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MOTHER'S DAY

Turning back the pages of history to the much-maligned Middle Ages, it is discovered that the idea of dedicating one day each year especially to mother was not original with our generation. England of the 13th Century set aside the second Sunday of Lent as "Mothering Sunday." On that day it was the custom for exalted knights and lowly serfs to tread the homeward paths to visit their mothers, laden with gifts of gold, jewels, and food delicacies. When or why this delightful gift occasion vanished from the calendar nobody knows.

But it is known that it did not reappear until 1908. In that year, Miss Ann Jarvis, a Philadelphia Sunday School teacher, took up the burden of popularizing her private holiday, Mothers' Day. Her campaign was launched among local churchmen. She solicited their cooperation and got it. So enthusiastically did they respond that the idea was widespread among countless churchfolk from coast to coast.

Newspapers soon took notice. Editors commented in their columns. And gradually public opinion was molded behind the Mothers' Day movement. At that point, it was only natural that government recognition should soon follow.

In 1914, Congress passed a concurrent resolution requesting that Mothers' Day be given the status of a National holiday. And so, on May 8th, of that year, while the clouds of war were hovering ominously over Europe, President Woodrow Wilson, in happy contrast, issued a proclamation establishing this great holiday the second Sunday in May.

Since then, the popularity of Mothers' Day has spread like wildfire. It has reached into the heart of practically every son and daughter from coast to coast. In fact, surveys show that it ranks second only to Christmas as a gift-giving occasion. And there it's certain to remain.

It reaches the adult who may be bored or cycnical about a holiday or observance. It stirs every heart in proportion to his better nature. It touches a chord of sentiment that is firmly rooted. It is the day when one thinks again of his mother.

PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP FOR EDUCATION IN MARYLAND ASSURED

Annapolis,—Members of the State Department of Education, according to Dr. Albert S. Cook, State Superintendent of Schools, experienced "a thrill of delight" when they learned of the reappointment, for another term of seven years, of Tasker G. Lowndes of Cumberland as Chairman of the State Board of Education.

Writing to Governor Herbert R. O'Conor from the Eastern Shore, where he and other members of the Department attended a conference of High School Principals at Easton, Dr. Cook "expressed the appreciation of the members of the State Department of Education, for the Governor's recognition of the necessity of maintaining high standards in the Schools".

"Progressive and efficient leadership for education in Maryland", Dr. Cook wrote, "is now assured by you for another seven years. Mr. Lowndes has no patience with mediocrity or inefficiency in those chosen for positions of leadership".

One of the campaign pledges that Governor O'Conor stressed repeatedly was that he would not allow politics to touch the administration of the Public Schools, a pledge the fulfillment of which no one questions now, after the reappointment of Mr. Lowndes, a Republican, whose services to the cause of education in Maryland the Governor eulogized highly.

VALUE OF U. S. FARM LAND DECLINES

Reflecting lower prices of agricultural products, the value of American farmland declined 1.18 per cent. during the year ended March 1, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reports. The decline halted a six-year upward trend.

The bureau said the index of farm real estate values on March 1 stood at 84 per cent. of the 1912-14 level, compared with 85 per cent. on the same date last year. Despite the decline, the index was still about 15 per cent. above the so-called "depression" level of 1933.

The bureau said average per-acre values continued upward only in Ohio, West Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Montana, and Colorado.

OUT OF THE GOOD EARTH

J. E. Jones

In the Yesterdays of Discovery we note that Christopher Columbus carried the first grains of corn to Europe on his first return voyage. Later the Pilgrims came to Cape Cod on their way to Plymouth, and in their hungry days at what is now Provincetown some of them wandered to a place called "Corn Hill" and made the spot everlastingly famous because they found a kettle of Indian corn which they carried back to the Mayflower. They feasted—the recession was over, and they speedily got around the corner, and pursued freedom of religion, liberty and happiness at Plymouth.

Corn as we know it today averages 28.2 bushels to the acre and the corp raised in the United States annually yields from 2 million bushels upwards. In size the stalks grow from 2 feet high in the West Indies to more than 20 feet tall in the Corn Belt. The price has been running under 50 cents a bushel in the Chicago grain markets.

