

The Way of Life

by BRUCE BARTON

What Does It Matter?

Last summer there was a water shortage in a town where I was visiting.

I happened to be chatting with my host, who is a noted man, while he was shaving, and I noticed how careful he was to use every little water.

"It seems sort of silly for you to be so conscientious," I remarked. "After all, the few drops that you conserve won't make any difference."

"They don't make any difference in the final result," he said, "but they make a lot of difference to me."

When he saw from my expression that I did not quite get his meaning, he proceeded to give me his philosophy of life.

He said that when he graduated from college, a quarter of a century ago, there was a great deal of popular emphasis upon so-called "social service."

Science had begun to introduce wonderful new inventions for increasing human happiness. Men were stirred by the hope of a quick millennium. Young people graduated with the notion that a few years of earnest effort would transform the world.

My friend was one of the most eager of the reformers. He organized, and voted, and agitated, and did all the things that he should. But nothing happened. The good candidates for whom he cast his vote were defeated. The good causes

made slow progress. Human nature showed a discouraging unwillingness to change.

"I went through a period of deep disillusionment," he said. "I thought to myself, what's the use of doing anything when one's single effort seems so futile?"

"One day while I was in this mood I discovered these words of Socrates:

"I, therefore, . . . consider how I may exhibit my soul before the judge in a healthy condition. Wherefore, disregarding the honors that most men value, and looking to the truth, I shall endeavor in reality to live as virtuously as I can; and when I die, to die so. And I invite all other men, to the utmost of my power; . . . to this contest, which, I affirm, surpasses all contests here."

"That flashed across my mind like a bolt of lightning," my friend continued. "It clarified everything."

"I realized that I am not responsible for the success or failure of any good cause. All that I am responsible for is my own best effort in that cause. Whether my vote be effective or not; whether the amount of water I can save will make any difference—these are not the questions."

"The only question is: Am I doing my best?"

"That discovery gave me great comfort," he concluded. "Maybe you could use it in one of your editorials?"

"Many thanks," I answered. "I can."

laboratories and now in use by some 70-odd shoe factories, fastens the sole to the upper without the use of tacks, pegs or stitches. It is said to be waterproof, flexible and permanent.

There will always be a few people who will pay fancy prices for hand-made goods, but the big money is made by those who find a better way to make things cheaper.

FISH

Fish ought to be the cheapest of all foods, instead of being one of the most expensive, as it is in all large cities and in towns away from the commercial fisheries. It is one

food crop which requires no planting or cultivation.

The reason for the high cost is the perishable nature of fish and the expense of keeping it iced. Experiments with the quick freezing of fish in carbon dioxide snow or "dry ice" indicate that the flavor can be preserved and deterioration prevented in a way which makes the cost of handling and shipping much lower than previously.

Before long fresh fish of the most popular food varieties will be available everywhere at a cost to compete with meat. But no fish ever bought in a market tastes half so good as the ones you catch yourself!

O. S. C. Says Poultry

Production Holding Own

In spite of the fact that poultry prices seem to have hit rock bottom during the past year, poultry production on the whole is more than holding its own with other Oregon farm enterprises, according to A. G.

Lunn, chief of the poultry department of the Oregon Experiment station.

"I do not know of any major branch of agriculture today that is paying the producer as well as the poultry business," Lunn said. "The poultryman who has good stock and enough of it can more than pay his basic cost of production, even though he may not get interest on investment."

The situation during the past year has emphasized more strongly than ever, Lunn believes, the importance of the size of the poultry flock. Where poultry constitutes the principal farm income a flock of not less than 1000 hens is essential. Small flock owners are just "out of luck" during such times of stress, he says.

Lunn believes that the lowest levels of egg and poultry prices have been reached that may be expected for at least a couple of years, and that with fewer eggs in storage and fewer birds being raised, the price of eggs this year will be an improvement over last. This, however, depends somewhat on general business conditions, he says.



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MIGRATION

There is a "back-to-the-land" movement actively in progress in the East. Within the past three months sixteen farms within five miles of my own have been sold to people who have been working in the factories in the industrial cities of Massachusetts.

I talked with one of these newcomers the other day. "I'm an electrician," he said. "When times are good I have a job in an electrical equipment factory. When times are bad I'm out of a job. We have been saving, my wife and I, to buy a house in town. Then we began to consider what good a town house would be to us if I didn't have a job. On the farm we can at least feed ourselves and our three children, and we're near enough to town so that when things pick up I can go back to my job and come home every night. I'm not a farmer, but my wife is country bred and I'm not afraid of work."

We are going to hear more of this sort of thing. In the old days the "landless man" was regarded as a social outcast. The only really independent man today is the one who can get his own living, in a pinch, from his own land.

HOUSES

I saw the beginning of a revolution the other day in Wilmington, Delaware. It is a house, a small, one-family house, the frame of which is made of pressed steel shapes. Two young men put the frame of the house together with bolts in a couple of days' time. It was as easy as a boy playing with one of the popular structural toys.

These amateur builders are using only materials which call for no skilled labor in completing their house. Factory-made roofing, siding, insulating material, wall-board and flooring, will give them, they say, a more substantial house than most, and at much lower cost than a house built in the usual manner. I heard of other experiments in factory-built homes. Engineers, architects and manufacturers are about ready to offer better homes at less money.

WORK

The five-day week for factory workers is already established in many large industries and in some of the building trades. It will not be long before nobody works on Saturday.

The eight-hour working day, for which the labor unions fought for so many years, seems about to be shortened. The Kellogg Company of Battle Creek is the first large concern to try the six-hour day. The factory runs twelve hours, in two shifts. There is no time out for meals. The company reports that even with an increase of one-eighth in the basic wage rate the overhead and operating cost per unit of production is lower than under the eight-hour plan.

Watch for the shortening of the working day by other industries.

SHOES

Shoes are cheaper than ever before, and the tendency is still downward.

At the same time, a fashionable Fifth Avenue custom shoemaker has recently raised his minimum price for a pair of ladies' shoes from \$75 to \$100 a pair!

The latest thing to make shoes cheaper is the glued-on sole. A new adhesive, developed in the DuPont

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