

The old adage about fighting the devil with fire has been adopted in the battle of the country stores against the mail order houses. It consists in nothing less than a number of merchants and manufacturers forming a house on the same lines as the mail order houses and making its name known through the country merchants and by advertising in the country newspapers. The new method is called the Berkeley system, and its headquarters are in Sioux City.

The general outline of the plan of this Berkeley system is thus described: Certain special articles, that have been handled by the mail order houses in enormous quantities are selected. These are ready-made goods for which there is a steady demand. The small storekeepers combine their orders. In this way they build up a large aggregate. The manufacturers belonging to the association are thus able to produce the goods and place them on the small merchants' shelves at prices lower than the mail order people can afford to sell them, but at a living profit to themselves. Many times are placed with the dealers "on consignment" to be sold for when sold. The goods sell better and faster when displayed in the stores than they do from the catalogue.

A single article will illustrate how this plan has been working out. The mail order concern had been selling thousands on thousands of kitchen oil stoves. Wood is expensive on the western plains, and oil is cheaper and handier for the housewife. The Berkeley stores and the manufacturers associated with them took up these stoves, with the result that the business of the mail order houses in this article throughout the middle west has fallen off tremendously.

Today this Berkeley system has 6,000 stores enrolled as members and is getting new recruits at the rate of ten a day—30 a month. The system gets out its advertising in the cheapest form. It depends on advertisements in local papers and circulars. The merchants are furnished with plates for their newspaper notices and circulars and are kept supplied with something new every week or every fortnight, so there shall be no cessation of interest on the part of the buyers and so that the stock shall be kept moving evenly and rapidly. Generally speaking, it is like a huge department store, not under one roof, but with its various branches scattered throughout the United States. In this way the business of these country stores has revived incredibly. The volume of their advertising has increased 30 per cent in the last two years, and their business has grown decidedly. The local stores' advertisements at the lowest possible rates and to help them fight the mail order houses, because the latter do little, if any, newspaper advertising.

Thus far the Berkeley system has been managed most judiciously. While the manufacturers belonging to the association have kept the cost of production down to the lowest possible notch, they have received such tremendous orders from the system that they have been able to fill them at rock bottom prices and at a living profit to themselves. The country merchants, who are in a sense their copartners, are thus able to compete successfully with even the biggest of the mail order houses. The arrangement with the manufacturers permits the goods being shipped direct from the factories to the store as fast as the orders come in, so there is no expensive handling or storing of the goods before they are needed. In every way, in fact, an effort is being made to handle the vast business with the strictest economy, not with a view of centralizing the bulk of the profits in one place, but of distributing them impartially and equally among all who are concerned in their making.

There are certain features of this Berkeley system that make it seem feasible and practical. One is that it recognizes the principle of concentration and co-operation that seems so much a part of this age. It meets the mail order house on its own grounds of cheapness of manufacture and elimination of waste. It was organized by country merchants themselves to meet the very question of the mail order business, men who knew the actual conditions and figured out a plan that would most effectively solve the problem. It takes advantage of the newspapers and thus has a superior kind of publicity over the mail order houses. It allows the local merchants their margins of profits and yet gets rid of the cost of middleman and wholesaler. It confines itself to some of the leading articles in which the mail order houses have made their greatest inroads. And by gaining the support of local merchants and newspaper men it builds up a vast organization and one that is powerful in every community. Moreover, the system has proved itself by its results. Already it has had a vast success, and as its plan becomes known this success cannot but be increased. I am not speaking for the particular house started in Sioux City alone. That is probably only a forerunner of other houses that will be started throughout the United States. There is no reason why the merchants and manufacturers of any section might not form a similar co-operative concern. I am only recognizing the correctness of the principle. On some such basis and along some such lines an effective fight against the mail order houses could be organized.

The country merchants and the country press should realize that they have in their own hands a powerful weapon and one that should be decisive. Then let the newspapers and the commercial clubs join hands with them, and we have a fighting force that would be invincible. A large number of manufacturers would also lend their support. Here, it seems to me, is a feasible plan for solving the problem.

