

The Apotheosis of Bellyache

Monroe Journal. All peoples have had their deities and their ideals; even localities have objects of worship or silent admiration. Often these objects of worship are nothing more than a frame of mind, a dominant attitude of the community, which exists so long that it becomes permanent and finally takes its place as an ideal. Sometimes these attitudes are unworthy and are sloughed off. At other times they are nourished and cherished and finally defied. Some people in this community are today on the verge of apotheosizing the bellyache. Everything is bad, nothing is good. We are run down at the heel, out at the elbows, split in the seat and shirt tail hanging out. As a town, county, commercial force, manufacturing and agricultural community, we are done for. We are strangled by taxation, asphyxiated by extravagance, prostrated by hard times—dead, damned and delivered. Down with hope, down with enthusiasm, down with good cheer, down with energy, down with progress, down with everything—up with the bellyache. What a wonderful thing is the bellyache! Who ever had such a beautiful case, how would we should all be. The boy with the Banner of Excelsior sturdily climbing the Alps has nothing on us. He holds, we march under a new and wonderful banner—the banner of the bellyache.

Let the Tail Go With the Hide. Send for the old clothes man and the second-hand dealer. We can't make a rifle, let's admit facts and act accordingly. Hurry on with the junk man, too. There is nothing left in this community worth while. The farmers are leaving the country, such of them as can get away. They are hurrying off to other sections to get rich. Their lands will be given away, for certainly nobody will buy them when they are sold for taxes, for if the owners can't use them why should any one else want them? Business has gone, we can't pay the expenses. Schools are no good, churches are falling into decay, there's not a darn thing left but a big hole in the ground. Let's let's up and leave. Let us seek other localities. Everybody knows that there are nice, fine places where money grows on trees, other folks pay the taxes, business flourishes of its own accord, nobody has to do anything but bellyache. Those are the places for us. We have lost everything else, let's get out. It has always been the part of discretion to let the tail go with the hide.

The Glorious Role of Sniveling. But this is a conservative community, therefore many will object to getting out. Some will just want to stay on and rot. Well, and good, let's do that. Let's just accept the situation and become a community of snivellers. Hug tight to the delusion that the community is stuck, that the town can't grow, that the county is going backward. Shut eyes to the hopeful facts about us, be blind to the possibilities of energy, enthusiasm, co-operation and work. Snivel, snivel, snivel. If we can't leave we can stay and snivel. What a comfort there is to be had from sniveling. The bellyachers have convinced us of our decrepitude, and what is there left in this world for the decrepit but to snivel!

Nothing But Universal Problems. "We must all hang together," said this thing," said some one when the patriots at Philadelphia were putting their names to the Declaration of Independence. "Or all hang separately," remarked old Ben Franklin. There you have it today. This community is not faced with a single problem today other than which in some former or other future every community in the United States. Taxes! Taxes are everywhere. You bawl about high rate here and a low rate somewhere else, but that other place is bawling about a high assessment with its low rate. Everywhere there are taxes. Congress is now faced with the cry from all over the country and will do what it can to lower taxes. The States' governments are doing what it can in the same direction, and our local governments are doing the same. But you can't eat your cake and have it too. We pay taxes but we get something for it. There are a lot of expenditures that could be cut off and will be when the people do something about it beyond mere growling. We have been caught in our own trap. We have demanded everything of the government and the government has got to raise the money somehow. But the point is that we are just like every other community on that score. There is nothing singular about it. Where would the bellyachers go to escape paying taxes? We don't send a cent of tax money out of the town and county. The State does not get a cent of property tax, the national government does not get a cent, and only a few men pay other than a property tax. The only part of the tax which goes out is the interest on the money that we have borrowed. It is all spent here, for schools, for roads, for other community purposes. We have raised a great hullabaloo about taxes, never stopping to think that very little of our tax money goes out of the community.

Agriculture and Commerce. The people are leaving the country because of high taxes! Never was a bigger lie. The average farmer today can pay his taxes easier than he ever could. Where is the section of the country where the farmers are not leaving? Rural population is steadily declining in the United States because we are changing from an agricultural to an industrial country. Fewer people are staying on the farms, but you notice that the annual crops are getting bigger and bigger all the time. Better methods and labor-saving machinery are increasing the crops while at the same time freeing the workers. We are in a splendid state of readjustment, a readjustment which never stops. The boy, leave the farms, so they do, but suppose they staid there and made more cotton and corn, what would they get for it? They are leaving because they are not needed

there. The big cities are growing and the small towns are not growing in proportion. But this is now reaching the turning point. Labor is rushing to the cities faster than it will be absorbed, and there will be a resurgence to the country. The small town that has energy and willingness to face the situation and pull together, can grow and prosper right on. Only those towns which do something in this way will prosper. Count eight or ten towns in this State and you have the possible city areas. The other sections are to remain small towns and even agricultural communities. Those will prosper most which see the facts and face them.

