

U.S. MEAT SUPPLY UNEQUAL TO NEED

Eight Reasons Given For Existing Conditions.

MUST IMPORT SMALL PART

Supply of Country 13 Per Cent Less Than Demand—18,250,000 More Animals Needed For 1914, Houston Assests—Experts Now at Work Attempting to Solve Difficult Problem.

Washington.—Not enough meat will be produced in the United States this year to supply the population, says a bulletin issued by the department of agriculture, which estimates the supply of food animals to be 18,250,000 short.

Another bulletin says "Intense competition" exists in the distribution of wheat and flour from the farmer to the consumer.

Changes in the price of flour, the department says, do not always follow immediately changes in the price of wheat, but middlemen get smaller profits when wheat is high.

The bulletin on the meat supply fulfills predictions made by experts throughout the country several years ago—that the day when the production would not equal the demand was approaching rapidly.

Unless the people eat less meat, 13 per cent of the amount they would normally consume in 1914 must come from abroad.

Eight reasons are given for the shortage, which, it is said, will be more closely investigated by the committee



Photo by American Press Association.

RECENTLY REPORTED.

recently appointed by Secretary Houston to study the economics of the meat situation. The reasons are:

The encroachment of farms on the range territory.

The lack of a proper range leasing law, permitting economical management and utilization of ranges.

The shortage in the corn and forage crops due to the severe drought in Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma in 1912, which caused the farmers in those states to dispose of their meat animals.

The increase in the value of land and the increased cost of labor and stock feed, resulting in greatly increased cost of production.

The decline in stock raising on farms in the east and south because of poor marketing facilities, resulting from many local slaughtering establishments being driven out of business by the competition of the great central slaughtering establishments of the west and central west.

The temptation to sell live stock at the prevailing high prices rather than to continue to carry it with high priced stock feed, possible loss from disease or accident and uncertain prices the following year.

Enormous losses from hog cholera.

The competition of higher prices for other farm products.

Figured on the basis of each 100 of the total estimated population and compared with conditions in 1910, the bulletin estimates the shortage amounts to almost nine cattle, seven sheep and three hogs.

At the same time the report cites that the actual value of the meat animals on the farms in 1912 in the aggregate than it was in 1910.

The bulletin relative to wheat and flour says middlemen are content with somewhat smaller profits when wheat is high than when it is low, but it is the refusal of housewives to stick to any particular brand of flour that keeps the grocer from making big profits and furnishes the competition.

The bulletin shows that when in March, 1908, the farmer was getting 64 cents a bushel on all grades of wheat at the elevator, the margin of profit between that figure and what the consumer paid for patent flour made from a bushel of wheat was approximately 20 cents, whereas in October, 1911, when the price of wheat at the farm was 97.5 cents a bushel the margin of profit to the grain elevator, the railroad, the grain jobber or commission man, the flour mill, the flour jobber or wholesale grocer, and the grocer was 6 cents a bushel.

W. J. C. C. C.

Editor.—What lovely furniture! Little Tommy—Yes. I think the man we bought it from is sorry now he sold it. Anyway he's always calling—London The Sun.

THE HUSBANDS OF EDITH

By
GEORGE BARR
M'CUTCHEON

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affairs in which my best friends were frightfully—er—complicated. I meant to say that I'm terribly cut up over poor Mrs. Medcroft. She's a dear. Believe me, she's a most delicious singer. Even Carney says that, and he's very fastidious—and very loyal."

"They are married in name only," said Mrs. Rodney, beginning to sniffle. She looked up and smiled wanly through her tears. "You know what I mean. My grammar is terrible when I'm nervous." She pulled at her handkerchief for a wailing moment. "Do you think I'd better speak to Edith? We may be able to prevent the divorce."

"Divorce," gasped Mrs. Odell-Carney incredulously.

At this juncture Mrs. Odell-Carney emerged from her shell, so to speak. She stalked through the window and confronted the two ladies, one of whom at least was vastly dismayed by her sudden appearance.

"Now, see here," he began without preliminary apology. "I won't bear of a divorce. That's all rubbish—perfect rot 'pon my soul. What's the use? Hang it all, Mrs. Rodney, what's the odds, so long as all parties are contented? We can stand it, by Jove. If they can, don't you know. We can't regulate the love affairs of the universe. Besides, I'm not going to stand by and see a friend dragged into a thing of this sort."