Within the words rural civics there is embraced a movement which, carried to its fullest possibilities, may well mean the transformation of a nation. We are prone to think of civics and civic matters as having to do solely with town or city. People living in such close proximity to one

another that they are forever posting themselves are inclined to consider the welfare of the body politic as a whole. Therefore it is natural that the first impulse for civic betterment should come from the city.

But the time has come when this movement for civic betterment, the improvement of conditions for the masses rather than the individual, is recognized as one of the greatest factors in the uplifting of rural communities. There never was a time, either in country or city, when the individual was under such direct obligation to the mass of his fellow citizens. Within the last half century, by means of increased transportation facilities, the invention of the telephone and the thousand and one inventions which make for closer communion and better living, man has become even more closely bound to his neighbor, so that the latter's welfare has become his own welfare. This is just as true of the farmer as of any other class.

In the growth of rural civics lies not only the salvation of our rural communities, but of the nation as a whole. It is not only the individual farmer, but the community as a whole—the town center, the highways radiating in all directions, the social conditions, the opportunities for mental relaxation and development—and you exert an influence which extends straight on to the legislative halls of the nation.

That Henry Jones allows his back pasture to run to thistles is apparently nobody's business but his own. This may be true up to the point where the first puff of wind flutters the thistle down over into the pastures of his neighbors. Right there Henry Jones has unintentionally taken a hand in his neighbors' affairs, and his neighbors have a right to demand of Henry Jones that he do his share to relieve the community of a pest. A puff of wind and a bit of thistle down have made of the free individual a responsible unit in the mass.

Every movement which tends to bring the members of the rural community together for discussion of those things which concern the community as a whole is a distinct step forward. Every schoolhouse should be a civic center for the district in which it is situated. Every town house or county seat should be a larger civic center wherein the leaders in the smaller centers may meet for the discussion of the work which they are doing and for the intelligent mapping out of future plans along which these smaller centers may co-operate.

The "town beautiful" of necessity means the "home beautiful," and the home beautiful means the retention of the boys and girls on the farm. Rural civics in its broadest sense means rural uplift, uplift along every line which tends to make country life more worth while, more attractive, more inspiring. Rural civics has no place in party politics, save that it will produce in each party the best men that can be put forward. The welfare of the nation is dependent on the welfare of the individual, and the individual alone is helpless and hopeless. Patriotism of the highest type is the immediate and best product of the realization of communal responsibility.

The lyceum in the schoolhouse and the public forum at the town or county seat will come to mean not only a more beautiful country, but a purging of politics which shall ultimately make our government what we are wont to claim that it is and what it should be if it is not—the ideal which Lincoln so tersely set forth as "a government of the people, by the people and for the people."

Trees to Hide Billboard.
In one of the back streets of Brighton, England, up which the tram cars pass to the Dyke road and the golf links, stand four little trees. The road is not an avenue, and one wonders how these four little trees strayed there till the conductor explains that they were placed by the municipality to hide an advertisement boarding put up by the railway line and which mars the view of a very pretty wooded cutting. As the company declined to remove it the town fathers promptly planted their trees, and now in the summer the boarding is almost hidden from view.

What is Best for Indigestion?
Mr. A. Robinson of Drumquin, Ontario, has been troubled for years with indigestion and recommends Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver Tablets as "the best medicine I ever used." If troubled with indigestion or constipation give them a trial. They are certain to prove beneficial. They are easy to take and pleasant in effect. Price 25 cents. Samples free at P. M. Kirkland's.

Uniform Street Tree Planting.
Washington is rapidly becoming famous the world-over for its fine trees, but one kind of tree being planted in each street. Some of the fine examples are: Pennsylvania avenue, pink oaks; Indiana avenue, oriental planes; Massachusetts avenue, American lindens, and East Capitol street planted with American elms. Streets such as these, planted uniformly with one species, and that a good species, will in time make any town famous for beautiful streets.

Estray Notice
Came to my place about the first of July, two black fillies and one gray horse about nine years old and one bay colt two or three years old, not altered. Owner can have same by paying for this notice and damages to G. M. Hoysler, Independence, Oregon. Phone Bell 1428. 107

GREAT BENEFIT TO CHILDREN

Satisfactory Results From a Scheme to Beautify Towns.

