

AMERICAN PEOPLE GREAT SPENDERS

Millions of Dollars Thrown Away for Trifles That Ought to Set Nation Thinking.

SOME WAYS MONEY GOES

Postcard and Cheap Souvenirs Take Big Sum Every Year—Billions Spent for Needless Telephone Calls and Telegrams.

By EDWARD MOTT WOOLLEY.

It seems incongruous that in this rich and wonderful land of ours it should be necessary to conduct mighty selling and advertising campaigns in order to raise money to crush our enemies—real and dangerous enemies who are bent upon throttling the very liberty on which our country has been built.

If we really felt the interior of our pockets as we would raise six or eight billion dollars spontaneously and without the glare of salesmanship and publicity; and we would do it so easily that Germany and her allies would be speechless at our overwhelming resources and purpose.

The trouble is that even yet we do not realize the tragedy that is ever in the war has been thrown into the American consciousness. With a million or more of our boys in France, and the casualty lists coming home every day, we still lack the pulsating fervor of patriotic courage—the courage that within one and stirs the soul.

Fighting Impulse Needed.—The one unquestionable evidence of courage is the willingness to sacrifice. A man who sees his child in deadly peril is instantly ready to sacrifice everything, even his life. It takes no argument to "sell" to him the need of courage. He gets it from within. The fighting impulse dominates his every instinct. What we most need in America today is fighting impulse. Once we get it the doom of Germany, as a menace to ourselves and to the world, will be sealed. If we had this valiant, undaunted determination we could raise, this coming year, not merely six or eight billion, but as many billions as our country might need. Let us search our hearts, therefore, and discover why it is that brass-band methods are needed to sell us Liberty bonds. It seems all the more incredible that such should be the case when the money we are asked to contribute is merely money saved for ourselves.

Indeed, we could put through this fourth Liberty loan without even feeling it directly. I am not talking here about the sacredness of money, but about the fact that we can make this fourth loan a glorious manifestation of Americanism.

Never was there such a nation of spenders—we literally throw money to the winds. Cash runs out of our pockets into a hundred channels of extravagance. Tempted, at every turn by something that appeals to our pleasures, we hand out the dime, quarter and dollar. We work hard, most of us, and we play hard. Many of us play with an amazing abandon that scarcely reckons the cost. We gratify ourselves not only at plays, but we satisfy our luxury-loving tendencies and our vanity in many of the things that enter into our daily lives.

Let us consider here merely the millions that go for trivial things that do not count as permanent investments either for utility or luxury.

Millions Spent for Cards.—The insurance take our best card money. This habit, which perhaps we would not criticize in times of peace, is almost universal. A dealer estimates that 50,000,000 people spend an average of a dollar a year for the cheaper kinds of cards, and an additional sum of a hundred million dollars on postage. But on the fancy cards and more expensive sets, such as bridge tables, the estimate is \$200,000,000 in addition to the postage. Including the cards that are kept by the purchasers, it is probable that the total is half a billion dollars. Many men have made fortunes in this business. I know of former millionaire manufacturers who retired with a lot of money.

It is certainly inconsistent that this great sum should go for such a trivial purpose when the nation is involved in this mighty war that calls for cash everywhere. Here is one expenditure that could be eliminated almost wholly until the war is over. Besides this amount put into Liberty bonds might mean something worth while to the people themselves.

Then there is another class of souvenirs that misrepresents an enormous sum and absorbs an astonishing amount of money. Travelers and tourists especially waste their cash upon these things, and immense quantities are sold to the people everywhere. The bulk of this stuff is useless junk—at least in war time, when conservation is the high need. Why spend our money these days for fancy buttons, card trays, wooden clasp articles, neckties, trinkets, postcards, stiffs, and what whams? The souvenir stores in Atlantic City, Asbury Park, Coney Island, Revere Beach near Boston, Venice near Los Angeles, and similar establishments take more than a hundred million dollars out of our pockets every summer. One small town concerns to Atlantic City sells a hundred thousand dollars worth of this stuff. The net profit is over fifty thousand. There are factories that turn out this sort of product to vast quantities, and much

of it is fraud stuff. Wooden articles are reputed to be made from trees that grow on hostile shores, but are really bogus. Strings of beads are manufactured by the mile and sold to the public as the work of Indians. The same is true of moccasins, toy canoes and the like.

