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By Wm. H. WHEELER

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HALSEY, Linn Co., Ore., July 26, 1923

**THE PRICE OF WHEAT**

The price of wheat has entered into party politics and has made a beautiful mess of the situation. When we were at war Europe could get no wheat from South America and Australasia because of the German menace to transportation from those places. She could get none from Russia because industry there was paralyzed. The United States must feed the allies or they would starve and the Hohenzollern egotistical madman would become the ruler of the world. We were not producing enough to do this. Our government, to stimulate production, guaranteed a good price and as a result American farmers raised the wheat that fed the men who won the war.

Now Russia has wheat to sell. So have Argentina and Australia. The seas are free again for them to send their grain to market. America has more than she can eat and nobody else will buy the surplus at a price that will pay the cost of raising it.

Senator Brookhart, represents the farm bloc, presumably, and he proposes, as a cure for overproduction, that we repeat the course which produced increased production before—government guarantee of a minimum limit of price. He is a political homeopathist. He thinks like cures like—that encouragement and continuance of the overproduction which brought prices down will bring them up again.

We had one good war-time law which could be revived with good effect now. It limited the profit a buyer might make when he sold wheat, and it prohibited the multiplication of that profit by resale.

The Capper law against trading in futures could be strengthened and better enforced for the farmer's good. When the miller pay \$1.50 in May for wheat that the grower sold in September for 90 cents and the board of trade graindealer makes half a million dollars in a year the farmer gets too little or the poor man's bread costs too much, or both.

The financing of farmers in holding 200,000,000 bushels of wheat in storage, which the farm bureau has helped to bring about, as narrated in another column, has not the enthusiastic approval of the board of trade.

**HANG MORE MURDERERS**

The best place for a deliberate murderer is under ground. One of them, convicted in Michigan expressed his delight at his good fortune in having chosen for his scene of operations a state in which the penalty of murder is relatively light, says the Oregonian.

"If they give me life, I'll be out in sixteen years, anyway," he said. "I'm going to be good when I get in."

The prisoner pictures an even less unhappy prospect. "You cops," he is quoted as saying further "would not be surprised, would you, if the judge let me off with two to thirty years because I'm confessing?" "Of course," said one of his accomplices, "when you go out on a stickup job, you intend either to get the bird's money or to shoot him, you know."

The reason the restoration of the death penalty in Oregon has failed to reduce the number of murders is that in spite of the law we don't hang enough of them.

Contempt of a contemptible judge is not necessarily contempt of the court he disgraces.

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**FALL TERM OPENS SEPTEMBER 28, 1923**  
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**THE REGISTRAR**  
Oregon Agricultural College  
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On the first page is a quotation from Luther Burbank on tobacco. But there is no tobacco on Burbank.

When Mr. Harding protested against the "farm bloc" in congress it was a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. Now it looms up as a tempest.

Francisco Villa slaughtered without mercy. Now he has been slaughtered the same way. "He that taketh up the sword shall fall by the sword"

Lane county has compelled the market road from Coburg to the Linn county line. This strengthens competition with the Harrisburg bridge—the bridge what ain't.

From the roar that arises when Mrs. Poindexter stirs up the animals at Washington with a tiny pen point we infer that if she had been in either house of congress in the place of some of the old women we have sent there the Congressional Record would have been more interesting literature.

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**In Union is Strength**  
Co-operation May Save the Farmer

Successful farming cannot be done without brains. She same is true of successful marketing. A man may be a good farmer and such a poor marketer that he goes bankrupt. A successful market manager might go bankrupt trying to carry on a farm. Every man to his trade, there are men between the farmer and the consumer who understand their business. They profit at the expense of both. Co-operative marketing appears to be the only hope of the farmer today. But there are as many chances of failure as of success in co-operative marketing. At the head of such an enterprise what is needed is not a good farmer but a good marketer. Where properly managed co-operative marketing is a success, and the more co-operation the greater the success. A good market manager can command a good salary. The most expensive thing on the market is brains, and it is the most profitable thing that can be bought.

O. E. Bradfute, president of the American Farm Bureau federation, announces a gigantic plan to boost the price of this year's crop of wheat. Withdrawing 200,000,000 bushels of surplus wheat from the market and storing it on farms is proposed. It is estimated that \$125,000,000 of the \$660,000,000 made available under the new intermediate credit act will be ample to finance the stored grain.

Good farm wheat bins would be designated as regular United States bonded warehouses and thus provide bonded warehouse receipts to be issued against the grain stored on the farm, according to the bureau plan. The grower could borrow through the intermediate credit system up to three fourths of the market value of his stored grain, enabling him to withhold his wheat until prices advanced to the point where it would be advisable to sell.

