletoe, too, were used by the British Druids in the time of Caesar, and how long before that nobody knows.

That Reminds Me

Memorize Fewer Dates

By W. P. Davies

REVISING ITS COURSES IN AMERICAN history the Minneapolis school board has decided to fix attention on fewer dates than has been customary. For the grades emphasis will be placed on 10 dates especially significant in the nation's history, while a greater number will be included in the high school courses. Certainly it is more important that children have a few dates firmly fixed in their minds, together with the reasons for their importance, than commit to memory a long list of dates without appreciation of their meaning.

MEMORIES ARE AS DIFFERENT AS are other personal qualities and traits. There are minds which seem to be able to store away without effort facts without limit and at the same time to avoid confusion concerning the relative importance of the things they have learned. Macaulay seemed to remember word for word almost everything he read and to draw at will on his vast store for whatever he wanted whenever he wanted it. Our own Chief Justice Hughes could dictate a long speech, and then, without seeing the manuscript, deliver the speech without changing a syllable.

THERE ARE OTHERS WHO FIND It difficult to memorize anything and who lose quickly whatever they have memorized. And there are still others who remember everything but never sort it out. Their minds are crammed with details, each of which seems as important as any of the others. Mark Twain has illustrated this tendency in describing the manner in which one of his characters told a story. He began the story, but never finished it. Each detail recalled another, and he went off after that, to branch off again when another detail came to mind. To him all facts were of equal importance.

IN MY OWN SCHOOL DAYS I learned a lot of dates, as most youngsters have done; and most of those dates are forgotten. A few are remembered. More important, I think, are the events with which the dates are associated. I do not remember when Shakespeare was born, or died, though I have read those dates Scores of times. But I do remember that he wrote in the latter part of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth centuries, and that his activity covered parts of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. That gives me a sort of clue to the sixteenth century.

I REMEMBER THAT COLUMBUS sent his brother to England to interest Henry VII in his proposed voyage of exploration, but meanwhile Isabella of Spain had pawned her jewels for enough cash to finance Columbus. Everybody knows that Columbus sailed in 1492, so Henry's son, Henry VIII, must have reigned in the early part of the sixteenth century, Henry VIII wrote a broadside against Martin Luther and was rewarded by the pope with the title "Defender of the Faith," which has been worn by British sovereigns ever since. But Henry changed his mind when he wanted a divorce, and himself separated the English church from Rome. So in that way I am able to hook up some highly important events and to fix their approximate time.

IN A SIMILAR WAY A FEW DATES in American history will go a long way if they are recalled in connection with the events that made them memorable. The settlements in Virginia and at Plymouth Rock were only a few years apart. The battle of New Orleans was fought in the same year as the battle of Waterloo, which is sometimes handy to remember. I often confused Pizarro with Cortez, but when I noticed that Pizarro and Peru had the same initials, that helped me to keep them straight. But it keeps me busy trying to remember whether some world-shaking event occurred last year or the year before.

By W. P. Davies

DURING THE FORMER WORLD war, many American soldiers in England were encamped for training at Salisbury field, some 80 miles southwest of London, and some of them brought back interesting descriptions of the antiquities to be seen in that neighborhood. Probably American soldiers in this war are in camp on the same plain, preparing for the invasion of the continent that is to come. They also will have opportunity to visit some of the historic places near by.

THE CITY OF SALISBURY WAS A Saxon stronghold some centuries before the Norman invasion, and its old fort was strengthened by Alfred, greatest of the Saxon kings. But before the time of the Saxons there had been built by men now unknown those massive stone columns surrounding the enclosure now known as Stonehenge, whose purpose and history are lost in the mists of the early centuries.

IN THE CITY OF SALISBURY IS one of England's famous cathedrals, now some 700 years old, whose spire of 404 feet is the tallest in England. Associated with the cathedral is an ancient tradition which had been rendered in verse as follows:

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL.

As many days as in the year there be,
As many windows in this church we see.
As many marble pillars here appear
(8760).

As there are hours throughout the fleet-
ing year.
So many gates as moons one year does view.
Strange tale to tell; yet not more strange than true.