Corn is food. It still competes successfully for championship in corn meal, Johnnycake, spoon bread, mush and other foods, and in de luxe products decorates the grocery shelves in richly-labeled packages on which are printed the challenge that it is the best cereal in the world. Living creatures inculding cows, crows and hogs feed upon it and a wide variety of the by-products of corn are manufactured into starch, oil, glucose, corn syrup and the like.

Those are familiar facts well to remember about corn. Many famous statesmen have hailed from the Corn Belt, and they have always fought for this great product of their soil.

Then there is pop-corn of which World Fair prophets expect to sell 5 billion boxes, size 7 inches tall, 4 inches wide and 2 inches thick, at 10 cents a box—all in the months of Tomorrow. It will all be glorified with melted butter from the dairy belts; and millions will feast upon it.

To return to the Yesterdays for the nonce: We find a prophecy written by Jonathan Swift, back in Colonial times. Here it is:

"Whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together."

* * * *

Transportation has blazed the way for Amercan progress for a century, and it swung into high gear with the coming of motor vehicles which brought all foods to the markets at all times of the year—from somewhere and everywhere. But there is something new and rather thrilling in the promise that fresh orchids will be received every three days from Venezula, which promises to show a rare exhibit of beautiful flowers at the Fair.

* * * *

Grapefruit had not broken into American society at the turn of the present century. Now grapefruit is an important crop in Florida, California, Texas and many other states. The English served this fruit only in swell London eating places at 50 cents an order before the World War—but you can buy three of them in Washington stores for 10 cents this month, all because there has been an overproduction that has glutted the markets.

But progress marches on, and orange and grapefruit trees have been arranged at the Florida exhibit and they will bear two crops of fruit and bloom during the World's Fair. We ripen citrus fruits, and make certain of triumpts and progress for tomorrow.

Our great poet Longfellow knew his Yesterdays and had sound perspectives for our own Todays and Tomorrow: "Listen to voices in the upper air, nor lose thy simple faith in mysteries," he wrote.

Affected indifference to everything of current interest is a fad with some people.

HIGHWAY AND RAILWAY DIFFERENCES

When engineers started to build modern highways, they had before them the example of several generations of railway builders which they followed with suitable modifications, E. H. Holmes of the United States Department of Agriculture notes in a recent issue of Public Roads. The railway example was generally helpful as applied to limitation of grades and curves, economical balance in cutting and filling, and to some other features.

More recently, however, the road builders have been paying more attention to differences rather than similarities between railroad and highway problems. Railroads were built for planned movement and close control of traffic. The train dispatcher was boss, and directed passings and meetings of trains. On the highway, it is every driver for himself, with only minor checks. Traffic engineers have found that it does not help much to know that a certain stretch of highway would or could accommodate a certain number of cars if the drivers used it most efficiently.

To solve highway traffic problems the engineers find that what they need to know is actual facts such as: how drivers really do use a similar stretch of road; how the fast drivers pass the slow ones, and how much straightaway is needed for a safe passing; how many vehicles use the road in rush hours, and in off hours; how traffic in the opposite direction cuts down chances on passing, and how hills and curves prevent passing or make it dangerous.

Such facts can be gathered only on the highway. Current highway research is turning toward the invention and improvement of mechanical and electrical equipment for counting traffic, measuring speeds of vehicles, and analyzing the actual use that drivers make of representative sections of road. Several new devices are already in use and the engineers are using actual experience as a guide to planning safer and more efficient highways.

WORKERS BENEFIT BY MILK DRINKING

Two and a quarter million thirsty workers in 7,000 British factories are drinking milk at the rate of 8,500,000 gallons a year. That is one of the many facts reported in the League's survey of national nutrition policies.

Britian's milk-in-industry scheme has shown excellent results on the health of workers who "down tools" for a few minutes every day while they drink milk. The factories using the scheme report far fewer absentees, and milk retailers report no adverse effects on their sales. Cheap milk is also provided for hundreds of thousands of poor school children.

The League's survey reveals that governments all over the world are becoming increasingly nutrition-conscious. More governments are following the example of the United States and Norway, in helping the farmers' economy and building the poor man's health, by buying up surplus stocks of high-value nutritive foods and reselling at lower prices.