"A friend, Carney," exclaimed his wife.

"Well, it's possible, my dear, that he may be a friend. I know so many chaps in London who might be doing this sort of thing, don't you know. Who knows but the chap who's writing her these letters may be one of my best friends? It doesn't pay to take a chance on it. I won't hear of it. If Medcroft knows and his wife knows and Miss Fowler knows, why the deuce should we bother our heads about it? Last night I heard the Medcroft infant howling its lungs out-teething. I dare say but did I go in and take a hand in straightening out the poor little beggar? Not I. By the same token, why should I or anybody else presume to step in and try to straighten out the troubles of its parents? It's useless interference, either way you take it."

"I think it's all very entertaining and diverting," said Mrs. Odell-Carney carelessly.

"Do you really think so?" asked the doubting Mrs. Rodney. "I was so afraid you'd mind. Your position in society, my dear Mrs.—"

"My position in society, Mrs. Rodney, can weather the tempest you predict," said Mrs. Odell-Carney, with a smile that went to Mrs. Rodney's marrow.

"Oh, if—if you really don't mind"—she murmured apologetically.

"Not at all, my dear madam," remarked Odell-Carney, carefully adjusting his eyeglasses. "It's quite immaterial, I assure you."

CHAPTER XL

Other Relations.

IT is but natural to presume after the foregoing that the affairs of the Medcrofts were under close and careful scrutiny from that confidential hour. The Odell-Carneys were conspicuously nice and agreeable to the Medcrofts and Miss Fowler.

It may be said indeed that Mr. Odell-Carney went considerably out of his way to be agreeable to Mrs. Medcroft—so much so, in fact, that she made it a point to have some one else with her whenever she seemed likely to be left alone with him. The Rodney's struggled bravely and so doubt consciously to emulate the example set by the Odell-Carneys, but it was hardly to be expected that they could see new things through old world eyes. They grew very stiff and ceremonious—that is, the Rodney ladies did. It was their prerogative, of course. Were they not cousins of the Medcrofts?

Four or five days of uneasy pretense passed with a swiftness that irritated certain members of the party and a slowness that distressed the others. Days never were so short as those which the now recklessly infatuated Edith was spending. He was valiantly earning his way into the heart of Constance, a process that tried his patience exceedingly, for she was bitingly unimpressible as if one were to judge by the calmness with which she fended off the inevitable though tardy assault. She kept him at arm's length. At appearances demanded a discreetness no matter how she may secretly have felt toward the good looking husband of her sister. To say that she was enjoying herself would be putting it much too tamely. She was reveling in the fun of the thing. It mattered little to her that people, her own cousins in particular, were looking upon her with cold and critical eyes. She knew down in her heart that she could throw a bomb among them at any time by the mere utterance of a single word. It mattered as little that Edith was beginning to chafe miserably under the strain of waiting and deception. The novelty had worn off for the wife of Roxbury. She was despairingly in love, and she was pining for the day to come when she could laugh again with real instead of simulated jocundity.

"Constance, dear," she would lament a dozen times a day, "it's growing unbearable. Oh, how I wish the three weeks were ended. Then I could have my Roxbury, and you could have your Roxbury, and everybody wouldn't be plying me and cavilling at you because I'm unhappily married."

"Why do you say I could have your other Roxbury?" demanded her sister on one occasion. "You forget father expects me to marry the vicar. I—" "You are so tiresome, Constance. Don't worry me with your love affairs—I don't want to hear them. There's Mr. Brock waiting for you in the garden."

"I know it, my dear. I think it is good for him to wait. I think it is good for him to wait," said the other, with airy confidence. "What does Roxbury say in his letter this morning?"

"He says it will all be over in a day or two. Dear me, how I wish it were over now! I can't endure Cousin Mary's unpopularity much longer, and as for Katherine! My dear, I hate that girl!"

"She's been very nice lately, Edith—ever since Freddie dropped me so completely. By the way, Burton was telling me today that Odell-Carney had been asking her some very curious and staggering questions about Tootles and your most private affairs."

