

The Observation Post

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Man the Fighter

Sometime or other we all feel "up against it." When that time comes, remember: We were all born to be fighters and also that all life is a battle.

The chap that comes a flop, the man that goes to pieces, the degenerates, the failures, are all men who have failed to realise that they had a spot of fighting to do.

The successful man is the man who early in the piece realises that he had a fight on hand and that it must be fought clean. The leaders are chaps who rolled up their sleeves, layed their gun over open sights and went into action, whilst the failure was still dreamily looking on waiting to be a casualty, the MAN was the winner!

The trouble to-day is that life is made too smooth, too damned easy, too soft. Influence and Union control ruin too many men (and women).

Let's make up our minds to fight our way ahead and up the ladder of success. We shall meet men higher up who will try to push us down, because they want the credit for themselves or because they are jealous. Those beneath us will try to drag us down, will speak evil against us because they are jealous of our energy, our keenness and the rewards of our labours. But we will succeed if we fight and fight clean.

Even Nature herself is continually fighting, struggling, competing with her own recalcitrant forces. Watch the fight between rain and drought, between cultivation and desert, between glut and famine. Watch the birds, the insects, and the hosts of wild things in the bush, in the stream, in the air. All, from the most minute microbes to the biggest mammals, must fight to live.

You are no exception.
So stand up and fight!

It's the friction in the oyster that makes the pearl.
Life's a free-for-all, and the palm waits for the winner.
Will you ever be a winner?

Perhaps—if you never forget that your ultimate success is relative to the physical fitness you acquire as you progress.

Sunday Sports --- Why Not?

(By "The Gadfly.")

I wish to preface this little article by emphasising that the views expressed are entirely my own, and that their publication in "The Observation Post" does not imply that they have the endorsement of the Editor, or of the Military Authorities, nor is it intended even to suggest that they have their commendation or approval.

The ideas submitted are simply those of one man, who believes they are worthy of consideration.

I think there is nothing more depressing or distressing than to see hundreds of uniformed men who, on a Sunday in this city wander aimlessly about our streets, with nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to see, and no one to meet, and I consider that it is high time that something was done to alter this lamentable state of affairs.

I am not unmindful of what is already being done. There is the A.N.A. with its atmosphere of homely comfort. There is also an occasional concert. With its fine-spirited amateur artists. These are all to the good. But are they enough? Do they fit the need that exists? I think not.

There remains much more to be done. I advocate Sunday sports for soldiers. I submit that there should be Sunday boxing matches, wrestling bouts, cricket games, bowls, and many others. There should be Sunday indoor games, such as card tournaments, darts, skittles, yes! and crown and anchor, too, if the men desire it!

OPPOSITION EXPECTED.

Of course there would be opposition from certain sections of church people. Nevertheless, I consider that the sports on Sunday should be established. After all, the men in uniform are being trained for war, and I have yet to learn that war pays much respect to, or has a very great regard for the observance of the Sabbath in the manner that many of its self-appointed defenders demand from soldiers at home.

Some years ago, the Waipawa B.S.A. staged a Sunday reunion and sports meeting, for its members and their wives and families, and it was an unqualified success, special trains running, and the attendance was far in excess of the most sanguine expectations.

Of course there was opposition from certain people, and a vigorous newspaper correspondence resulted in the columns of a daily which had a wide circulation in the district. Three of the Sabbatharians were particularly active. One, who signed himself "Sabbath Day," declared that the benefits which Sunday observance had procured for the people had been bought by the sufferings and the devotion of generations of devoted men and women. Another signed himself "Real Freedom," and stated that he was led from above to oppose any broadening of the Sabbath on Sabbath Day, while the third, a Mr. R. C. Macfarlane, who placed a particularly pungent emphasis on the fact that church people had the right to consider themselves spiritual, and to enforce the observance.

I entered the lists in defence of the action of the Association in holding the meeting on a Sunday, and as my letter anticipates to the full the objections that can be brought forward against

sports meetings on Sundays for soldiers, I purpose submitting it, and I ask readers of the "Observation Post" to make their own views public through the columns of their own paper.

