

Mt. Scott Herald

A Weekly paper devoted to the betterment of Mt. Scott and adjoining rural districts.

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Food Prices Of 1917.

If we could forecast the future even for the space of one year ahead, we of this country would no doubt make some amazing discoveries.

One piece of information, however, is being forced upon our attention without our being gifted with any extraordinary foresight. It is that during at least the next twelve months there will be no material reduction in the cost of living.

Already we are experiencing war prices for foodstuffs without being at war. What the situation will be before another crop is harvested is a matter to be pondered with misgivings. Should this country become entangled in the war, the situation will not be improved.

But even with prices as they are now many grave questions are confronting us. Take, for instance, that of seed for planting. With potatoes wholesaling at from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per bushel, can the potato raisers (or will they) afford the enormous outlay necessary to plant an acreage sufficient to surpass the crop of 1915, or even to equal it? If the crop is not increased we can hardly look for a reduction in price—unless the government jails the unscrupulous food speculators.

Will the usual acreage of spring wheat and oats be sown, with these grains at their present almost prohibitive prices? Or will the farmer figure that he can clean up enough profit on a smaller crop?

Even the good housewife's onion patch is in danger of shrinking, owing to the enormous rise in the price of this odorous vegetable.

To make the situation more serious still, the indications are that southern farmers are preparing for a record crop of cotton. The agricultural papers and those connected with the agricultural departments have been insistent in their advice to farmers to reduce rather than increase the cotton acreage. But 18 and 20 cent cotton is intoxicating, and it is doubtful if the southern farmers can be prevented from letting go everything else in order to make a killing on cotton. Such a course would have the effect of reducing the south's production of foodstuffs even below normal, thus further complicating the food situation.

It could be remedied, however, if our people would get one idea firmly fixed in their minds, that our lands must be made to produce more, and more, AND MORE.

It is the age-old law of supply and demand which, barring the activities of the price boosters, always works to maintain an equitable balance. That the scarcity of an article enhances its value, is a law as immutable as those governing the seasons.

It should be the first and greatest duty of every citizen of this country during the coming year to see that every available foot of land under his control be made to produce some crop. Food crops are preferable, but some crop should be raised. Mother earth is calling to her children to come and partake of her bounties, and we will have only ourselves to hold responsible if we refuse.

Conservation and increase of food crops is the only thing that can relieve the situation—except to jail the speculators.

Public lands have not yet

given out, as some seem to think. Uncle Sam has still seven hundred millions of homestead lands left. As an inducement to settlers, Congress has reduced from five to three years the length of time that a person must occupy a claim before he can get a patent on it. He need actually stay on the place only seven months of the year, and cultivate only ten of the one hundred and sixty acres.

The Mail Order Menace.

One of the large mail order houses of Chicago recently declared a dividend of \$2 a share, being a 25 cent increase over that of last quarter. This puts the stock on an 8 per cent basis. The capitalization has been increased from \$60,000,000 to \$75,000,000. The directors have been authorized to distribute as a stock dividend on April 2nd the \$15,000,000 new common stock on the basis of one new share for each four now owned.

This is the story of but one of the many mail order houses and represents a fraction only of the millions of dollars which are taken annually from the tills of the rural and small town merchants of the country. These mail order houses pay no taxes and contribute to the betterment of no community. A dollar sent to them is gone forever, whereas, if paid to the local merchants it passes from them to the "butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker" and very often finds its way back to the original owner in the course of a few weeks.

Very often the same goods purchased from the mail order house can be secured just as cheaply of the local merchants and with much greater satisfaction. Both the merchants and the purchasing public are partially to blame for the state of affairs which exists. The mail order houses, through their catalogs and by means of the rural free mail service, conveys all the advantages of the city department stores into the remotest country hamlets, while in many instances the rural merchants are not putting forth the effort they should to meet these changing conditions, and are not sufficiently alive to the value of modern advertising ideas. Publicity is the only effective weapon with which to fight the mail order business.—M. G. H.

They say that gasoline is going to be higher on account of the scarcity of potatoes. That excuse is as good as any other, and incidentally is as good as the excuses that are being given for many of the products which have been advanced in price.

If corn, having ears, ever hears of the high price that potatoes are bringing, you can imagine what an ear of corn will cost.

The 1917 Ford is said not to be so noisy as the 1916 model. The brass band has been taken off the radiator.—Selected.

Potatoes have eyes, but cannot see. Help the blind—\$4.00 per bushel.

You may count that day lost when a dead one doesn't knock a live one.

