

## "NATURAL RIGHTS."

Has the government really any right to tell a man living in New York City that he mustn't buy a drink? Isn't national prohibition really an infringement on personal liberty? Aren't there certain "national rights" that no government is justified in disregarding?

These are questions that have been raised in recent months as never before by the ratification of the prohibition amendment. Men are inquiring into what is really the foundation of ethics. This is a good thing. We ought to consider what is the basis of right and wrong action, what are the rules of conduct. "A life unexamined, uncriticized," said Socrates, "is not worthy of man."

The first thing that impresses us when we consider the matter is that it is difficult to formulate codes to govern conduct. The code fits some particular age and set of conditions. But in the course of time it is outgrown and needs supplementing or amending.

The code of the Old Testament, for instance, was in many respects set aside by Jesus. Even the Ten Commandments call for additions to meet the requirements of the modern age.

What, then, is the test by which conduct is judged? On what principle are additions made from time to time to ethical standards?

The procedure is perhaps best illustrated from the life of primitive man. Treason is one of the earliest crimes recognized by society. It was regarded as a crime before murder was so regarded. The reason is evident. It endangered the safety of the whole clan. The traitor, with the help of a hostile clan, might prove the destruction of the whole group. So treason was rigidly punished. Murder, on the other hand, was at first considered little more than a family affair. If a man was murdered it was up to his kinsmen to avenge his death. But the clan was not particularly interested.

The punishment of treason in which the entire clan was concerned was much more certain than the punishment of murder by certain offended individuals. It was only after considerable progress was made that the clan took charge of punishing murder and thus put it on a level with treason.

In considering conduct on its moral side the determining test has been, not does this action conflict with some previous code, but, how does it affect the common good? "The genuinely moral person," Prof. John Dewey writes in the Dewey and Tufts "Ethics"—a really great book—"is one in whom the habit 'of regarding all capacities and habits 'of self from the social standpoint is 'formed and active. Such an one performs his acts with reference to the 'effect they have upon the social groups 'of which he is a part.' And developing the same idea, he says in another place: "It is the business of men to 'develop such capacities and desires, 'such selves as render them capable of 'finding their own satisfaction in fulfilling the demands which grow out 'of their associated life."

A man has no natural rights except to what will promote the general welfare. All our legislation is based unconsciously perhaps on that principle. We justify legislation that makes for the general well being of society. If prohibition promotes the general good, then it violates no right of any individual. Because no individual has any right to a scheme of things that, however harmless it may be to him personally, is a detriment to society.

## COME HOME, MR. WILSON

The President Needed Here to Attend to the Nation's Business.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: An American citizen whose forebears came to this country in 1835 I protest against Woodrow Wilson representing me and my interests in the so-called peace council in Paris.

As an American I call upon the President of my country to fulfil his obligations to me and to my fellow citizens. These are, as I understand them, to administer the affairs of government for our welfare, to facilitate the necessary legislation, and to keep a watchful eye upon affairs of the world that our interests may be properly safeguarded.

Speaking as one American citizen, do not believe that Woodrow Wilson properly or fairly representing the interests or the sentiments of the people whose servant he is. We want peace at once. We want business activity without hindrance or interference by Government. We want our President back on the job where he should be, helping to work out the grave problems confronting us. We want peace within our own borders. We want equilibrium here first.

Let every one who feels as I do give voice to it. W. D. JOHNSON.

NEW YORK, March 18.

## A MOUNTAIN AS MEMORIAL

Mount Theodore Roosevelt Proposed Instead of Mount Rainier.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: A memorial we could fashion for Theodore Roosevelt would be too fine for such a man. But monuments of human workmanship are not everlasting. What would be more fitting to stand for a time as a memorial of one of the greatest Americans than one of America's greatest mountains?

Mount Rainier is one of the highest and noblest in the United States. It stands amid unsurpassed grandeur and beauty, and around it nature reveals what was so near to the heart of Theodore Roosevelt. And yet it bears the name of an obscure English officer who had little connection with and no particular interest in this country.

I suggest that the name of Mount Rainier be changed to that of Mount Theodore Roosevelt, and that Rainier Park also be given his name.

The mountain has a far and mighty view of things; so had Theodore Roosevelt. It stands firm upon its base unshaken by attack of storms, defying heat and cold; so did Theodore Roosevelt. And around its rugged strength and grandeur bloom fields of flowers.

By all means let us have Mount Theodore Roosevelt.

HORATIO J. BREWER.

NEW YORK, March 18.

## THE BLUE STAR AND THE GOLD.

It was the proud distinction of Col. Theodore Roosevelt that so soon as America went to war he could adorn a window of his home—and a typical American home it is—with a service flag that had four blue stars in its field of white; for his four sons were among the first to answer their country's call.

Now one of the stars is gold. The youngest of these sons, Lieut. Quentin Roosevelt, was one of America's eagles. Flying in France, he was attacked by two German aviators and at their hands he met a heroic fate.

There is that sorrow in the Roosevelt home today that only a father and a mother can truly know. But the star that changed from blue to gold, as the soldier for whom it was a symbol passed from life to death, is shining testimony that a son of this home has made the supreme sacrifice that every American worthy of the name must be ready to make in this hour when the nation's rights and liberties are at stake.