

# TODAY and TOMORROW

FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE

**SPRING** . . . . . up our way  
Spring has come at last up in the New England hills. It has been the latest season in recent years—so late that I hear many of the younger folk in our town say that this May must have been the coldest on record.

Well, I can remember one New England Summer in my boyhood when snow fell on the Fourth of July! Not much, to be sure, but enough of the rain that fell all that day—and spoiled our "celebration"—froze under the chill of a Canadian north wind to enable us to see the white flakes. And I remember one Memorial Day—we used always to call it "Decoration Day"—when my sisters and I were looking for wood violets to place on the soldiers' graves, we found a snow-bank a foot deep in a shaded gully. And just above the snow the violets were blooming.

There is no precedent that anybody can go by in forecasting the weather. No two years are ever quite alike.

**FLAGS** . . . . . increased sales

The Chicago Association of Commerce reports that three times as many American flags have been sold so far this year as in the first half of 1934. I don't know that that means that the reaction against Communism has set in, as the Chicago business men seem to think, but I would be glad to see a general revival of the old-fashioned "flag-raising" that used to be a regular Fourth-of-July affair in the smaller communities, and even in some big cities, in my youth.

Every rural town in the East used to have its "Liberty Pole," and the hoisting of the Stars and Stripes, with a prayer by the minister, a "concert" by the local "brass band," and a patriotic speech by some local or imported big-wig were fitting preludes to the sports and games and picnic feast in which everybody took part.

There is a little hill on my farm where the Liberty Pole used to stand, up to forty or fifty years ago. The pasture around it is still known as "the flagpole lot."

If I thought anything could divert my neighbors from their holiday joy-riding to an exhibition of patriotism, I'd set up a new Liberty Pole on the old flagpole lot and invite them to an old-fashioned Fourth-of-July picnic.

**RADIO** . . . . . fine in country

I don't think that any modern invention has ever brought so much real pleasure and value to so many people as the radio. I drive around in the country a good deal, calling on neighboring farmers and friends, and it is the exception to find a country or village home where the radio is not going.

There isn't any doubt that the radio has proved a powerful influence in setting all sorts of people to thinking of social and political questions, to which they never gave attention before. It is bringing religion into many homes whose people, for one reason or another, seldom go to church. Then the music, the household talks for the home-makers, the entertaining features for the children, the farm market news and all the rest of the good things that are broadcast.

**WAR** . . . . . two sides

Listening to and reading all the anti-war talk that is going around, I am reminded of the most stirring speech I ever heard Woodrow Wilson make. It was 24 years ago, in June, 1911, at Denver, when he spoke of "The Bible and Progress," spoke as a believing and practical Christian to an audience composed of most of the members of all the Christian churches in that city.

"Liberty," he said, "is a spiritual conception. . . . There are times in the history of nations when they must take up the crude implements of bloodshed in order to vindicate spiritual conceptions. . . . When men take up arms to set other men free, there is something sacred and holy in the warfare."

That was spoken more than three years before Europe went to war in 1914, more than six years before the United States went into that conflict. Nobody wanted war. But when a situation arose in which America was called upon to vindicate the spiritual conception of Liberty, as Mr. Wilson had phrased it, we went into the war in that spirit.

Don't let anyone tell you America went to war for profits or to save somebody's investments.

**CHAINS** . . . . . and gambling

How many chain letters have you had? I've only received one myself but my wife has had four or five in the past fortnight and I think my daughter's latest score is around fifteen.

We have one very simple system of handling these chain letters. That is to throw them in the waste basket without answering them.

The chain letter craze is just one more evidence of the wide-spread gambling spirit which prevades the whole country. The trouble with this form of gambling is that the odds are so heavy against everyone who tries it.

I suggest that anybody who has

money to bet and the urge to get money without working for it would better wait until he can lay his wager under some controlled and well-policed scheme where he at least has a chance of collecting his winnings if luck should happen to be with him.

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