

THE STARS AND STRIPES

April 11, 1919

FLEECING THE SOLDIER

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Here is what an Expeditionary Force member writing home to his father had to say about the money-grabbing natives among whom the troops had to make their way for a time:

They fleece us pitilessly; the price of everything is exorbitant; in all the dealings that we have with them they treat us more like enemies than friends. Their cupidity is unequalled; money is their god; virtue, honor seem nothing to them compared to the precious metal. I do not mean that there are no estimable people whose character is equally noble and generous—there are many, but I speak of the nation in general. . . .

Money is the prime mover of all their actions; they think only of means to gain it; each is for himself, and none is for the public good. The inhabitants along the coast, even the best Whigs, carry provisions of all kinds to the English fleet, which is anchored in Gardiner's bay, and that because the English pay them well.

That last is puzzling, isn't it? You see, the letter was written back in 1782. The writer was a Frenchman, Comte de Ferson, an officer attached to the F.E.F., which was then helping the colonies of America fight their fight for independence. The "they" were the first Yanks.

ANTIQUARIAN.