"I know, my dear," groaned Edith. "He very politely remarked to me last night that Tootles made him think very strangely of a friend of his in London. He wouldn't mention the fellow's name. He only smiled and said, 'Nevah mind, my dear, he's a chaffed handsome dog. I dare say he meant that as a compliment to Tootles. She is pretty, don't you think so, dear?'"

"She's just like you, Edith," said Constance, who understood things quite clearly.

"Then, in heaven's name, Constance, why are they staring at her so impudently—all of them?"

"It's because she is so pretty. Goodness, Edith, don't let every little thing worry you. You'll have wrinkles and gray hairs soon enough."

"It's all very nice for you to talk, grumbled Edith. 'I'm going mad with loneliness. I have a lover near you all the time—he's mad about you. What have I? I'm utterly alone. No one loves me—no, not a soul!'"

"You won't let them love you, Edith," said Constance jauntily. "They all want to love you, all of them."

"I hate men," announced Mrs. Medcroft retrospectively.

Developments of a most refractory character swooped down upon them at the very end of the season in Innsbruck. Every one had begun to rejoice that the fortnight was almost over and that they could go their different ways

without having anything really regrettable to carry away with them. The Rodney's were going to Paris, the Medcrofts to London, the Odell-Carneys (after finding out where the others were bent to) to Ostend. Freddie Uster suddenly announced his determination to remain at the Tirol for a week or two longer. That very day he had been introduced to a Mlle. Le Brun, a fascinating young Parisian stopping at the Tirol with her mother.

All might have ended well had it not been for the unfortunate circumstance of Odell-Carney's making a purchase of the London Standard instead of the Times, as was his custom. His lamentations over this piece of stupidity were cut short by the discovery of an astonishing article upon the editorial page of the paper—an article which created within him a sense of grave perplexity. He read the headlines twice, and glanced through the text three, neither time with any very definite idea of what he was reading. His fingers shook as he held the sheet nearer the window for a second or two, until the incredible thing that lay before him in simple, unimpeachable black and white.

"On me word," he kept repeating to himself feebly. Then he got up and went off in extreme haste to find his wife.

"My dear," he said to her in the carriage. "I must speak with you alone." She was just starting off for a drive with Mrs. Rodney.

"Bad news, Carney?" she demanded, struck by his expression. She was following him toward a remote corner of the approach. He did not reply until they were seated much nearer to each other than was their wont.

"Read that," he said, slipping the Standard into her hands. "What do you think of it?"

"My dear Carney, I don't know. Would you mind telling me what I am to read?"

"The Medcroft thing. Right there."

She read the article, her husband watching her face the while. Surprise, incredulity, dismay, succeeded each other in rapid changes. She was reeling in sheer amazement of the doings of Roxbury Medcroft in connection with the county council's subcommittee—in London! The story went on to relate how Medcroft, implacable leader of the opposition to the "graffers," suddenly had appeared before the committee with the most astounding figures and facts to support his charges of rottenness on the part of the "clique," his thrown the opposing leaders into a panic; even one had been led to believe that he was sojourning in the east. As a matter of fact, it was soon revealed, he had been in London secretly working on the problem for nearly three weeks, keeping discreetly under cover in order that his influence might not be thwarted. His array of facts, his bitter arraignment of the men who were trying to force the building bill through the council, staggered the whole city of London. At length the whole thing was known, the bill would be overlooked, its promoters had been so completely put to rout. The committee would be compelled to take cognizance of the startling exposure. The people would demand a full thrashing out of the obnoxious deal. Roxbury Medcroft's name was on every one's lip. The Standard had proved by securing a great "beat."

The Odell-Carneys looked at each other in wonder and perplexity. "What does it mean?" asked the lady, her eyes narrowing.

"Look here, Agatha, this paper's at least two days old. Now, how the devil can Medcroft be in London and Innsbruck at the same time. He was here day before yesterday, wasn't he? I'm so confused and unseeing."

"Yes, yes, he was here. And this paper?" She paused irresolutely.

"Says he was there. 'Pon my word, it's most uncanny. There's some mystery here."

"It's not it, Carney! This is no Roxbury Medcroft."

