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THE BREAKDOWN OF THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.

Democratic politicians and press agents continue to cry in concert, that congress is not functioning. Why do they not transfer their anxiety on this score to the executive department? For many weeks the question of whether or not President Wilson is physically competent to perform the duties of his office has been a mooted one, without definite information being to the people on this important point by an administration which has become celebrated for its secretiveness. Heads of a number of foreign missions, among whom are several ambassadors, remain technically without official standing because they have not been received by the president.

Viscount Grey left the country after several weeks cooling of his heels without being received by the president as ambassador from Great Britain, though during his stay President Wilson received the Prince of Wales and the King and Queen of Belgium. Many vacancies in the American diplomatic service have not been filled, and there is general disorganization in the national public service because President Wilson does not, perhaps cannot, perform his functions or authorize others to do so for him. Thereby undue importance and power is accorded to certain comparatively obscure and mediocre individuals who happen to have personal access to the president.

The biggest obstacle to the proper functioning of congress is the incapacity of President Wilson. It is believed to be in part responsible for his unwillingness to treat with the senate in the matter of ratification of the peace treaty. This situation is becoming scandalous. Conditions created by the administration are chaotic, and nothing is being done, perhaps nothing can be done, by the executive toward the work of reconstruction.

PREACHER PROTESTS.

Preachers have caught some of the spirit of unrest, if we may judge from the utterances of the Rev. John R. Stratton of New York, whose denominational affiliations are not revealed in reporting his remarks. Mr. Stratton talks plainly when he says: "If the devil was not working 24 hours a day, American preachers might take a strike vote and let the country go straight to hell."

The words of the New York minister are forcible and they serve to renew attention to a subject often commented on—the small pay of the average preacher. Ministers' salaries always have been entirely too low compared with the education and mental ability demanded. At present preachers are sharing with others of fixed incomes the problem of making salaries fixed at pre-war figures, and none too large then, balance post-war prices of living. While anyone with the financial consideration only in view would be foolish to enter the ministry, a church that calls a pastor or receives one sent should contribute sufficient support to enable him to live comfortably and maintain his self-respect as one who pays his way.

While financial support is necessary for the preacher, if he has received the call and fits his profession, he is also engaged in the work for the character of the he can give. The satisfaction he gets from the love of the work and duty faithfully performed must constitute in large part compensation for the self-denial he is compelled to practice. It is true that such satisfaction cannot be exchanged for groceries and clothing, but it is the non-negotiable reward of every worker who is in love with his job. The man who does not feel pleasure over work well done, regardless of the money received for it, is a misfit in his line of effort, and this should be true of preachers above other professions.

However, the plan of striking will hardly provide a remedy for the evil of which the New York pastor complains. Churches are not conducted for financial profit-like business institutions. Relief doubtless will be had through increased appreciation of the membership of what constitutes a living salary for a preacher, preacher, considering his family and the demands made on him. That much is his due and he should have no less. Yet no matter how large the salary, from the service he renders will the preacher receive the greater reward, if he is truly devoted to his calling.

THEY CARE NOT FOR COST.

The Kalamazoo Gazette says that it was Tolstoy who told the story of the man who went to the spinner to buy some fine threads. But the threads the spinner showed him were not fine enough to suit.

"The spinner said: 'If these are not fine enough for you, then here are some others that will suit you.'

"And she pointed to a bare spot. The man declared he could not see the thread.

"The spinner replied: 'The fact that you cannot see them proves that they are very fine; I can't see them myself.'

"The fool was rejoiced and ordered some more of the same thread, and paid down the money for it."

The story might be a satire on the extravagance of the present times. Flush folks demand the finest of everything. They scorn cotton and call for silk. The moderate-priced article is rejected with suspicion because it doesn't cost enough.

The unnecessary things they buy are as futile in their uselessness as the invisible threads which, very likely, the vain and foolish-man attempted to spin into something equivalent to a $20 silk shirt.

Think this story over.