An immediate and tremendous effect on the wheat market is expected to result from the storing of this grain in farm bins kept safe under lock and key.

C. E. Spence, state market agent says:

There will be a bumper potato crop in Oregon, and farmers are wondering what to do with it. They are wondering if the price they will get will warrant the harvesting.

There is a wonderful grain yield in Oregon and the northwest and growers are wondering if the market will give them wages and cost of seed.

Many growers are stampeded by stories of great surpluses and lack of transportation. They will conclude that they had better sell before the market is completely glutted and while there is a chance to get transportation. It has ever been thus.

The officials of Northwest Wheat Growers' Association are not scared by this speculators' propaganda, but the grain grower on the outside has not their source of crop and market information. If three-fourths of the grain of the northwest was contracted to this association, these stampered stories of surplus yields and car shortage would have little scare effect.

If there was a state-wide marketing association to handle 60 percent of the potatoes of Oregon, farmers would not be wondering if their potato fields would be worth digging.

The state co-operative egg association of California, Oregon and Washington, under a merger, do not fight each other for the eastern markets—they do not all dump on and demoralize the same market.

Any successful co-operative marketing association, large or small, cuts just that much out of the profits of the speculator—profits that are by all rights the producers. It is but a matter of co-operative loyalty and efficient management to merge and extend these associations.

But the great drawback of organization is the growers who stand back and say they will not co-operate until they see how the movement works out. Usually there are enough of these to hold back a majority of the output. And these are

the producers the slick speculators use to hold back success of the organization and often break it. When farmers will learn the lesson that big business has so many times given them—that controlling markets is the only way to fix selling prices—then will there be fair profits to growers. Loyalty seems to be the first necessity.

Sunday before last 837 cars crossed the Willamette on the Harrisburg ferry.

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**The Custard Cup**  
by **Florence Bingham Livingston**  
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(Continued)  
CHAPTER XX

Lettie on the Firing Line.  
Lettie's plan was definite, but only a child would have formed it. Her suspicions were red-hot, but only a child of ten-second impulsiveness would have acted upon them. There was a great deal of inflammable material in her nature, and no one could tell what chance spark might set it off. The evidence that had recurred to her, under the stress of Mrs. Penfield's suffering, was slight, even unreliable, but her imagination had invested it with integrity.  
From Mrs. Sanders' living-room window she had caught the merest glimpse of a man with a child in his arms, hurrying out of the Custard Cup. Looking out of a lighted room into the deepening twilight, she had seen neither clearly and had not thought of recognizing the man or the child. But when she had found that Thad was missing, she had jumped to the congenial conclusion that she had seen Frank Bosley carrying Thad away. Why Frank Bosley? Chiefly because Lettie disliked him, distrusted him, and because in build he was not unlike the man she had seen. The fact that Frank Bosley could have no possible interest in kidnapping a Custard Cup child, did not occur to Lettie's conviction. True to the impulsiveness which was the keynote of her nature, she had jumped to a conclusion.

It was several blocks to the Everidge street house, but Lettie covered them rapidly. There was no light in any window, but she rang the bell. "I'll begin decent," she thought to herself. She was sure that queer people came here, and somehow she didn't expect them to do anything so mild as to respond to a bell. Giving them the chance was her way of discharging her formal duty.

There was no answer. Lettie set her teeth and proceeded to business. "Thad's in there," she thought steadily, "and I'm going to have him."

Quietly she circled the two-story house. It had a high basement. There was a basement window toward the vacant lot, but it was fastened. Immediately she reflected that if she got into the basement, she would probably want to get upstairs and might find herself locked away from the main floor. She knew that the key was not likely to be on the basement side. The windows on the first floor were all closed—except one on the other side from the vacant lot, probably the bathroom window. That was raised a few inches. It was very narrow, but so was Lettie. Mentally she pounced on that window.

She called upon her wide experience in prowling to help her. In the back yard she found an old box; in other back yards she found other boxes. She borrowed four of different sizes, and with every intention of returning them. No one knew better than Lettie how important a piece of personal property an old wooden box may be; and in spite of her acquisitive tendencies, she had a rigid respect for prior claims.

She placed the boxes on end, by way of making them reach. Then through acquired agility and with the help of nails that had once fastened a vine to the wall, she climbed within range of the ledge, pushed up the window softly, squeezed her thin body through, swung downward with her wiry hands grasping the sill, and touched her feet to the floor.