Here is my letter:—

(To the Editor)

Sir,—I desire to express my thanks to those correspondents who have commented upon my first letter dealing with sport on Sunday, and if space is available I would like to reply briefly thereto. It is noticeable that none of them has attempted to deal with the subject from the point of view of the right of the individual to freedom of conscience and freedom of action. In fact, some have expressly declared, in as many words, that such right does not, or ought not to exist, and that to the writers, as members of an organised body of Christian worshippers, a special commission has been given, to impose their will upon all those who do not believe as they do. This is a very dangerous mental attitude for anybody to adopt, and if carried to its logical conclusion would lead to persecution and the worst forms of religious intolerance, resulting in the absolute negation of all forms of mental and physical liberty. "Sabbath Day" declares that the benefits of Christian civilisation have been procured by the sufferings and sacrifices of generations of devoted men and women. True! But who caused them to suffer and to undergo sacrifice? Was it not those people of that day who mistakenly believed that they were quite within their rights in interpreting what they thought was Divine law, not only for themselves but for all mankind? Were not the persecuted made to suffer solely because the churches of the day denied to them the right of freedom of conscience? Is it not then unpardonable on the part of the sufferers that, having won for themselves, through tears and blood, the right to follow the dictates of their conscience, they should now adopt the same attitude as those who formerly harried them and should say to those outside their fold, "We believe this is right—whether you believe it or not—you must do as we do, or we will condemn you?" Having gained liberty for themselves, they would bind their fellows in chains. As for "Real Freedom," who declares that he is content to let church lead him, it is sufficient to say that in so doing he is exercising his moral judgment and following the dictates of his conscience. He is at liberty to do so, and the liberty of conscience which he claims for himself he cannot consistently deny to others. Referring to the letter appearing over the name of Mr. R. C. Macfarlane, I propose ignoring absolutely the personalities it contains, pausing only to remark that even the strictest Sabbatharian ought to know that there is never any excuse for not being a gentleman. With regard to his remark that "There is but One who adjudicates on spiritual matters and the clergy are least likely to usurp the duty of the Divine," one wonders if he is really serious. If the clergy do not "adjudicate," by what process of mental activity do they arrive at the decision that the action of certain individuals is wrong? Surely I am right in giving them the credit of weighing all the evidence, taking all the facts into consideration, and finally coming to a de-

The Padre's Column

After the war, what?

All sorts of men and women these days are dreaming or thinking and talking about what kind of world, what kind of society they hope for after the war.

Some of them get their ideas into the newspapers, like this:—"The United Nations must work together." "The raw materials of the world must be made available to all nations without favouritism." "Privilege based on wealth must be abolished." These are typical sentences taken at random. Then there are these speeches to which we have all had to listen which paint rosy pictures and which all unfortunately depend on the one little word "if."

You know the sort—"If only so and so would do such and such all would be well."

Now this is not to poke fun at plans and planning. Far from it. Rather it is to make a suggestion to save plans and planning from having fun poked at them!

Plans to be any use must take in to account all the factors. Again anyone can get up and say "Here's the plan" but can anyone, taking all the facts into account, get up and say "Here's the plan and it works!" What makes it tough for planners and would-be planners is that we are not playing chess or draughts or poker (for matches of course!) Everything would be simple if we could change economic and political system as simply as we move the chessmen or draughtsmen or exchange the matches.

The fact is that systems don't exist apart from human beings who create them, or get used to them, or profit from them.

Every suggested plan depends for its effectiveness on the simple questions "Are nations, or groups of nations, or groups of people in the nations prepared to change their ideas, their way of life, their economic structures and work together for something better?"

"And as a citizen prepared to submit to changes in my way of living, in my ideas so as to make my contribution to the general scheme?"

Or look at it this way. Some people are afraid of all the possible changes because their personal fortunes, incomes, and general comfort may suffer. They would have to change over from a state of fear and motives of self-interest to a state of confidence in their fellow citizens and to motives of self-sacrifice.