TRY IT ON AT WASHINGTON.

The new Secretary of Agriculture, Edw. T. Meredith, declares that "business men must look to the operations of their establishments, no matter in what line they may be engaged, and see that no useless employe is retained to add to the cost of distributing what the farmer now produces." If the new cabinet member has ideas of this kind he will not have to go beyond the borders of the Washington departments to find plenty of room for application of his advice to eliminate superfluous employes. There is not a private business in the country so wastefully run as is the government of the United States under the present national administration, and there are few private enterprises that could be conducted with such obesity of the payroll as is now prevalent in the departments at Washington without being thrown into bankruptcy.

STILL YOU can't blame the war fiends for not rushing gaily to get what they know they deserve. But this does not say they should not be dragged when they try to hang back.

A CONGRESSMAN complains that "lobby bags" are eating his stationery. When paper was cheap nobody ever heard anything about such pests.

NOW THEY say clothing prices "won't come down until 1921." But what the average man wants to know is if they are likely to come down then.

WE ARE WARNED to expect a crop of mad-grants. If we want to stop it all we will have to do is send a scull list or two to Europe.

WHAT DO YOU Want Most in Life?—Headline. More print paper to make out the list on.

MOSES had another advantage over moderns. He wore neither shoes nor pants.

WILL HOLLAND endure a blockade for a blockhead?

MANY A FAVORITE son now aspires to be the father of his country.

The Passing Show

ISN'T it funny how a new SPRING straw hat in a February blizzard

CAN keep a girl's legs warm?

WE have to agree

WITH the man who says that poverty

AND worry are conducive

TO longevity or at least admit it seems so.

"LET the world get back to work"

SEEMS to be a universal slogan

BUT the trouble is

THAT slogans and desk signs

ARE always for the other

FELLOW and not for the one

WHO happens to be reading them.

THERE was a time

WHEN the youngest visitors in a family

HAD to wait until the

OLDEST sister could slip out a prize

BUT nowadays

IT is a case of catch-as-catch-oven.

BAKER wants $15,000,000 for aviation—

IT is probably useless to look

AROUND and see if there isn't any

LEFT of that $640,000,000 already

APPROPRIATED for aviation.

FASHION expert says that not all skirts

ARE to be knee high—

WELL, isn't that something to

BE thankful for?

EVIDENTLY a lot of our farmer friends

ARE busy putting in their evenings

WITH the festive still and raisin.

AFTER a man has been on the

JUMP for about sixty years

HE never thanks anyone in advance

FOR their assistance.

HAVE you ever thought that the work of

BURGLARS sometimes is wonderful—

THEY can get away with $75,000 of silks

AS if it was a popular necktie

OR carry off 50 barrels of whiskey from

A BONDED warehouse

AS easy as though it was a dozen eggs.

THERE has been so much fu this winter

THAT the running mates belonging to Mr. Pierce's little carriers

HAS not been noticed so much as usual.

BRYAN has nothing to say over

THE Lansing episode—

WELL, what could he say, he knows less it feels.

AFTER a woman

GETS on a train she has a good worry

OVER how terrible it would have been

IF she had forgotten to bring

EVERYTHING she didn't forget to bring.

KICKERS and men of little faith

ARE reminded that

OURS is the only government

THAT has survived

UNCHANGED for over one hundred years—

THINK it over.

Voice of the People

A WORD FROM TEXAS.

San Antonio, Texas, Feb. 11, 1920.

Editor THE TIMES, Hammond, Ind.—Among the many important events of the past week which have crowded into your already overloaded mental storeroom, you will probably recall that the writer left Hammond on Friday last, with his father on a health seeking tour of Texas and other indefinite points.