I HAVE READ OF SOME SUCH LEGEND before. What basis of truth I may, have I do not know. Perhaps some Yankee soldier will take the trouble to check up on the number of windows, pillars and gates in the old cathedral. Legends attach themselves to ancient buildings, often without known cause. Long ago I came across a legend about another famous English cathedral, that at York, which seemed to have been current for many years in Yorkshire. Year in and year out workmen were employed on the cathedral, removing stone and replacing it and making other alterations. The legend was that for some reason the building of the cathedral had never been paid for and that claims for its cost could not be enforced until the building had been completed. Therefore, went the story, the church authorities saw to it that the building should remain more or less incomplete, keeping workmen busy on it all the time.

AN ENGLISHMAN WHOM I ASKED about the story said he was familiar with it, but the only element of truth in it was that workmen were actually employed making minor changes in the building a good share of the time. In parts of the building, said my informant, stone had been used which was not completely resistant to weather, and from time to time stone showing signs of deterioration was removed and replaced. Out of that simple fact gossip has built a legend which had been firmly believed for years.

NOT THAT ONE CAN NOTICE IT yet, but it is a fact that the sun has reached the tropic of Capricorn and started on its way north and our shortest days for this season are over. This statement is made subject to correction which may be necessary on account of the more or less erratic behavior of the sun and earth which causes them to be a few minutes ahead of or behind schedule time. For most practical purposes it suffices to consider December 21 the midwinter day. But most of our real winter is yet to come. How's the oil holding out, and the coal?

INNUMERABLE TRADITIONS and customs have become associated with Christmas day and the Christmas season. Many of them are directly related to the Christian faith, while others are of pagan origin. In many cases ancient pagan forms, many of them beautiful and impressive, have been retained and given new significance by having implanted in them elements derived from the story of Jesus. Without these traditions and customs Christmas would lose much of its flavor. With the day we associate the Christmas tree and the Christmas candle, holly and mistletoe, the ringing of bells and the sing of carols, and there is a great multitude to whom the Christmas season would not be quite complete without the opportunity to read or hear read that famous old poem "The Night Before Christmas."

THE AUTHOR OF THE POEM, Clement Carke Moore, was born in New York in 1799 and died at Newport, R. I., in 1863. He was graduated from Columbia in 1804, and for twenty-five years served as a professor in New York General Theological seminary, occupying the chair of Biblical Learning and later changing to that of Oriental and Greek Literature. He published a volume of poems and was the author of theological treatises. Like the creator of "Alice" and inventor of her amazing and amusing adventures, this teacher of serious subjects is now known and remembered for an achievement of an entirely different type, a bit of verse which he probably regarded as of no consequence, but which is known and loved the world over. It has become my custom to publish that little poem sometime during the Christmas season, and here it is again:

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the
house Not a creature was stirring, not
even a mouse; The stockings were hung by the
chimney with care, In hopes that St. Nicholas soon
would be there The children were nestled all
snug in their beds, While visions of sugar-plums
danced in their heads; and mamma in her kichief
and I in my cap, Had just settled our brains for a
long winter's nap— When out on the lawn there
arose such a clatter, I sprang from my bed to see
what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like
a flash, Tore open the shutters and threw
up the sash, The moon on the breast of the
new-fallen snow Gave a lustre of midday to subjects below; When what to my wondering
eyes should appear, But a miniature sleigh and eight
tiny reindeer. With a little old driver so lively
and quick I knew in a moment it must be
St. Nick. More rapid than eagles his
coursers they came, And he whistled and shouted
and called them by name. "Now Dasher; now Dancer! now
Prancer and Vixon! On Comet! on Cupid! on Donner
and Blitzen! To the top of the porch, to the
top of the wall! Now dash away, dash away,
dash away all!" As dry leaves that before the
wild hurricane fly, When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew, With the sleigh full of toys, and
St. Nicholas, too. And then in a twinkling I heard
on the roof The prancing and pawing of each
little hoof. As I drew in my head and was
turning around, Down the chimney St. Nicholas
came with a bound. He was dressed all in fur from
his head to his foot, And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot; A bundle of toys he had flung on
his back, And he looked like a peddler just
opening his pack; His eyes, how they twinkled; his
dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his
nose like a cherry; His droll little mouth was drawn
up like a bow, And the beard on his chin was
as white as the snow. The stump of a pipe he held
tight in his teeth, And the smoke it encircled his
head like a wreath. He had a broad face and a little
round belly That shook when he laughed like
a bowl full of jelly. He was chubby and plump,— a
right jolly old elf; And I laughed when I saw him,
in spite of myself. A wink of his eye and twist of
his head Soon gave me to know there was
nothing to dread. He spoke not a word, but went
straight to his work, And filled all the stockings, then
turned with a jerk, And laying his finger aside of
his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose. He sprang to his sleigh, to his

team gave a whistle; And away they all flew like the
down of a thistle; And I heard him exclaim, ere he
drove out of sight, "Happy Christmas to all, and to
all a good-night."