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A scheme of prize awards as an incentive for greater care of yards and gardens by house dwellers has been adopted by a business firm in Neenah, Wis., for the improvement of Niagara, one of the paper mills on the Menominee river, in northern Wisconsin.

This plan, which can be followed by any town, marks another step in the movement for well kept gardens as a civic necessity. Milwaukee also benefits by such a movement, and Ishpeming, Mich., rejoices in a prize contest held annually by an iron company. In the Niagara plan the village has been divided into sixteen districts. Prizes are offered on a yard improvement contest to cover cleanliness, sightliness and neatness of the premises. The company in Neenah will appoint three men out of town, who, with two resident judges, will make three inspections during the season. A prize will be given to the yard in each of the sixteen districts showing the greatest improvement during the summer. To the best of the sixteen districts a prize winner's prize will be offered. In addition to the first prize, there will be given a cash prize to every family residing in the neighborhood which shows the greatest improvement.

Seeds, plants, shrubs and trees are being sold to the contestants at cost. Much of the natural beauty of the little town, which is situated attractively between high bluffs, was shorn by lumbermen and jobbers, who cut every tree from the hills and valleys, leaving stumps and slashings as they passed through.

Ever since the inauguration of the yard improvement plan stumps and brush have begun to disappear rapidly. Fencing, grading and the removal of rock are doing wonders in the way of appearance, and thousands of plants, shrubs and trees are being set in. Promising lawns already take the place of riot of weed and Canadian thistle. The women and children have benefited in health by the out of door exercise attendant on the garden work, and men find recreation and interest in working about their homes.

Niagara's array of willing beautifiers promise to make their village a rival of Ishpeming, with its annual prize contest under the auspices of an iron company. The prize contestants there are persons occupying land owned by the company, and a number of classes are posted under which they may compete. Prizes are offered for the best kept premises, vine planting, window box planting and vegetable gardening. The company issues an attractive booklet with instructions in the care of the garden and planting.

The pamphlet issued by the Ishpeming company speaks editorially on the subject of garden care.

"We find that the children in the homes where much regard is given to making and keeping it as attractive as possible are inclined to be more home loving and more easily interested in the best thing." It says, "A boy can have no better training than that of knowing how to cultivate the soil. Many vegetable and flower gardens have been brought to our notice showing the value of the work done by boys and girls through the long summer holidays. Many a boy and girl have thus been able to earn their first money and acquire a habit of industry in this work which has been a help to them throughout their lives. There is no question about the benefit to the home or the home life having such improved surroundings."

As a result of this work the city of Ishpeming presents a pleasing contrast to the coal mining and foundry towns of America and Europe. It enjoys the distinction of being the best kept of any in the long mining list. Ishpeming has responded enthusiastically to the company's invitations for general improvement.

The prizes, which are cash, aggregate several hundred dollars annually. There are several first, second, third and fourth prizes in each class. These are for the tenants of the company. Besides these the president of the company gives prizes of money to the boys and girls of the public schools who make the best showings in flower and vegetable gardens.

The company has a fine nursery and greenhouses, from which it supplies its tenants at low cost.

Missionary work in the cause of gardens has been carried out with satisfactory results in Milwaukee by the Milwaukee Sentinel Outdoor Art association and the Woman's School alliance. In Milwaukee the entries for the first year were 100. This season 1,500 are taking part in the contest. Many of the native ferns, wild grape vines and trees have been collected in the woods and transferred to the yards. Three prizes have been offered, not for the best yard, but for the greatest improvement under prevailing conditions. There are special prizes for children and two extra awards one for the greatest general

improvement and one for the greatest permanent improvement. Sickly women and children are being made well and strong by the Milwaukee tenement movement.—St. Louis Republic.

Road Building to Music.
Major L. W. V. Kennon in building the Benguet road through the mountains of northern Luzon, Philippine Islands, was obliged to study the character of his 4,000 native employees and adopt peculiar methods of developing their efficiency. He found that music was the best incentive to work. He had a band follow the gangs wherever they went and play as the men worked. From laborers worth 10 cents a day he developed the men into musical machines working in cadence with drum beats. Finally in closing up the work he made a wager that the road would be finished by a certain day. He promised a good cigar to every laborer if he won the bet. He won.

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