San Antonio being about as far from nowhere as we could get, we proceeded to rent a furnished five room cottage with garage. Our new landlady impressed us with the serious information that while our rent included the garage she was extremely sorry that we could not make use of it for a few days. She seemed terribly worried over this point and we had to assure her most emphatically that we had left all our cars at home. This she could not quite understand as we Northerners are supposed to drive Pierce-Arrows the around and carry a couple of Kodaks along to assist like lifeboats on a battleship. Of course we like all business men did not come right out and tell her the plain truth, that is to say, that we did not possess such means of economical of transportation. In order to enlighten her and ease her mind on the point that the use of the garage would not inconvenience us, I told her that our Green car was to be lonely stuck in a snow drift back home and that as it would be several months before the snow would settle sufficiently to locate the car, we had decided to come South. Of course, we only referred to old number 2847 of the Green Line back home. You know we feel that, after all, we are entitled to some credit of ownership in this particular car of the old H., W. & E. C. line as it has been quite faithful in carrying us to the store every morning, as I cannot see but what George W. would have resorted to this subterfuge. Our generous landlady remarked about the number of covered cars used in the North and asked us if our car was of this style. Upon observing her in the affirmative she bombarded us with questions about its general appearance, equipment and conveniences. In order to hold up the reputation of the rest of you Northerners back home, we described our "private" conveyance as an electric-lite model. Being conversant with autos in general it took a great deal of ingenuity on our part to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. She seemed kindly honored to be friends with such Northerners, who could boast of a great long green electric car driven by a perfect chauffeur and a covered garage, moreover proof, fireproof, sanitary and up to date, electric heaters, electric lights, push-buttons, etc. You should have seen her face beam when I did her how the car starts, the doorman gives a silent signal to the chauffeur that all is O. K., then pulls a little lever which closes the door and falls on the running board. I suppose if I had told them this too, the exact length of the wheelbase, she would have fainted.

Well, we started in to "back" it and have been enjoying our little comedy ever since.

Dad is just beginning to regret that he did not raise his son in this manner, he now has to go, that is, he wishes he had. Mr. taught me more about cooking and sewing mines. He also would like to get hold of a couple of certain doctors back in Hammond who advised him to go to Texas for his health. But probably those doctors did not know that we could not afford to take a cook along with us.

On the other hand if he survives the present situation you can bet your last dollar that he will have found what he came after.

You know, somehow or other, we were so thoroughly saturated with Lake Michigan weather before we left that since we arrived here, old Zephyrus is combinating about the maiden chilly weather. The local press is full of comment on the topic and unless you give us credit we will be suspicious by stirring in the hence for the sun shines again.

Ninety per cent of the people here do not put chimneys in their houses but we were fortunate enough to get one built by a man from Kansas City. And you should see our heating plant—a monstrosity placed in the dining room. Its general proportions are about the size of a five gallon oil can. No, I'm not kidding either—has no grate and I have to stoop over to turn the damper in the stove pipe. The only way to get the ashes out is to carry the stove outside to its handle. We keep an old stool handy to set the edge of the stove pipe on while we do this. I am also inclined to believe that we should have brought one of the Erie's firemen with us as our fire went out nine times this morning during the other fifteen minutes we stood up to call out the fire department.

The only fuel used here is mosquito wood. This is roselled mosquito and pronounced mosquito. This wood is so crooked that they have to knock out every other tooth in the saw to get around the corners and in many cases a single run of the saw will cut off eight or ten pieces. When I called up the wood yard, I asked the fellow what was the smallest quantity he would deliver. I told him I did not want five or ten cords but preferred to have less than one cord. He said $2 worth was the least he could send. Thank goodness he was so obliging, as in case he had sent me a dollar's worth it would not have been enough for kindling for one rainy day on the ranch. As it was, the driver had no change and I was ten cents ahead on the price so I just told him to take back ten cents worth to even it up. He threw a chunk back into the wagon and left me the other nickel. As we could not find the poker to stir up the fire, we have resorted to a long handled contraption I have seen my wife beat eggs with and stir flour with when baking. I thought it would be a wise thing to use this little implement to scoop the ashes out of the gas stove, but on account of its perforated bottom this failed. I sprinkled ashes all the way through the house. Not having any ash pan we have resorted to the bread-pan as the next best thing. You know I got provoked—guess you know what I mean—at Dad a while ago. He swept the floor and threw the dirt into the stove just when I had coaxed up a good fire. You know it made me a little all peeved to have to build the fire all over again.