At best the bulk of these goods is rubbish, and our outgo for this purpose might well be cut off entirely during the war. To do this requires absolutely no sacrifice. The people who engage in this business will simply have to do what so many of us have already done, adjust themselves to war.

Aside from souvenirs, we are wasteful spenders for actual necessities that are inferior or worthless. There is a great class of people to whom cheapness or flashiness appeals, rather than utility and economy. A dealer in cheap goods told me that he netted \$25,000 a year from merchandise that was practically worthless. He found it easy to appeal to the spending instincts of his customers.

Unnecessary Phone Calls.

Not many of us ever stop to think of the immense amount of money that is spent for unnecessary telephone calls. Wherever you go the telephone booths are occupied, and when you catch fragments of the conversations that are being held, you find that they are of the most unimportant. It is a girl who calls up her best girl to tell her he still loves her. Maude calls Alton to thank him for the chocolates. No matter how trivial the conversation, our first impulse is to step into a telephone booth.

If five million people would save one five-cent call a day it would mean a total of over ninety million dollars a year. Doubtless several times this sum could be saved very easily by the general public on local and long-distance calls. We are lavishly extravagant in the use of the telephone. I know of business houses that talk several times a day between New York and Chicago, "hurray" tolls on each occasion that run from five to forty dollars or more. If there is one thing that the American has lately learned it is economy of talk—which in these days of war need might well mean millions of dollars in Liberty Bonds. The telephone wires are heavily overtaxed, anywhere we have this habit, too. With a little planning we could commonly use a three-cent stamp instead of a ten-word message. One large wholesale house requiring all its traveling men to report daily by telegram, an expenditure that might be eliminated. The telegraph tolls of some of the large industrial and commercial establishments are so big that they seem incredible.

The night letter is, in a measure, a luxury, at least we could do away with the social phase of it. I happen to know one business man, who on his frequent and long absences from home, gets a night letter from his wife every morning and sends one each night. He says that he has never connected to fifty words, but often ran several times that length. Baby had the colic; Freddy fell downstairs and skinned his knee; Janette had her hair washed.

I happen to be acquainted also with a young man who reveals in night letters to his fiancée. They are real letters, too, beginning like this: "Darling Sam—I love you more than ever. I couldn't sleep last night thinking of you. Do you love me still?"

A certain business man, the head of a large concern, goes away at intervals to rest for a week or two, but insists on having a night letter every morning, narrating the substance of the previous day's business. [These messages run into hundreds of words every day.]

I would not belittle the night letter; but in the present stress we need to curtail whatever part of his expense may be unnecessary, and loan the money to the government.

The Taxicab Mania.—We Americans also have the taxicab mania. There is a very large class of men and women who ride in cabs habitually, and let go immense sums in the aggregate. They ride taxicabs a few blocks. In a group of twenty leading cities there are about four hundred thousand of these vehicles, and it is estimated that they absorb ten dollars every day in unnecessary fares. The aggregate would be over fourteen million dollars a year. [What would be the total for the whole United States?]

It is a luxury to jump into a cab whenever one wants to move about, but these are stern times and we need to be more iron-minded. The boys in France do not ride in cabs, and the money we waste on this form of luxury might better go into gas masks for them.

We American men saturate ourselves with many kinds of soft indulgences—as in the barber shops. These places in the high class hotels, as well as in the better shops outside, take from us immense sums—of what? Here is a typical list: Shave, 25c; haircut, 50c; shampoo, 35c; buy run, 10c-face massage, 35c; manicure, 50c; shine, 10c; 20c; 20c; 20c; 20c. It is not an uncommon form for men to go through the whole list, and to pay additional money for hair tonics and other fancy frills.

When we analyze this list we find that the only item really necessary is the haircut—and perhaps the shine. Men can shave themselves at a cost of two or three cents, and save perhaps half an hour in time. One soldier boy in France is said to have shaved himself many of them. In those good old days of peace, were the class that patronized these shops, but today they are made of more. Do you know? They are not just for the hair, but for the face. These costly habits when the nation calls for cannon to back our troops abroad? If a million men spend an average of

50 cents a day unnecessarily in barber shops we have a total of \$152,500,000. Under the actual figures, taking into consideration all classes of people. In the less exclusive barber shops one finds a continual stream of men of the moderate salary class, who indulge in the items I have enumerated. We might guess the total ought to be at least half a billion dollars.