By W. P. Davies

LOCAL PRIDE IS THE SUBJECT OF two anecdotes in the current Reader's Digest. According to one of these a navy wife from the East became ill after joining her husband in San Francisco. When the navy doctor, who was consulted, advised an operation the husband asked a local civilian physician with whom he was on friendly terms to look up the navy surgeon's professional standing. The friend complied and reported that the naval surgeon was not a San Franciscan, nor was he even a Californian. He had not thought it necessary to investigate further.

THE OTHER STORY ATTRIBUTES to a Texas preacher this prayer:

"O, Lord, we thank Thee for the bounteous blessings bestowed upon Texas; and we beseech Thee to look with favor upon those places where Your feet have not trod."

DICKENS MADE HIMSELF DISLIKED on this side of the ocean for his comments on American manners and customs. But he was equally willing to satirize many of the things that he found in England. In one of his books—I think it's "Our Mutual Friend—he had a bumptious character, Mr. Podsnap, in many respects like the modern Colonel Blimp, of current British satire. At a private dinner party Mr. Podsnap makes a stuffy patriotic speech which he closes by admonishing his hearers to be duly grateful for the divine blessings which an all-wise Providence has showered upon their beloved country, "to the direct exclusion—ah—of such other countries—ah—"
—"with an obliterating wave of his hand
—"as there may happen to be."

I'm not sure that Dickens told it exactly that way, but that's the substance of it.

I SHALL CLOSE THIS ANTHOLOGY of provincialism, parochialism, or whatever you choose to call it, with the devout Scot's final petition in his long prayer: "and if Ye hae ony braw gifts to bestow, gie them to Yer ain peculiar people, the Scotch."

IS THE FOX POPULATION OF North Dakota increasing rapidly, and if so, why? That it has increased greatly in some localities of late is rather strongly suggested by the stories that appear from time to time of the number of foxes bagged by individual trappers. Dozens, scores, and in some cases hundreds of foxes are reported to have been taken by individual trappers in a season, and as furs and now valuable, the returns from such trap lines run into considerable money,

THERE IS A BELIEF THAT FOXES are more numerous because there is more natural food for them, especially in the form of pheasants. I have heard, also, that rabbits are more numerous of late, and foxes are fond of rabbits. The rabbit population is very fluctuating. For a few years the country will seem to be full of rabbits, and they do a lot of damage, especially to young trees. Then most of them will disappear, presumably from disease which becomes epidemic among them.

I AM NO TRAPPER, BUT I HAVE A trap, a perfectly good one that has never been used. I bought it last spring, having designs on a rabbit that was playing havoc with gardens in the vicinity. I saw the animal several times, and thought at first of calling the police. But I didn't know if the police arrested rabbits, and anyway, if they came the rabbit might not be there. So I bought me a steel rat trap. But while I was studying about where to set the trap so that it might catch the rabbit and yet not catch somebody's pet animal, the rabbit disappeared, apparently for good. Perhaps it heard the trap rattle. So I still have the trap, read" for the next rabbit.

By W. P. Davies

STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE in several quarters that in the United States the peak of war production has been reached and that hereafter, while expansion in certain lines may be expected for sometime, there will also be a course of tapering off in other directions, so that total production for war purposes is likely to be on the downward grade. Such statements are made not by mere theorists who are out of touch with the practical requirements of the situation but by hard-headed men who have been right in the center of the struggle for production and who have had opportunity to be familiar with all its phases.

ONE OF THE MEN QUOTED ON this subject is Henry J. Kaiser, who has achieved wonders in the field of industry and who is thoroughly familiar with its numerous problems. Mr. Kaiser is convinced that the time has come when attention must be given to the gradual return of many of our present war-time industries to peace-time production. Donald J. Nelson, head of the war production board, says the major problems of manpower and supply of material for war production have been solved and that already in some departments material and plants are being released for production for civilian use. Others, similarly familiar with the facts, are reported to concur substantially in these opinions.