In experimenting with the grub question we have had our troubles with coffee and butter. You know I don't know much about making coffee, but I think this climate is improving Dad's health considerable as he drank a cup of my first effort and, you know, he said he liked it. As for me, I couldn't force the stuff. I threw the rest of it down the sink. When the plumber got through he said he found not more than a teaspoonful had lodged in the trap. Speaking of butter you know we like good butter and the little old store-keeper showed me a half pound brick of genuine country stuff he graded up. This with the rest of my bill came to about four dollars and seventy-two cents. Well, you know these Texas fellows are more than honest. I gave the old gent a five dollar bill but did not count my change until I got home, then I discovered I only had one quarter and two pennies. You know, I didn't care a rap about a penny, but it makes me mad if somebody sticks me. I'm a stay-home now and I'm a few things about their being honesty among thieves, looked like a sermon from a Sunday school—pardon me just a moment, do you spell Sunday school with one capital S or two, or don't you use any capitals at all?

Well you know about the time I had counted my change a dozen times and had made up my mind to go back and tell Mr. Texas that he could not put anything over on a Hoosier I began to think that maybe the extra penny may have dropped into my bag of groceries. Well, you know when I opened the bag the cent was there alright—right in the butter. I don't know whether or not the old storekeeper played a joke on me or not. I do believe he remember was so d . . . the . . . I guess I had every indication get that." Incidentally it smelled like and tasted like good made up stuff. I guess was serious as a good old gal by good I'm doing me the . . .

Well, butter we must have, you . . . and I got a pound of Armour's old . . . squeezed the juice out of a little rubber . . . for your daily bread. I figured I would soften up the pretty white half . . . Great scott! . . . the . . . delivery boy came up on the porch with a basket of apples which I . . .

Some rapid calculations as to regard the price on this article of daily diet and remorse one purchase as a very bitter one. After munching one of the apples we decided they were . . . I put in the fire bottle and boiled about half a peck. You know I couldn't remember whether they should be cut into small pieces or strips once to cook best, so to be on the safe side I cut some into small pieces and some into large pieces. Then came the problem, whether to put water on them or not. Neither of us knew a cow jumped up a nickel for our answer—as is the custom in the West. I don't remember which side came up as the nickel went thru a crack in the floor.

Anyway I washed the apples, set them on the gas stove and turned the fire down, all this done I looked for more fields to conquer in the culinary line. As we had no fresh bread I decided to go to the store about two blocks away and get some. While out I remembered a small purchase I had to make at the drug store on the next corner.

Well, you know I stood around in that store about twenty-nine minutes before the old pill-maker showed up to wait on me. I told him I was used to singing the Green Line and the Erie but he had them all skipped for speed. However, he acquitted himself by explaining that he did not wish to rush me out again into the cold. That's the custom in Texas.

About the time I get in our front yard I thought of the apples. You know I had had not been almost helpless, I would have deserted my job then and there. As it was, I meekly opened the door and crawled in. Apples. Yes apples, use your imagination, dear friend. Even the one in my throat was scorched. You know, it was a terrible blow. My reputation as a cook was shattered and to think I had volunteered to leave my fireside back in Indiana to come to Texas to cook for a sick man, and that man my own father. You know I felt awful about this and really wished I had the "flu" so I could fly away to parts unknown. Talk about rounding it in Texas, we know what it is—you know.

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HANK and PETE

IF IT KEEPS UP THEY'LL SOON BE SETTING RINGS WITH BLOCKS OF SUGAR INSTEAD OF DIAMONDS

By KEN KLING

ASSORTED NUTS

Bringing Up Bill

CAN'T BLAME HIM

A Task

Splinters