On the other hand there are those who from motives of "grab" will support any scheme which will increase their personal fortunes, incomes and general comfort. They welcome any ideas which suggest that they will have more opportunities to "scrounge" for themselves. If others suffer, well it is just too bad.

Here's another point. It's a fact, isn't it, that there are groups of nations that is of human beings, in the world who are waiting for the chance "to get their own back" on others nations and plenty of individuals who are hoping and planning to get their own back on other human beings.

If what I have said has any grain of truth in it, then what hope is there of a better state of things developing?

cision! And if that process in its entirety is not adjudication, then I am at a loss to know what other word describes it. His claim that it is right that the personnel of the churches should act as a spiritual police force is the most vicious and dangerous principle that could ever be enunciated, for it presumes that one body of men, solely because they believe certain things, have a right to attempt to force those beliefs upon their fellow men. Against that monstrous principle (if it is not a profanation to call it by such a name), I intend that there never did, there never will and there never can exist any church, or any man, or combination of men, possessed of the right or the power of binding or controlling the minds or consciences of men without the previous consent of those whose minds and consciences are to be thus controlled or bound. So long as man is a rational being, just so long will he believe in accordance with the evidence submitted to him. He cannot himself impel his judgment to believe, for belief is not an act of volition of the will; it is swayed by the evidence and will be moved by that alone. Man's will is free—not even Deity can compel it, and for man to assume to do so is an unwarranted impertinence and an act of colossal folly. And so I say that the way a man chooses to enjoy himself or make life interesting on Sunday (or any other day), so long as he does not strike at another's life, or liberty, or property, is that man's own individual affair. The fact that one's neighbour is offended by the sight of what he thinks is impiety or even wickedness, does not give him the right to interfere, either personally, or through his church organisation, nor is it within his right to move for a law ordering his neighbour to conform to his idea of what is goodness, piety, or perfect Christian doctrine.

Well, there it is. As I say, I consider it anticipates anything that can be said against holding sports meetings on Sundays. What do you think?

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Fear, selfishness, greed or the scrounging spirit, and hatred are the cold-hard facts which kill even the most perfect of our plans.

So it boils down to this—If plans for improvement are to succeed they must find a compelling reason for ordinary human beings to be prepared to accept changes and they must find an antidote to fear, scrounging and hatred.

Is it possible to find such a reason and such an antidote? Where?

I was reading the other day a little book by some author named Mark. It seems the Hero of his book, not a very big book by the way, had some friends, but when things looked dangerous they deserted him—Fear got them, but He went on His way for He was mightier than fear. It seems, too, there were also other people who were afraid because He wanted them to change their religious ideas. Others were the slaves of jealousy and hatred, and there were the scroungers too, notably one who received "30 pieces of silver" for betraying the whereabouts of Mark's Hero. And near the end of the little book there is the scene where the solitary Hero is doing battle with all that Fear, Hatred, Jealousy and Selfishness can bring against Him. But His position is hopeless for He is nailed hand and foot to a Cross. His Name also had been written there, "Jesus of Nazareth."

There is another chapter after that which seems to suggest a Victory over all these things. It would be great news, but could it be true?

After that I was reading some letters, one of which mentioned how representatives of two nations which previously had refused to co-operate had allowed their ideas to be changed and were now learning to work together as one. The reason given was this:—"But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For He is our peace who hath made both one . . . that He might create in Himself of the two one new man." (From a letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians, Chapter 2.)

To-day millions, yes millions of men and women are finding that in the same Jesus Christ there is the antidote to their own personal fears, greed, hatred, and selfishness. And they have begun to work together for a truly Christian Order of Society. They find in Christ's battle and sacrifice the compelling reason for so acting and they find love, or self-sacrifice to be the true motive for living. They find it to be much more satisfying and more powerful motive than greed or hatred and so forth and moreover it leads on to working and planning together.

Do you know of any other antidote or of any sufficiently compelling other motive to lead human beings to accept changes for the benefit of all?

Must not Christ and really practical planning go together?

Congratulations

Congratulations to Gunner Guy of 6 and Felicitations to the new Mrs. Guy. May all your troubles be little ones! Bye the bye, who did get married, you or your B.S.M.?

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