To have our shoes shined we spend at least \$100,000,000 a year and a million more than the market price for shoes here because we wish to avoid the trouble of putting them in ourselves. Some of this expense undoubtedly is necessary, but while the war lasts we need not be ashamed of any tight laced and rigorous way on our nickels and dimes without being open to the charge of selfishness—provided we use the money for government needs. We can shine our own shoes for a tenth of this hundred million dollars. There are in New York a number of men who have grown very wealthy from the shoe-shining business. Among them are some large tenement owners who are reputed to be worth millions. There are more than fifty thousand bootblack places in the United States, some of them employing a dozen or more. The majority of these bootblacks are within the fighting age, at least they ought to be doing some sort of war service, instead of shining shoes—while American blood runs so freely on the other side.

Women Big Wasters.

But when it comes to this kind of money-wasting women spend far more money than men. Figures secured from one large department store give some interesting sidelights on possible economies. Its sales of toilet goods last year were about 1.5 per cent of its total sales. Thus for every million dollars in sales its customers buy \$150,000 worth of toilet articles. Apply this ratio to all the stores in the United States and you have a total of approximately \$1,500,000,000. The term toilet goods is very elastic, including both necessary and unnecessary articles, but the conscientious wife saves no doubt a very large one-third of these items as partly dispensable, such as perfume, certain soaps, powders, rouge, toilet waters, so-called beauty compounds, and the like.

American women are highly educated. We live in an atmosphere redolent with ambrosia. From almost every woman one passes on the "parade" streets of the cities there comes an aura of roses or perhaps violets. Our girls demand scents, in infinite variety, not only in perfume itself, but in hundreds of products. Merely to gratify our sense of olfactory luxury we spend tens of millions of dollars annually. Yet in France the husbands, brothers and sweethearts of our women and girls are sweating and fighting in noisome places amid the stench of filth and death. The colors they get are of gunpowder and blood. Surely we can spare some of our perfume money in the cause for which we sent them abroad.

If it were possible to estimate the money spent by women in New York alone for hairdressing and beauty culture it would undoubtedly run into the tens of millions. One hairdresser in the metropolitan district states that within eighteen months, or since America entered the war, he has built up a business that nets him seven hundred dollars a month.

A woman proprietor of a so-called beauty establishment says that fifty customers bring her a revenue of \$30,000 a year, that she realized a clear profit of \$20,000 on powders, creams and perfumes, that she sold sets of combs at seven hundred dollars each. [Thousands of women pay fancy fees for hair waving, tinting and bleaching. One concern announces twelve colors, ranging from black to white-blond. Much money also goes for removal of freckles, wrinkles treatment, face bleaching and so on. The manure bill in New York is enormous, and the chiropodist outgo large.] These pleasures are furnished in the utmost luxury. If only we could impress on women of this class the dreadful hardships our American youths are undergoing in the great cause!

The lesson ought to sink home to all women in America, who in greater or lesser degree, let their good money go for such futile vanities. It is estimated that a million men and women throughout the country are spending to the tune of at least an average of a dollar a day. Thus we have a total of \$365,000,000 a year. To this we can add perhaps half as much for hairdressers, attendants, facial treatment and indolence.

Nothing is commended, but most of us, at least those who have the Turkish bath habit, can take our ablutions at home. The soldiers in Europe do not have Turkish baths. We imagine we need them here. We eat big dinners and all ourselves with rheumatic deposits, poison ourselves by gormazing.

We contract colds because our systems are too hotly clogged to throw off the germs. It is when we are stuffed with rich viands and all sorts of luxuries that we turn to the Turkish bath for relief. Why not discipline ourselves during the war and transfer all these millions of dollars into the fund that is going to beat autocracy and the German peril?