IT IS NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD that we have yet enough of everything with which to carry on the war. We have yet before us in Europe and in the Pacific the major efforts of the war and no one can foresee the demands that will be made on our production when the real invasion of Germany and the concentrated attack on Japan are fully under way. That we shall need then incalculable quantities of some materials as well as our maximum manpower is taken for granted. But in the opinion of those in the best position to know, in certain lines we have already produced all that is likely to be needed.

IT WAS THE BELIEF OF GERMAN leaders that entrance of the United States into the war might safely be ignored because it would be impossible for this nation to convert American industry to war production on the scale that would be necessary to make the nation's power effective in time for it to be an important element in the war. Yet that very thing has been done and even now, before the war has reached its climax, American industry has upset the calculations of Europe's vaunted military technicians.

FOR 10 YEARS BEFORE HITLER turned loose his dogs of war Germany had been goose-stepping in preparation for the war that was to come. Its industries had been regimented and organized with the single purpose of making its military force irresistible. The output of those industries for civilian life was so restricted that in the ordinary affairs of life the entire population was kept on a war footing through that whole period, and under rigid government control the nation's production had been on a scale of efficiency with which it was confidently believed no mere democratic people could successfully compete.

THAT THE GERMAN MACHINE, UNDER rigid totalitarian control, was highly efficient in many ways is undeniable. It had built a military structure the most powerful the world had ever seen and its material equipment was the marvel of all beholders. Yet within a little more than two years American democracy has achieved far more than the best that totalitarian Germany could do in 10 years. From raw civilians it has organized and trained a fighting force of 10 million which on a dozen fronts has dealt successfully with the professionals of Germany and Japan. It has eclipsed all other nations in production of war material. Not only has it supplied its own forces, but it has delivered millions of tons of fighting instruments to its Allies and the disasters that have overtaken German armies in Russia are due in no small measure to the use of American equipment in Russian hands.

ALL OF THIS, BE IT REMEMBERED, has been done by a democratic nation under a system of free enterprise. Our industries have required government direction and co-ordination under the abnormal conditions of war, and in some measure they have been subjected to government control. But essentially they remain, as they were, private enterprises, dependent on the skill, resourcefulness and imagination of private individuals, and it is upon those factors that the hope of American industry for the future rests, as it is to them that its past success is due.

THE WORDS OF THE RUSSIAN National hymn have been changed so as to express sentiment quite different from that which appeared in the "Internationale." The latter song was intended to be world-wide in its application, just as the Comintern, which had its headquarters in Moscow, asserted itself as the representative of the "workers of the world." Nationalism had no place in the philosophy of those who organized the Comintern and wrote the lines of the "Internationale." They conceived "One World" in which all power should be vested in the "toilers." National sentiment and national loyalties had no place in their thinking, and the words of the "Internationale" constituted an appeal to the downtrodden and starving everywhere to rise and seize by force the power which was held to be rightfully theirs. It was emphatically a war song.

RECENTLY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ordered the abolition of the Comintern. Now the "Internationale" has been rewritten, not as a class song, but as a national hymn. Considerable cynical comment followed the announcement of the Comintern's suspension, and doubt was expressed concerning the good faith of whatever action was actually taken. Undoubtedly the rewriting of the "Internationale" will bring forth similar comment. We shall be reminded, as we have been in the past, that the bear, as well as the wolf, may don sheep's clothing.

I AM NOT PREPARED TO PASS judgment on what has taken place in Russia, but I suggest the possibility that Russia may be undergoing changes similar in their nature to those which many other nations have experienced, changes often expressed either in the language of national songs or in the treatment given them. National songs have usually been born of conflict, and in their early stages they have expressed something of the antagonism associated with conflict. Often with the lapse of time the acrimonious sentiment has subsided, and words which expressed them have been eliminated from the national songs, or, if used, have been used without thought of their original meaning.

THE BRITISH NATIONAL ANthem, for example, contains these beligerent and provocative words:

O Lord, our God, arise; Scatter his enemies
And make them fall. Confound their politics; Frustrate their knavish tricks; On Thee our hope we fix;
God save the king.

