

Editorial Page of Home and Farm Magazine Section

Timely, Pertinent Comment Upon Men and Affairs, Following the Trend of World News;
Suggestions of Interest to Readers; Hints Along Lines of Progressive Farm Thought.

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TO READERS.

Readers are requested to send letters and articles for publication to The Editor, Oregon - Washington - Idaho Farmer, Oregonian Building, Portland, Oregon.

Discussions on questions and problems that bear directly on the agricultural, livestock and poultry interests of the Northwest, and on the uplift and comfort of the farm home always are welcomed. No letters treating of religion, politics or the European war are solicited, for the Oregon-Washington-Idaho Farmer proclaims neutrality on these matters.

Comparatively brief contributions are preferred to long ones. Send us also photographs of your livestock and farm scenes that you think would be of general interest. We wish to make this magazine of value to you. Help us to do it.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

There are many people to whom the greeting "Happy New Year!" may seem rather a mockery, for to many the old year has not brought forth the fulfillment of wishes for a "Happy New Year" pronounced January 1, 1914. But who knows what future is stored for him in the 365 days of the new year? The year 1915 may go down in history as one of the most prosperous the United States has ever known. It may in the future recall a year of business revival, the like of which was never seen before. It may mean a wealth of trade with South America and Europe which will enrich the coffers of this Nation beyond the most lurid imagination. It may mean a prosperity that will be general and widespread in America.

Of course this view of the future is possibly with glasses of too pronounced a rose tint, but is not optimism better than pessimism? And then there are signs, plenty of them, that augur well for the United States in the year to come. There is little apparent reason now why it should not be a remarkably prosperous year, though the sad part of it is it would probably be a prosperity reaped at the expense of our brethren in Europe.

Be assured that it will be a far happier new year for you in America—particularly for you in the wonderful Pacific Northwest—than for hundreds of thousands, nay, millions, of rich and poor alike in Europe. Where riches stave off actual want and hunger in France, in England and in Germany, still there is the more poignant distress—that of bereavement. In few families is not a son, a husband, a father or a cousin dead, killed in battle.

We have many causes here in America to congratulate ourselves at the beginning of the year of our Lord, 1915. Everywhere business conditions are far better than they were a year ago, and a confidence in the future of many projects is to be found in plenty. Money is being put into wider circulation and the benefit is widespread. The feeling of stringency that has gripped the money market of the country is loosening and dollars and cents are parted with more freely than they were even a few months ago.

Men and women of the Northwest—have you not ample cause to look for blessings in the year to come? What the Nation will profit from a business revival, you will

doubly profit. Living in a land of, as yet, little touched potentialities, you may realize what others may not for years in the tangible wealth of this world. But don't count too much upon mere money. Honest, now, isn't it better to be living in this great Northwestern country and to be making only a fairly comfortable living than to be stuffed in some devitalizing city of the East with listless luxury laying at your command?

Brace up. Take the bit in your teeth. Look the world square in the face, and with a calm confidence in the future greet your neighbor with "A Happy New Year!"

WHY IS A TRUST?

SUPPOSE the farmers of the Northwest should join in a large organization for the purpose of securing good prices for the results of their labor. Would this combine be prosecuted as a trust and possibly dissolved because of "restraint of trade"? Would such an organization be illegal in the eyes of the law, or a lawful institution? The courts apparently differ on the subject, if recent decisions are any criterion.

Three United States District Court Judges decided last October that the North Atlantic steamship trust was not committing an unlawful act by combining and maintaining a pool to fix rates of fare for steerage and third-class passengers. The court maintained that the fares were not excessive and the combination prevented throat-cutting, which might be worse.

The International Harvester Company was tried before a district court last August and ordered dissolved because it was a big concern. It came out in the testimony that the harvester company had not violated any law, as it had not raised prices or threatened extinction of independent concerns. It had only done what the steamship company had done, combined to prevent throat-cutting among numberless small concerns. Yet one trust was patted on the head, called a good fellow and sent on its way, while the other was kicked out with the command to "unscramble" itself.

The Supreme Court of the United States has now to decide, on an appeal, if the order was constitutional. Trust law is apparently more complicated than a trust.