Throughout Europe and the Americas especially, governments are conductng campaigns for more milk, and cheap milk, for the poor.

Norway for example, last year alloted $210,000 for the provision of cheap milk and $57,000 for meat and bacon, for low-paid workers and their families. Hungary is placing nearly $500,000 at the disposal of the Home Office to provide free milk for mothers and babies.

More and more countries are setting up national nutrition committees which are concentrating on nutritional education, and their efforts are beginning to take effect also in the improvement of food production.

"TO MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK"

For more than 25 years, U. S. Presidents have unsuccessfully been trying to reorganize the executive departments of the Federal government. The plans of Taft, Wilson, Harding and Hoover all collapsed from opposition or neglect.

In 1938, Roosevelt's first reorganization plan suffered the same fate. It was crushed under the cries of "dictatorship." But last March, Congress finally approved a highly modified Reorganization Bill. It empowered the President to abolish or reshuffle 135 executive agencies and to name six executive assistants. Specifically exempted from reorganization were 21 boards, bureaus and commissions.

Purpose of the reorganization, the President said, was "to make democracy work" by improving the overall management, the allocation of departmental activities, and the management within each department. Moreover, he estimated that the move would save the government from $15,000,000 to $20,000,000 in administrative expenses.

You can tell when the wife is about ready to buy a new easy chair. It happens at the peake of your affection for the old one.

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Canada Now Ships Grain to West Ports

Reasons Given for Shift Are Many and Varied.

WINNIPEG.—A survey of figures characteristic of this year's routing of western Canadian grain crops reveals that the Port of St. John, New Brunswick, and to a lesser extent Fort William have been the chief sufferers in this year's vastly increased movement of overseas grain through West Coast ports—Vancouver and New Westminster.

Reason advanced for the flow of grain to the West are many and varied. Grain experts point out that high rail rates to unfrozen ports in the East close late movements as before. Other factors, however, such as an increased market in the Orient and more favorably located stores—in regard to this winter's market—have netted the western ports a vast increase in grain trade.

Although experts are careful to point out that comparative shipping figures between this winter and last do not give the full picture of the change in routing of grain, they nevertheless are clear indications of the trend.

The main argument against comparative figures between the last two western Canadian crops is that the 1938-39 yield was a normal crop—whereas the 1937-38 crop was not.

However, figures released by the board of grain commissioners at Winnipeg give at least a partial indication of why eastern shippers are becoming alarmed by the trend.

Officials point out that re-routing of the 1938-39 bumper crop to the West coast caused shipments to St. John to drop more than 400,000 bushels during one week in January, compared to the corresponding period last year. Other eastern Canadian ports, however, such as Montreal, Sorel, Three Rivers, maintained shipments considerably above identical periods in 1937-38.

Grain figures taken over a longer period serve to emphasize the steady drop of shipments cleared through St. John, and the corresponding increase at West coast ports.

Early Communication

On February 14, 1859, Oregon was admitted to the Union by act of congress. News of this action was eagerly looked for in Oregon, and particularly in Salem, which was to be the capital of the new state. It did not reach there, however, until 29 days after the passage of the act. The news was transmitted to St. Louis by telegraph and was carried from there by Overland mail to San Francisco, arriving on March 10. It was conveyed by steamer to Oregon City, reaching there on March 15. Late the same day the long awaited news was carried by a mounted messenger into Salem, where its arrival was enthusiastically acclaimed. Thus four distinct methods of communication had been employed in relaying the news across the continent to its destination.

It's all right for the doctor to say we have a cold instead of the flu, but we don't appreciate his sticking that word "mere" in front of it.

Diminutive Lizard Fatal To Black Widow Spider

SAN DIEGO.—In the San Diego alligator lizard, harmless but ferocious-looking reptile, zoologists of the University of California at last believe they have found a means of exterminating the dreaded black widow spider whose bite results in illness and sometimes death.

The diminutive lizard, which rarely attains a size in excess of 10 inches, is a deadly enemy of the black widow and has a big appetite for the poisonous spider and its eggs.

Experiments conducted by Raymond B. Cowles, University of California zoologist, indicate that introduction of the tiny lizards in numbers would be a means of controlling the menace of the black widow.