Those words are no longer sung. Loyal Britons now sing an inoffensive supplication in which all but avowed enemies can join.

ONE OF THE MOST STIRRING OF nationalistic hymns is the Welsh "Men of Harlech," whose words breathe fire and slaughter against the "Saxon foe." But most Welshmen have long since forgotten that the Saxons were ever their foes, as have the Saxons themselves. The words based on ancient conflict, though used, have become meaningless.

THE FRENCH "MARSEILLAISE" for generations has been an expression of French nationalism, but written in the heat of conflict it was as universal and as revolutionary as the "Internationale." Its revolutionary character has been forgotten.

OUR OWN "STAR SPANGLED BANNER" was written while an enemy was bombarding one of our forts. It expressed, as it was intended to do, the anger which a loyal American might be expected to feel at the moment. The words of the song have not been revised, but by common consent there are omissions in popular use the words of anger once so appropriate, but which have long since ceased to apply. One song of a different type is "America." It is full of lofty sentiment, and it expresses no anger or hatred. But it did not become the national anthem. In still another category is Julia Warde Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic." It was born of conflict; both words and music have the true martial ring; its thought is inspiring; but it contains neither anger nor bitterness.

RUSSIA'S RECAST HYMN APPEALS to the national spirit of the Russian people and not to the destructive revolutionary spirit of the world. If, as it appears, it marks a change in the attitude and outlook of Russian leadership it is symptomatic of a constructive process similar to "that which" has marked the history of many other nations.

By W. P. Davies

WELL, IT WASN'T A WHITE Christmas in this part of the country, as the snow was held off until next day. But Christmas day was pleasant, nevertheless, the temperature for several hours being just about the freezing point, but just the same, the youngsters would have preferred a blanket of soft snow. There used to be a saying back east that "a green Christmas makes a fat graveyard." There Christmas may actually be green. The deciduous trees are bare, of course, but often the grass and other vegetation retains its summer color until after midwinter, and it is traditional that such an open season is productive of much illness and many deaths. Here, although the weather may be mild, the greenness is gone from the landscape.

SUCH A MILD CHRISTMAS AS THE recent one invariably prompts the question "Did you ever see such another Christmas day as this?" One runs across the impression that a little variation from the usual is unprecedented. I haven't taken the trouble to check up on the subject, but I feel quite certain that I have known several Christmas days quite as snowless, and mild, and pleasant as last Saturday was. And no matter what the weather is on a given winter day, one could usually find a duplicate for it in the records of not so many years. There are exceptions, of course. Occasionally there is a record breaker.

WE CAME NEAR BREAKING A record 10 years ago. Christmas day, 1933, was not the coldest recorded in Grand Forks, but it equaled the record for all our Christmas days here. The temperature got down to 30 below zero. That degree of cold had been recorded for only one earlier Christmas day since the weather station was established at the University. The other minus 30 Christmases was in 1892.

HOWEVER, CHRISTMAS DAY, 1943, while it equaled one record, was preliminary to the actual shattering of another, for on the morning of December 28 in that year the temperature reached 37 below zero, the coldest point ever reached for a December day at the University weather station. And that made us feel a little chesty.

DO WILDCATS EVER ATTACK HUMAN beings? A 16-year-old boy in the Canadian province of New Brunswick is sure they do. Early in the month, according to an eastern news dispatch, as the lad was returning from work in the woods, a wild cat pounced on him from the branches of a tree beneath which he was passing. He fought the animal off with his ax and wounded it so that it retired from the fray. The boy was severely lacerated but suffered no grave injuries.

WHETHER THIS OR THAT WILD animal will attack a human being unprovoked has long been the subject of argument. Contradicting the statements often made that none of the American members of the cat tribe will attack a human being unless forced or frightened into a fight or in defense of young, are the numerous specific and apparently well authenticated stories of such unprovoked attacks actually having been made.

I NEVER SAW A WILD CAT AT large, but when a boy I often heard in the Canadian woods the screams of an animal which everyone said was a wild cat, and I have seen the carcasses of a few of the animals which had been killed by hunters of the neighborhood. To us boys the wild cat was a fearsome animal. While none of the neighbors reported having been attacked by the cats, there were all sorts of stories of such attacks in distant parts of the country, and we believed them all. After hearing one of those animals scream you couldn't have coaxed one of us into the woods at night. The cats were supposed to sleep in the daytime.