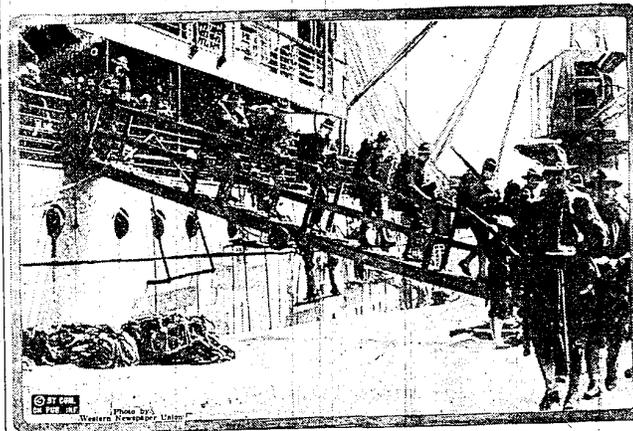
I have touched on merely a few of the items of unnecessary outgo. The list might be extended indefinitely. But there ought to be enough here to set us thinking, and we can make the extensions ourselves. There is no use denying the fact that the people that do not get their net themselves on a war basis financially. We are still wasting millions on trifles. The war would be over now if we had taken ourselves to hand at the bestiality.

HIGH-POWERED SEARCHLIGHTS FOR COAST DEFENSE



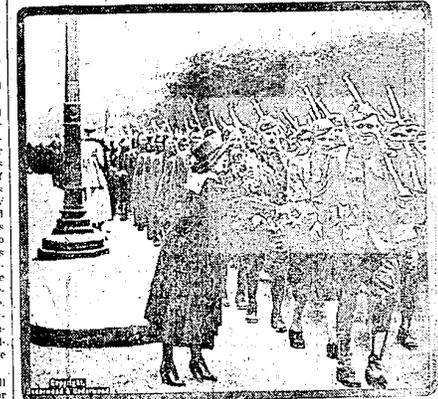
These are a few of the high-powered searchlights that Uncle Sam has scattered along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. With a marine at the head of each one of these searchlights, it will be practically impossible for anything foreign to pass our shores at night undetected. The crews of these batteries are put through a strenuous course of training and know the minute an alarm is sounded just what to do. The commanding officer and two government officials may be seen in the foreground.

AMERICAN TROOPS LANDING IN A FRENCH PORT



A transport landing American troops in a French harbor. The flow of our soldiers across the Atlantic to France is increasing each month, according to Secretary of War Baiber.

YANKEES PARADING IN PARIS



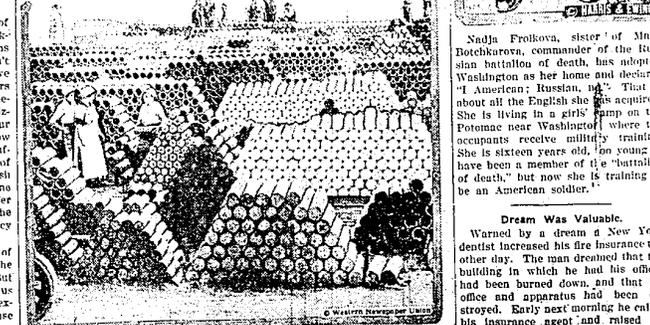
American soldiers are constantly being honored by the French populace. Here they are shown parading through the Champs Elysees, Paris. Charming dances are handing them roses.

NADJA BECOMES AMERICAN



Nadja Frolova, sister of Mrs. Botchkorova, commander of the Russian battalion of death, has adopted 'I American' (Russian, 'na'). That is about all the English she has acquired. She is living in a girls' camp on the Potomac near Washington, where the occupants receive military training. She is sixteen years old, but young to have been a member of the 'battalion of death,' but now she is training to be an American soldier.

SOME SHELLS THAT FRITZ WILL RECEIVE



Here is some food for the class reflection, stacked in neat piles at one of England's largest munition factories, which is turning out thousands and thousands of the deadly missiles daily for Boche consumption.

Dream Was Valuable.

Warned by a dream a New York dentist insured his fire insurance the other day. The man dreamed that the building in which he had his offices had been burned down, and that his office and apparatus had been destroyed. Early next morning he called his insurance agent and raised his policy from \$500 to \$1,000. His office was damaged slightly by fire a few nights later.