"Good God!"

"This explains everything. Heaven! Carney! This fellow is—is her lover! She's running about the country with him. She's—"

"Her lover? 'Gad, my dear, he may have been so at one time, but he's the other one's lover now, take my word for it. I say, 'pon my soul, this is a charming game your friends the Rodney's have let us into. They—"

"My friends! Yours, you mean!" she retorted.

"Oh, come now! But let it go at that. They know, of course that this fellow isn't her husband, and yet, by gad, Agatha, they've gone about by deliberate palming him off on us as the real article. They are actually sanctioning the whole!"

"Stop a moment, Carney," interrupted his wife. "The London chap may be the fraud. Let us go slow, my dear."

"Slow? How the devil can we go slow in such fast company? No! This fellow is the fraud. And they knew it too. They all know it. They—"

"Rubbish! You forget that the whole Rodney tribe is up in arms because Medcroft is making love to his wife's sister. They're not assuming anything there, let me tell you. And he's not Edith's lover. If he's not her husband, he's playing a part that she understands and approves. And this—this, my dear Carney, may account for the imaginary orphanage of Tootles. Dear me, it's quite a tangle."

"I shall telegraph my solicitors at once for definite news. They'll know whether the real Medcroft is in London and the why no Roxbury. Agatha, can't tell just what steps I'll take in regard to these Rodney's."

He went into a long tirade against the unentitled Beatties, as he called them. "Understand me, Agatha, I don't blame Mrs. Medcroft. If she's having an affair with this chap and can't pull the wool"—

"But she isn't having an affair with this chap," cried Mrs. Odell-Carney, her patience exhausted. "She's having an affair with a chap in London, the one who writes. Good gracious! Of course! Why, what fools we are. The real Medcroft is in London, and it is he who is writing the letters. How stupid of me!"

"Ah!" exclaimed he triumphantly. "Of course, she's getting letters from her husband. But, by the everlasting shagpat, do you suppose that her husband knows she's off here with another fellow who masquerades as her husband? No! He almost shouted it. 'I've never heard of anything so brazen. 'Gad, what nerve these Americans have! Just to think of it!'"

"I don't believe she is anything of the sort," declared his wife. "She's as good as gold. You can't fool me, Carney. I know women."

"Devise it, Agatha, so do I. And what more, I know men."

"They're a poor lot, the kind you know. This pseudo Medcroft is not your kind. He's a very clever chap and a gentleman."

"Now, look here, Agatha, don't imagine that I'm going to be such a cad as to turn against 'em in their hour of trial. No, I'm more their friend than ever. I'll help 'em to get out from here, and I'll build these Rodney's into holding their peace forever after. It's the Rodney duplicity that I can't stand."

"Shall we stay here, or shall we find an excuse to leave?" she asked pointedly.

"We'll stay long enough for me to tell the Rodney's what I think of 'em. I'll have an answer to my dispatch by night. Then I should advise you to have a talk with Mrs. Medcroft. You've invited her to the house, you know. Tell her there can't be two Medcrofts. See what I mean? We'll see 'em through this, but—well, you understand."

CHAPTER XL

"I do love you."

MEANTIME a telegram had preceded a lengthy letter into the department of the police, both directed to Herr Bauer, who in reality was James Githens of Scotland Yard. The telegram had said: "Why do you say M. is there? He is in London. Explain. Letter tomorrow." The letter had come, and Mr. Githens as well as the local police office was "bowled over," to express it in Scotland Yard English. He had wired his employers that "M. is still in Innsbruck. Cannot be in London." It was very clearly set forth in the letter that Mr. Githens of Scotland Yard had that Mr. Githens of Scotland Yard had betrayed his trust. He was virtually charged with playing into the hands of the enemy—"selling out," as it were. It readily may be expected that Mr. Githens was accused of being in the employ of the "opposition." Moreover, it is but reasonable to assume that he took vigorous steps at once to vindicate himself, which accounts for the woe that lurked close behind the heels of a man named Brock.