COMRADE STALIN HAVING SUBstituted different words for those of the Russian "Internationale," George Bernard Shaw has undertaken to revise the British national anthem. Considering the first stanza inoffensive he makes the second read as follows:

"O, Lord, our God, arise!
All our salvation lies
In Thy great hands!
Center his (the king's) thoughts on Thee,
Let him God's captain be!
Thine to eternity,
God save the king."

CERTAINLY THIS IS MORE IN keeping with the holiday spirit than the petition to "Confound their politics; frustrate their knavish tricks," appearing in the standard version. Shaw's version does him credit, and it is a welcome variation from the alternate cynicism and buffoonery so characteristic of Shaw.

THE SHAW VERSION, HOWEVER, is likely to meet the fate of most other amendments to national anthems—nobody will sing it. As a matter of fact, people don't sing the original of that second stanza, any more than they sing all of "America," or "The Star Spangled Banner." I have no idea how old "God! Save the King" is, but its several petitions, including thee political ones, were not written originally for King George VI. They were sung for his great-grandmother, Victoria, and, I suppose, for several of her predecessors.

EACH LANGUAGE HAS A TONE OF its own, and a good many years ago some writer, now unknown, compared several of them to musical instruments, with the following result:

Greek's a harp we love to hear, Latin is a trumpet clear; Spanish like an organ swells. Italian rings its silver bells; France with many a frolic mien Tunes its sprightly violin; Loud the German rolls its drums When Russia with its clashing cymbals.

comes.
But Britain's sons may well rejoice. For English—'tis the human voice.
Those lines were published many years ago in the Atlantic Monthly and have only recently been resurrected.

A WRITER IN THE CORONET MAGazine unwittingly got his geographical wires crossed when he wrote the following:
"A large flour mill at Grand Rapids is operated by the state of North Dakota. Advertising is conveniently provided by a law which makes it illegal for any official of the state to issue any paper— whether check or proclamation, tax receipt or letterhead—that does not advertise the state's brand of flour."

UNDOUBTEDLY THE WRITER knows that Grand Rapids is where they make furniture, and that it is at Grand Forks that the state of North Dakota grinds flour. I'm glad I am not in the milling business in North Dakota. I think it would irritate me greatly to be reminded every time I saw a piece of state printing that I was paying taxes to advertise the product of a competitor.

MORE STEEL FACTORIES WERE closed because of the strike. That must have been cheering news to the boys in Italy, in the air, in the Pacific. Those boys are not doing any striking.

AS THE YEAR COMES TO A CLOSE there is a turning of thought toward the past, and no matter what the old year may have brought us, there is a touch of sadness in our farewell. And, as we approach the New Year, it is often with high resolve, and always with hope. Few feel so utterly defeated as not to hope that the coming year will be better than the last. Tennyson has succeeded, better, perhaps, than any other poet, in interpreting the two moods in which we bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new. I have used two of his poems on that subject before, and because I feel that they have never been more timely and appropriate than in this present time of confusion I repeat them here:

DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR. Full knee-deep lies the winter snow, And the winter winds are wearily sighing; Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow, And tread softly and speak low, For the old year lies a-dying. Old year, you must not die; You came to us so readily, You lived with us so steadily, Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he does not move: He will not see the dawn of day. He hath no other life above. He brought me a friend and a true true-love, And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go. He frothed his bumpers to the brim; A jollier year we shall not see; But, though his eyes are waxing dim, And tho' his foes speak ill of him, He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die. He was full of joke and jest, But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste His son and heir doth ride post-haste, But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow I heard just now the crowing cock. The shadows flicker to and fro: The cricket chirp: the light burns low: 'Us nearly twelve o'clock. . . Shake hands before you die, Old year, we'll dearly rue for you: What is it we can do for you? Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin Alack! our friend is gone. Close up his eyes: Tie up his chin; Step from the corpse, and let him in That standeth there alone
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
A new face at the door.

GRANDER AND MORE SOLEMN
are those more familiar lines:

RING OUT, WILD BELLS.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, The flying cloud, the frosty light, The year is dying in the night.
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow; The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind, For those that here we see no more; Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife, Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in. Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right, Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand; Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.