Dr. Neubauer says people who go by don't buy.—Sunnyside Gazette.

The business man must push or be pushed.—Exchange.

Secondhand Goods. Your position in society is determined by the sort of secondhand goods you buy.

Perhaps you think this is a joke, but it isn't. Think it over. When a man is poor he patronizes a secondhand clothing merchant. When he gets very rich he patronizes a secondhand furniture dealer. Only the middle class shuns both secondhand stores.

And the very poor and the very rich meet at a secondhand bookshop.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

SAVING OLD MAIL BAGS.

Rough Usage Makes Their Repair a Big Task For Uncle Sam.

The repair and proper maintenance of mail bags are in an establishment at Washington, and the number repaired and placed in good condition in the last year was a million.

One of the difficulties connected with this repairing process was the accumulated dirt and dust which attached to these bags when returned from the service. A system was finally adopted consisting of large tumbling barrels, each having a capacity of several hundred bags. Driven rapidly by electric power, the dust confined to a tightly constructed room and carried off by blowers and lodged in immense canvas receptacles, resembling a dirigible balloon when inflated, this process was found thoroughly suitable. Four thousand a day are treated by this process.

The life of a mail bag is about six years, but the rough usage to which they are exposed makes many bags unfit for material. Such bags as still have good material make what are known as "pieced bags." Many are thus reclaimed and returned to service.

The advent of the parcel post made it necessary to enlarge the repair shop, because at times it was found impossible to obtain bags from the contractor in quantities sufficient to meet the demand. A manufacturing feature was therefore added.—New York Sun.

HIS PERFECT TRUST.

He Showed It in the High Compliment He Paid His Good Wife.

This story is not contributed, though it concerns a contributor. It came to us by devious paths, but it arrived, and it is a true story.

It came to pass that in the course of years Contributor Abintra arrived at his thirty-first wedding anniversary, and that was on a day recently. And in the morning at the breakfast table he expressed himself thus from an overflowing heart:

"Well, we've been married thirty or forty years today. And, my dear, I want to hand you this tribute while I think of it. In the presence of these children and grandchildren I wish to state that during all these years never once have you been guilty of the reprehensible habit of going through my pockets for money after I have retired at night."

"That is true," acknowledged Mrs. Abintra, "but how do you know it?" "How do I know it?" cried Abintra. "Why, I have never once forgotten to count my change carefully night and morning."

Perfect trust!—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Absolute Zero.

What is the absolute zero of temperature? The zero of thermometers is purely conventional. The inventor of the centigrade simply took for zero the coldest temperature known in his day, while Fahrenheit had even less ground for his selection. Absolute zero is a point fixed by nature and may be arrived at in a variety of ways. All cases expand or contract equal amounts for every degree of heat—the amount of 1-273 of their volume for each degree centigrade. If, then, a gas is cooled down continuously it must reach a point at which further contraction is impossible. If a gas loses 1-273 of its volume at each downward degree of centigrade, then in 273 degrees it would exhaust this power and become a solid; hence minus 273 C. is the absolute zero of temperature. This answers to minus 461 F.

China's Dried Persimmons.

China has developed a seedless persimmon of exquisite flavor for drying purposes. The dried persimmon is said to resemble a dried fig in looks and taste and is heavily coated with a layer of fine grape sugar. When the fruit is ripe, but before it begins to soften, the peeling is stripped off, and the fruit is hung on sticks to dry in the sun and wind. The sticks used are strips of bamboo pierced through the center of the persimmon. Several weeks are devoted to the drying process, after which the persimmons are covered with matting and allowed to cure, during which process the grape sugar is formed.

Sweet Voiced Frogs.

In Japan there is a kind of frog very celebrated for his sweet voice. He is called kajiki, and people pay as much as \$10 for a pair of these marsh musicians. A poet in Japan keeps scores of singing frogs at his home, and he sometimes gives a party to his friends, when, after listening to the music, every guest is asked to write a poem in honor of the frogs.

Asafetida.

Sheep have a fit of joy eating the young asafetida plant, and Persians and other oriental races relish it as much as sheep. The juice of the asafetida plant when fresh is so strong that a teaspoonful turns out more smell in a house than a hundredweight of drug store asafetida.

Cautious Father.

The Aspirant—Sir, may I count upon your support? The Father—That depends, young man. Are you running for office or are you asking for my daughter's hand?—Puck.

Suitable Reward.

Sandy McNab (to porter who has put all the heavy luggage into the van)—Mon. At consequence ye've been very obliging. Will ye tak' a pinch o' snuff?—London Today.