Brock and Constance had ridden off that afternoon to visit the historic Schloss Amburg. The great castle had been saved for the very last of their explorations. He had just been able to secure permission to visit that part of the duke's residence open on certain occasions to the curious public. Edith had declined to accompany them. In the first place, she was expecting the all important message from her husband. She was "on netties," to quote her plaintive eagerness. In the second place, she realized that as the crisis came, she must be at the affairs of Brock and Constance her presence was not a necessary adjunct. Not only was she expecting a message from Roxbury, but eagerly anticipating an outburst of joyous news from the two who had, it seemed, very gladly left her behind.

The young couple returning by the lower road from the Schloss came to a resting place at a little overhanging and garden on the hillside overlooking the river. It was a quiet, demure, untroubled place among the crags, standing in from the white roadway a hundred feet or more, clouded by gorgeous trees and sombre cliffs. It was to this charming, romantic retreat that Brock led his fair, now tremulous inmate. She, too, knew that it was an hour for decision had come. It was in the air, in the glint of his eyes, in the leaping of her heart. And she knew what she would say to him and what he would say to the world a few hours hence. The mountains seemed

to have lost their splendid frown. They were bending down upon her, tenderly caressing instead of bleak and forbidding as they always had been before.

A rosy cheeked girl came into the garden to serve them. Swift, cool breezes were scurrying down the valley, bearing in their wake the soft rain clouds that were soon to drench the earth and then radiantly pass on. They were quite alone, seated in the shelter of a wide, overhanging portico. A soft, green darkness was creeping over the mountain side, pregnant with smell of the shower.

Constance ordered tea and a bite of something to eat for both. Brock's gaze never left her exquisite face while she was engaged in the pretty but rather self conscious occupation of instructing the waitress. After the girl had departed, he leaned forward across the little table and said, a trifle hoarsely and disjunctively:

"It was most appetizing to watch you do that. I could live forever on nothing but tea and sandwiches if you were to order them."

"You're said a great many silly things to me this afternoon."

"I wonder"—he stopped and lowered his voice—"I wonder if you would call it silly if I were to tell you that I love you, very, very, much?" His gloved hand dropped upon hers as she fumbled aimlessly with the menu card; something in the very helplessness of that long, slim hand drew the strength of all his love toward it—all of this confident, arrogant love that had come to be so sure of itself in these last days. His gray eyes, dark with the purpose of his passion, took on a new and compelling glow; she looked into them for an instant; the wavering smile of last resort on her parted lips; then her lids dropped quickly and her lip trembled.

"I should still think you very silly," she said in a very low voice, "unless unless you do love me."

His fingers closed so tightly upon hers that she looked up, her eyes swimming with tenderness. Neither spoke for a long minute, but words were not needed to tell what the soul was saying through the eyes.

"I do love you—you know I do, Constance. I've loved you from the first day. I cannot live without you. Constance, darling, you won't keep me waiting? You will be my wife—you will marry me at once? You do love me, I know—I've known it for days and days!"

She whitened and broke in upon his passionate declaration, saying with a pretty pertinence: "Oh, you have? What insufferable conceit! I—"

He laughed joyously. "I never was so sure of anything in my life," he said. "You couldn't help loving me, Constance. I've loved you so. You don't have to tell me, dear; I know. Still, I'd like to hear you say, with those dear lips as well as with your eyes, that you love me."

She put her hand upon the back of the broad one which held the other imprisoned; there was a proud, earnest light in her eyes. "I do love you," she said simply.

"God, but I'm a happy man!" he exclaimed. Forgetful of the time and the place, he half arose and, leaning forward, kissed her full upon the upturned lips.

There was a rattling of chinaware behind them. In no little confusion both came tumbling down from parasitism and found themselves under the abashed scrutiny of a very red faced young serving woman.

"Oh, never mind," stammered Gretchen quite amiably. "I am used to that, madam. A great many ladies and gentlemen come here to—to what you call it?" She placed the tea and sandwiches before them, her fingers all thumbs, her cheeks aglow.

Brock pulled himself together. Very solemnly he said, "This young lady is to be my wife."

"Ach," said Gretchen, with a friendly smile and the utmost deference, "that is what they all say, mein herr. Then, signing approvingly, she bustled away.

Brock waited until she was out of sight. "She seems to be on to us, as Freddie would say. But what do we care? I'd like to stand on top of the Bandjock and shout the news to the world. Wouldn't you, dearest?"