APPALLING DEFENSE OF WAR.

Quite the most atrocious defense of war—incidentally it is also a bitter attack on peace as an enemy of mankind—is furnished by Edgar Stanton Maclay, author "The History of the Navy," in the North American Review, says an Eastern journal.

Falling back on exploded and forgotten Malthus, his point is that if we let humanity increase in peace, we shall starve:

We must not close our eyes to the fact that there are fewer than thirty million square miles of land suitable for the support of mankind on the globe. Centuries of experience show that this land will not support more than a hundred persons per square mile; so that the world's population would seem to be limited to three billions. Already the earth's population exceeds half this limit. If all nations are to cease preparations for war and concentrate their energies in the pursuit of peace and happiness, the world's population will be more than three billions in less than a single generation. Obviously, if the world's population is not kept down by war, it will be restricted by other means, etc.

Nothing more atrocious than this can be imagined.

In the first place, "centuries of experience" are worthless in view of the fact that the world has not yet begun to learn the possibilities of the soil in supporting life. The arbitrary limit of a hundred people to the square mile is absurd. Belgium supports

580 people to the square mile in prosperity and comfort—or did before a wicked war blasted it—and Holland 416.

In the second place, and even adopting the absurd assumption that deliberate curtailment of population is necessary—which is wholly an assumption and not supported by any respectable scientific fact or even theory—war is too blind a way to do it.

To say that Providence intended that humanity should curb its natural increase by war is to insult Providence by denying it ordinary intelligence.

And if society must kill to prevent overpopulation, why kill its fittest, as war does? War is not a survival of the fit, but of the unfit—the fit are taken and the culls are left to breed inferior future generations.

If society must kill to protect itself, why not kill intelligently? Why not periodically slaughter the unfit? Let civilization, instead of leading barbarism out of darkness, slay it in its benightedness and take its land. China is rich and large. The Chinese are not progressive. If society must kill, let it kill intelligently; let it depopulate China and occupy it with its civilized overflow.

Nonsense? Of course, but not half so nonsensical as the outpourings of Edgar Stanton Maclay in his defense of militarism—which is barbarism surviving past its time.

The limits of the soil's capacity to support life are not yet even known, not to speak of being reached. So far as a world congestion of humanity is concerned, there seems to be a law, illustrated by the large birth rate that goes with pioneering hardships and the low birth rate that accompanies comfort and luxury, to prevent that imaginary peril.

And even if it be admitted that arbitrary curtailment of population is necessary, no crueller, cruder, madder way of doing it than by the barbaric method of war could be imagined.

PEACE IN CHINA.

WE QUOTE the following, which is quite worth giving a moment's notice, from the amiable poet philosopher, Walt Mason:

The war goes on, the soldiers labor 12 hours a day at slaying foes; and men are wielding sword and saber who should be plying spades and hoes. There is no sign of early quitting, since neither side can overwhelm; and grand old China does her knitting, and peace abides within her realm. The rage grows hot, instead of colder, among most nations not at war; each has a chip upon its shoulder, and wonders what it's waiting for. They fear the struggle will be over before they have a chance to whoop; but China bales her hay and clover, and puts up cans of bird's-nest soup. In her calm blood there is no fever, she hones not for the field's alarms; she does not wish to swing a cleaver, or snickersnee, or other arms. She lists not to the martial clackers, she entertains no frenzied hates, but wisely builds her cannon-crackers, and ships them proudly to the States. From Sacramento to Salina we fear the lowly Mongol's name, and gibbly talk of "Heathen China," and laugh to scorn her quiet game. But now the world is battle crazy, old China 'tis that puts up ice; inscrutable, her methods mazy, she calmly stews her rats and rice.

Egypt had a standing army as long as 3800 years ago, but what sort of protest could it have made against the armed millions of today?

San Francisco knows what it is to need and receive help. That's why in one hour she picked up \$100,000 for the needy Belgians.

If you are dissatisfied with the world at least make your part of it better by being the kind of man or woman you ought to be.

It has been demonstrated several times that it is no easy task to trap a million Frenchmen, Germans or Russians.