He that cannot obey cannot command.—Benjamin Franklin.

ZEPPELIN AIR CRAFT.

Aluminum Girders and Hoops Line These Monster Balloons.

The technical details in the construction of Zeppelin air craft are explained in a journal named the Aeroplane. The visible exterior part of the Zeppelin is merely the cloth or fabric covering of the framework, which consists of sixteen girders made of very thin aluminum. The girders run from end to end of the ship, parallel for most of their length and turning inward to meet one another at nose and tail. The cylindrical body of the Zeppelin may therefore be said to have sixteen sides on account of the sixteen girders. To keep these longitudinal girders, or "stringers," in position there are thwartship girders, which run like hoops around the ship and act like the ribs of a boat. There are generally about eighteen hoop girders, spaced an equal distance, one from another, and they are braced across and across inside each hoop to the next by wire bracing, so that they cut up the whole skeleton into a succession of compartments, each of which—except the end compartments—has flat ends and sixteen sides.

In each of these compartments is a gas bag standing on its edge. The idea is that if one gas bag springs a leak or is punctured by a projectile only that one bag collapses, and the weighting of the ship is so arranged that even if four or five gas bags are entirely deflated those that remain will float the ship after all ballast, ammunition and other nonessentials have been thrown overboard.—London Standard.

KNEW TOO MUCH.

Tennyson's Father Had to Fly For His Life From Russia.

Shortly after the assassination of Emperor Paul of Russia, Tennyson, the father of the poet, dined with Lord St. Helens, the British ambassador, in Moscow. Several Russian officers of high rank whose names he did not know were also guests. During dinner a guarded reference was made to the emperor's death.

"Why do you speak so gingerly about a matter so notorious?" cried Tennyson impulsively, leaning across his neighbor, a Russian whose breast was covered with orders. "We know very well in England that the Emperor Paul was murdered. Count Zoffoff knocked him down, and Henningsen and Count Pahlen strangled him!" "There was a strained silence; then the ambassador abruptly changed the subject. As the guests fled out into an adjoining room Lord St. Helens drew Tennyson aside. "Don't go into the next room," he whispered, "but fly for your life. The man next you, across whose breast you leaned, was Count Pahlen, and Zoffoff was also at the table."

He gave a few hurried directions, and Tennyson rushed off, threw his clothes into a portmanteau and fled behind fast horses to Odessa, still in evening garb, though the cold was intense. He lay hidden for weeks and at last, in the disguise of a servant, was smuggled on board an English frigate.

A Wise Provision.

Did you ever notice when a man smites his thumb with a hammer while putting down a carpet under his wife's supervision how quickly he thrusts the bruised and throbbing member into his mouth? People think it is because the application is soothing. But the movement is purely involuntary, like winking. The man cannot help it. The fact is that nature knows what a man is apt to say under such circumstances and so has provided him with an automatic stopper. Whenever he hits his thumb hard enough to hurt—and it doesn't take a very hard blow almost to kill a man when he is doing something he doesn't like to do—by a sort of interlocking system his thumb flies into his mouth, and for the critical moment speech is cut off.

The Mistake of His Life.

Bluffers—What's wrong today? You look blue.

Bluffers—I'll never forgive myself. I kicked a caller out of my house last night.

"Hub! I kicked many a one. Young fellow, I suppose?"

"No; past middle age."

"Well, these old codgers have no business coming round sparking young girls. I kicked out one of that sort last week."

"Yes, but I've found out that this man wasn't after my daughter. He was after my mother-in-law."

WOMAN SWIMS FORTY MILES.

Miss Eliensky Circles Manhattan Island in 11 Hours 35 Minutes.

Around Manhattan Island, forty miles, in 11 hours and 35 minutes is the new record swim for a woman, made by Miss Ida Eliensky.

Accompanied by her brother Henry, the noted swimming expert, she left the Battery at 6:45, went against the East river current to Hell Gate, fought the undertow and heavy tide there, passed through Spuyten Duyvil creek, entered the North river at 12:05 and reached the Battery at 6:40 slightly in the lead. Miss Eliensky's principal reliance was the Australian crawl and the one arm trudgeon.

There are more than 48,000 sawmills in the United States, and their output of waste in the form of sawdust, shavings, slabs and other wood refuse is estimated at 36,000,000 cords a year. This is equal to 4,500,000,000 cubic feet of waste, which is the capacity of a bin one-half mile high with a base covering a forty acre lot.

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