"The world wouldn't hear us, dear," she said coolly. "Besides, it's raining up there. Just look at it sweeping down upon us. Goodness!"

He laughed heartily, amused by her attempt to be casual and indifferent. "You can't turn it off so easily as that, dearest," he cried. "Come! While it rains we may plan. You will marry me—tomorrow?"

"No," she cried, agitated. "How utterly ridiculous!"

"Well, then, day after tomorrow?"

"No, no, no, week after next. I—"

"See here, Constance, we've got some one else to consider as well as ourselves. In order to square it all up for Edith we must be able to say to these people that we haven't been friv-

ling. We're going to be married at once. That will let Edith out of the difficulty, and everything will look rosy at the outset. If we put it off the world will have said things in its ignorance that she can never refute, simply because the world doesn't stop long enough to hear two sides of a story unless they are given pretty closely together. Now, Edith is counting on us to put the peeping Tom Rodney and the charitable Carneys to rout with our own little bombshell. They're saying nasty things about all of us. They're calling you a vile thing for stealing your sister's husband, and they're calling me a dog for what I'm doing. No telling what they'll be saying if we don't step into the breach as soon as it is opened. We can't afford to wait, no matter what Roxbury says when he comes. We've just got to be able to forestall even dear old Roxbury. Come! Don't you see? We must be married at once."

"Dear me," she murmured softly, "what will papa say?"

"My dear Constance, I will explain it all to your father when he gets back from South America next winter."

It was now raining in torrents. They moved back into the darkest recess of their shelter and blissfully looked out upon the drenched universe with eyes that saw nothing but sweet sunshine and fair weather.

The clattering of horses' hoofs upon the hard, mountain road sounded suddenly above the hiss of the rainstorm. It was quite dark by this time, night having been hurried on by the lowering skies. A moment later three horsemen, drenched to the skin, drew up in front of the inn, threw their reins over the posts and dashed for shelter. They came noisily into the arbor, growling and stamping their soggy feet.

"What, ho!" called one of the newcomers, sticking his head through a window of the house. Brock and Miss Fowler looked on amused by the plight of the riders. Two of them were unquestionably officers of the police, the third seemed to be an Englishman. They were gruff, burly fellows, all of them. For a few minutes they stormed and growled about their miserable luck in being caught in the downpour, ordering schnapps and brandy in large and instant quantities. At last the Englishman, a heavy, sour faced man, turned his gaze in the direction of the lovers, who sat quite close together in the dark corner. His gaze developed into a stare, then a look of triumph. A moment later he was pointing out the couple to his companions, all three peering at them with excited eyes.

Brock's face went red under the rude stare. He was on the point of retreating when the Englishman stepped forward. The American arose at once.

"I've been looking for you, Mr. Medcroft—if that is your name," said the stranger, halting in front of the table. "My name is Githens, Scotland Yard. These men have an order for your arrest. I'd advise you to go with them peacefully. The young woman will not be bothered. She is free to go."

"What are you talking about?" demanded Brock angrily. Suddenly he felt a chill of misgiving. What had Roxbury Medcroft been doing that he should be subject to arrest?

"You are masquerading here as Roxbury Medcroft, the architect. You are not Medcroft. I have watched you for weeks. Today we have learned that Medcroft is in London. Your linen is marked with a letter B. You've drawn money on a letter of credit together with a woman who signs herself as Edith F. Medcroft. There is something wrong with you, Mr. B., and these officers, acting for the hotel and the state bank, have been instructed to detain you pending an investigation."

Mr. Githens was vindictive himself. He may have been a trifle disconcerted by Miss Fowler's musical laugh and Brock's plain guttural, but he managed to preserve a stiff dignity. "It's no laughing matter. Officers, this is your man. Take him in charge. Madam as I understand it, you are the alleged sister of the woman who is working herself off as Mrs. Medcroft. It may

"I do love you," she said simply.

"I do love you—you know I do, Constance. I've loved you from the first day. I cannot live without you. Constance, darling, you won't keep me waiting? You will be my wife—you will marry me at once? You do love me, I know—I've known it for days and days!"

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