Cowles said the lizards had been turned loose in areas affected with the hour-glass spiders and that in a short time the poisonous insects disappeared.

New Device Speeds Up Making of Cotton Cloth

SCHENECTADY.—The manufacture of cotton cloth at speeds faster than the eye can follow is forecast with a new adaptation of the "electric eye."

A photoelectric cell mechanism developed by General Electric engineers to detect flaws in cloth manufacture is said to permit finishing speeds as high as 140 yards per second—100 yards faster than with manual inspection.

The device is designed to locate misaligned threads, start motors of machinery to correct the flaws, and retest the finished product.

Engineers explained that it is necessary to realign threads which have gone askew, especially when cloth is to be printed, to prevent distortion of the design.

The cell's designers believed the new device also may be adjusted to other materials to speed production.

Smiths of Georgia Weary Of Name After 100 Years

ATLANTA.—The Georgia senate approved a bill to change the name of the Smith boys to MacNabb, and thereby hangs a tale.

It seems that 100 years ago the Smith's progenitor, a hardy Scotsman named MacNabb, eloped to America with an Irish lass. The girl's father followed the couple, intent on breaking up the marriage. The newlyweds, advised of the irate father's approach, changed their name to Smith and moved to the Carolinas.

Smith remained the family name until the present generation, represented by Malcolm Smith, news editor of the Newnan Herald, and Herbert Watson Smith, steel company employee in Newnan, decided the opposition had died down. They acted through the legislature to revive the Clan MacNabb.

Fresh Air Recipe

FREMONT, OHIO.—Ninety-year-old Mrs. Mary Warner has a prescription for longevity—and it's cheap. Plenty of fresh air, she says, is all that's required.

Yes, Poland and Rumania have guns. But what good is a gun if your enemy has the only factory that makes ammunition to fit it?

Grant of Patents Began With Greeks Years Ago

The grant of patents for inventions began long before the Christian era, Frank E. Barrows of New York says in a symposium of the American Chemical Society on American Patent Practice and Procedure.

"The earliest patent system of which we have authentic record was in the Greek province of Sybaris and related to inventions of new foods," it is pointed out. "Sybaris was destroyed in 510 B. C., and with it the record of its experience with a patent system, but the Greek historian Phylarchus, writing in the Third century B. C., tells us about the provisions of the system. It provided that any cook or caterer who invented an unusual and peculiar dish was entitled to a monopoly of this new invention for a period of one year.

"Only the inventor was entitled to the profit to be derived from its manufacture during this period, and the purpose was not only to protect and reward the inventor but to encourage others to labor at excelling in that field. Thus we have in the Sybaris patent law of 25 centuries ago the fundamentals of our modern patent systems.

"For practical purposes the earliest of our modern systems is that of Great Britain, established by the English Statute of Monopolies in 1623, more than three centuries ago. Our own patent system is next in point of time. It was established in 1790, shortly after the adoption of the Federal Constitution.

"Even before that time patents had been granted by some of the American colonies. The adoption of patent systems has spread and practically all nations have patent systems."

Strange Tropical Plant May Grow 60 Feet High

A strange tropical plant sometimes attaining tree size in Florida is the screw pine, which in its native Madagascar may reach 60 feet in height, writes Hugo H. Schroeder in Nature magazine. The base of the plant is held up on stilt-like aerial roots that grow in a cluster. The long sword-shaped leaves grow up to three feet in length; they are grouped in a spiral twist, quite different from the average leaf arrangement.

This plant, as well as other forms of the species, is extensively grown as a pot plant for home decoration, and conservatories, able to take care of good-sized plants under glass, show various species to good advantage. Some varieties have striped or variegated leaves, while others are unmarked.

It is called screw pine because of two different characteristics: The spiral twist of the leaves is responsible for the first half of the name, while "pine" was adopted because of the resemblance of the fruit to a rounded pine cone. These fruits grow to a diameter of six inches or more.

In its native regions the plant is useful for various purposes. The fruits are eaten for food, the fiber of the roots and leaves is used for making hats, ropes, baskets, bags and matting, and paper is made from the leaves.

No wonder Hitler's actions surprise everybody. He is doing what he said he would do.