She was inside. With the exuberance of ignorance, she felt that her quest was nearly accomplished. She stretched out her hands till she discovered the door; then went through—into inky blackness. She groped along the wall, tried a door, found it locked; tried another, found it also locked; tried a third. The knob yielded. She turned it carefully and looked into a room in which a gas jet burned. A woman was sitting by a



table—a rich woman. She was counting her money and putting the green



"What Are You Doing Here?" She Demanded.

bills into different piles. There was wrapping paper on the table, a ball of cord, a stick of red wax.  
There was no child in the room. Having glanced around to make sure, Lettie tried to withdraw quietly, but the doorknob slipped in her hand. It clicked sharply. The woman turned with a violent start, sprang up.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

Lettie shivered at the sound of her voice. It was low but harsh, cold, as different as possible from Penfield's—like voices she had been accustomed to in those lean years before she came into the Custard Cup. With a jerk the woman had covered her money with one of the papers. She turned on Lettie with eyes that glittered, threatened. Her face had a shut look.

"I want to see Mr. Bosley," Lettie floundered.  
The woman gazed at her coldly. "Ain't nobody here by that name."  
"He comes here."  
"He don't, neither."  
"Yes, he does," insisted Lettie desperately. "I've seen him."  
"You ain't, neither," retorted the woman with vehemence. She came forward. "You get out—!" She broke off in the midst of her intensity and glanced back at the table, as if considering how much the unwelcome visitor had seen. "How'd you get in?"

"Through the window. I wouldn't ha' done it if you'd answered the bell."  
"What did you come for?"  
"My little brother. Please let me have him—quick."

The woman's brows drew together in a horrible scowl. "There ain't nobody here but me. I'm alone—and I been alone all the time, too. What do you mean, you little devil?" She made a dive at Lettie; then paused. It was evident that she could not make up her mind what to do with the intruder.

Finally she gripped the child's shoulder, whirled her about, and forced her into a chair. "You sit there," she hissed. "Don't you move. You're a lun'ic. We'll have you put in a 'sylum."

Lettie glared steadily back at her. The grip on her thin shoulder had convinced her that physical resistance was inadvisable, but she was serene in the knowledge that she was not a lunatic.

"I want my little brother," she repeated, with diplomatic calm.  
A tide of color surged into the woman's face. She looked as if she were strangling. "Ain't nobody here," she snapped.

A terrible fear clutched Lettie's heart. What if Thad really were not here? She had been so blindly certain of his presence that she had not faced the opposite possibility.

"Please—"  
"Shut up."  
The woman sat down across from Lettie. They glared savagely at each other. The shades were drawn down below the window-sills, so that not a ray of light could penetrate outside. . . . No one would dream that a little girl was a prisoner in this house, dark, deserted, for all that a passer-by could tell. . . . The room was close and fear-somely silent. The gas sputtered up now and then with an angry sizzling. Lettie's frightened glance traveled around the bare room, seeking for some means of outwitting the woman before her. Nothing occurred to her.

Suddenly she heard a sound that was like a faint moan. It seemed to come from a distance. She heard it again. It might be in the basement. Again! She was sure it was below her somewhere.

"Oh!" Lettie started to her feet. "I hear him. It's Thad. Let me—"  
The woman pushed her back into her seat. "You fool! 'Tain't nothing but cats."

Lettie struggled to free herself. "It is, too. I know it's Thad. Leggo! Leggo! Darn it all, leggo!"

"Shut up. I got ways to keep you still." She seized the child's arms and twisted them back with a swift wrench. Lettie gasped; she turned faint with the pain. But when the first agony had passed, she was filled with renewed defiance. It flashed into her mind that the woman was waiting for something. Lettie wished it would come. Whatever it was, surely she could—

The moan struck her ears again, a long wall of human suffering, the desolation of a child that is spent with crying. Lettie's fingers worked, but she held herself still. Perhaps the woman would go to sleep after a while. Nobody could stay awake always. . . . The gas shot up at one side, sank again with a dismal gurgle.

Presently there was a sound outside—faint, momentary, like a step. Lettie's heart gave a bound of relief. But evidently it was not the sound that the woman had been waiting for. She sat straighter in her chair, in an attitude of alarmed listening. The sound came again. The woman sprang up, turned off the gas, and went out quickly toward the front of the house.

Instantly Lettie dashed the other way, through a door which she had previously decided must lead to the kitchen. Groping her way around the wall, she opened a door into another room, and then one which opened into space—the stairway.

She plunged recklessly down the dark stairs, her nerves keyed high by the fear of pursuit. The moaning was

(To be continued)

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