A Good Agricultural County. In the meantime Union county is one of the best agricultural counties to be found. Whole counties in Georgia have been denuded of population and there are agricultural states in the West that are going down in population. All of New England is losing. A county of this population and this nearness to market and the number of skillful farmers yet in it, is rich agricultural prospects. Of course there is no land boom. Lots of people think that a land boom means prosperity. It always proves a fictitious prosperity or a temporary one. Never yet has it been found out how to raise one's self by one's own bootstraps. Our farmers are for the most part prosperous. Of course there are hardships and always will be. Many land owners who have sent their children out into the world and can't get tenants suffer. But for the man who is able to work and does work, Union county has every advantage and the people are proving it. Everywhere there are marks of prosperity, and none greater than those where the people are calling for more taxes for better schools and better roads. We have been hit by two bad years but nobody can control the weather. Union county people have a ready market for their produce most of the time, and the improvement in homes, in churches, in schools, in living conditions, in the very dress and amusements of the people, show that this is no poverty-ridden country. Too much expenditures have gotten a good many in bad, but when in the world's history were there not people in bad? Give the farmers of Union county a good price for cotton and a continued favorable market for their side crops and they will do the rest. They have been doing it, they are doing it. They are now howling half so loud as the professional bellyachers.

Get a Little Pep in Business. Industrially we have been in bad luck from time to time, but that is the common lot of industrial communities. While manufacture is not making a surplus, it is living and the community has its benefits. In the matter of merchandising we are doing right well. Merchants are not getting rich but there is much more merchandising here than there ever was before. We are somewhat asleep on the job in that respect. An intelligent co-operation among merchants could largely increase our annual business to the benefit of every merchant in town. But we have not come to that yet. Our circle of trade could be pushed out in three out of the four directions if we would get up and push it. But it can't be pushed by advertising disadvantages and never an advantage. Monroe can sell goods cheaper than Charlotte and by a little team work the merchants could offer almost as good an assortment of stocks.

A Long List of Assets. If you will stop and think, this community has a long list of assets, both present and in prospect. It is a good place to live, whether in town or in the country. Strangers think more of it than we do. That's because we have lately seemed to give away to the bots. We have good lands, good farmers, good merchants and good stores. We have good churches and as good schools as the average. We have good public institutions, good people, and a splendid hospital. We have a good farm demonstrator to help the farmers, a good chamber of commerce to help the business people, we have honest officials who deserve our help and not our knocks—good Lord, we have so many good things that a man ought to be ashamed of himself to bellow about the few bad ones.

Who'll Step Over the Line? When four thousand Mexicans had been battering for days the walls of the Alamo behind which David Crockett, Col. Bowie, Col. Travis, and a handful of other Texas patriots were selling their lives, Col. Travis drew a line with his sword on the ground and stepped over it, saying that he would die there. Others might leave the fort and get out if they could, all were free to go, but if there were any who, like himself, expected to remain, they could follow him across the line. Every man but one stepped over and every man but that one died there that day and will forever live in history along with the Spartans at Thermopylae. There ought to be a man in this community or a number of men who would step over the line and call upon the people to forsake the banner of bellyache, to abandon the role of snivel, and to come forth upon the side of common sense, of enlightened self-interest and community spirit, join forces for progress, for solving such community problems as we have, and for holding up our heads in the pride of manhood and womanhood worthy of our town, of county, of history and our opportunity. We have surrendered too long to the spirit of bellyache. Let's get out of it. Let the croakers croak, and let the others fight the fight which we need to make. Once two old Confederates with shattered hope and fortune met for the first time in a great while. "We have lost everything, Matt," said one. "Yes, Charlie," replied the other, "but damned if I can't die game." If this community is really not what we have always boasted it to be, not what we can make it, then let those who detest the ethics of bellyache, come out and die game in the attempt to make something out of it.

Count Your Blessings. There is a song which we often hear at church which admonishes you to count your blessings. Why should we not count the blessings a little and quit talking about the evils, most of which are imaginary? The chief trouble is in fact that everybody is growling, but because there are no blessings, but because he is too greedy about blessings. He wants the earth and the fullness thereof. Too many people feel that the whole world is getting rich except them. They feel out in the cold. Everybody getting rich in Florida, New York, Charlotte or Kalamazoo. Only we are poor. Forget it! Figure on what you can throw into this community while it and then there will be more to take out.

Are Tumblebugs Disappearing? The Pathfinder. A number of readers have written to us saying that the beetle popularly known as the tumblebug, which was formerly very common throughout the country, is now seldom seen. For instance, W. M. Henderson, of Dover, Ga., writes: "Years ago our roads and fields were covered with legions of tumblebugs. Of recent years they have rapidly disappeared and now you rarely ever see one. What has become of them?"



CHRISTMAS IS AT CHARLES STORE

To get that "Christmasey" feeling, stop a moment at this house of Christmas cheer. Holly and Christmas colors, entwined with garlands, look for all the world like a huge Christmas tree, bright with lights, and banked with gifts. Thousands of gifts as varied and alluring as any in an Arabian Nights' Bazaar.

WHERE GIFT HUNTING IS EASY

Gift hunting is not a game of hide and seek at the Charles Store. It is much like having a box of luscious bon bons set before you by your hostess. You don't know which to choose. You would like to have them all. Everything is so temptingly displayed within reach of hand or eye, to make selection convenient for you.

IF YOU HAVEN'T MUCH TIME

Go straight to the Charles Store; here is a feast for the eye. The solution of that Christmas Puzzle—"What shall I give?" Toys, Books, Lingerie, Jewelry, Silver, Lamps, and numberless other things are so assembled that you can view them with the glance of the eye. All you need do is pick and choose.

THE CHARLES STORES COMPANY INC.

5c to \$2.98

THE CHRISTMAS STORE

5c to \$2.98

Store No. 5 No. 34 S. Union St., Concord, N. C.

Count Your Blessings. There is a song which we often hear at church which admonishes you to count your blessings. Why should we not count the blessings a little and quit talking about the evils, most of which are imaginary? The chief trouble is in fact that everybody is growling, but because there are no blessings, but because he is too greedy about blessings. He wants the earth and the fullness thereof. Too many people feel that the whole world is getting rich except them. They feel out in the cold. Everybody getting rich in Florida, New York, Charlotte or Kalamazoo. Only we are poor. Forget it! Figure on what you can throw into this community while it and then there will be more to take out.

Are Tumblebugs Disappearing? The Pathfinder. A number of readers have written to us saying that the beetle popularly known as the tumblebug, which was formerly very common throughout the country, is now seldom seen. For instance, W. M. Henderson, of Dover, Ga., writes: "Years ago our roads and fields were covered with legions of tumblebugs. Of recent years they have rapidly disappeared and now you rarely ever see one. What has become of them?"

respondent will find that these insects are as prevalent as ever. Local conditions on a given farm might have so changed by cultural practices as to practically eliminate these insects, but this is purely a local matter."

Cherish Your Credit. Gastonia Gazette. This is the first of the month and the bill collector is abroad in the land. Most of us hate to see him coming, but here is a different attitude to take, as explained by the Anoka, (Minn.) Herald. "It is an honor to receive a bill. Instead of getting all 'riled up' when the mail brings you a statement of account you should be genuinely pleased. For a bill is an indication that some one has faith in your honesty. A bill indicates that some one who knows you depends upon your honor to keep the word you pledged when you received the services or the goods, which he furnished. "If you never received a bill it would indicate that your credit was worthless; that no persons trusted you; that you were held in such poor

esteem by those who know you that none had even been willing to take your word that you would pay. Credit is the most precious thing you have. Money can be had by various means, but credit comes only from years of honesty and prompt meetings of bills; when they are due. "When you pay a bill you are merely being honest. Indeed, you are doing yourself a good turn. When you receive a bill, then, meet it as you agreed if you possibly can. If you can't, frankly tell your creditor why you can't. You'll find him more than ready to meet you half-way. Cherish your credit as you do health, happiness and other priceless boons equally rare and exclusive."

Now Watch the 5c Sisters. Monroe Enquirer. Otto W ood, the murderer who is serving a 20-year sentence in the State penitentiary is a smart guy. He claims he made his escape from prison in order that he might see his little children. Now watch the sob-sisters all over this land and country move heaven and earth to secure a pardon for Wood, forsooth that he loves his children, and therefore should not suffer for heinous crimes committed.

Circumstantial Evidence. The father of the household had a gold-headed umbrella which he prized very highly. One rainy morning the umbrella turned up missing. "Will, did you take my umbrella?" he asked of his son. "No, father." "Did you, Mary?" "No, father I didn't see it." Just then the younger brother came in. "I know where it is, I think sister's beau took it." "Why, Tommy!" said sister. "He did not." "Well, all I know," said Tommy, "last night, as he was leaving I heard him say to sister in the hall, 'I'm going to steal one tonight!'"

The maintenance of amateur standards against the encroachments of professional football is expected to be one of the important subjects of consideration at the twentieth annual meeting of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, to be held in New York at the end of December.