

A LETTER FROM EDITOR SHIPHERD

The many friends of Editor H. H. Shipherd of the Hub, who has been for some time in the Y. M. C. A. work overseas, will be glad to hear from him through the columns of this paper.

We always take great pleasure in printing whatever we get from him in the way of news and therefore we give you this, which was written by him especially for the Hub.

A. P. O. 767, France, Jan. 8, '19
Mr. Leon Strang, Editor:

Dear Sir:—The work I am engaged in in the interest of the Y. M. C. A. and for the benefit of our boys, has been keeping me so busy there is little time to give to writing letters to friends or even for the Hub.

I desire to send a little that may interest our readers, of things as seen by myself here as I pass along the streets or through the country.

Clean Meat Markets

One of the most pleasing sights you see in this large city of Nantes is the meat markets. The shops are small ones almost invariably, but are so neat and clean. The walls are mostly lined with white enamel or some other clean covering. The butchers are apt to be dressed in white or in "Mother Hubbards" that look very attractive. The tables on which the meat is displayed are kept clean and everything about the place looks clean. There is seemingly plenty of meat to be had and the prices along about the same as we pay at home.

The chickens in this section appear to have the color of the people—black. I have seen very few other than black and very few French people who do not have jet black hair.

Prices of Goods in General

I have been noting some of the prices on goods of a standard character. In the way of groceries some articles would seem high to you, no doubt, and to us. Eggs are hard to get at any price but sell at about \$1.30 a dozen; potatoes average around \$3 a bushel, and a few other articles in accordance; but in the line of many vegetables there is such an abundance that the prices are more reasonable.

It is in the dry goods stores the people are the harder hit, for if you want to buy a little sheeting you will be asked for yard-wide material about ninety cents. Common calico or gingham brings about eighty cents a yard; a cheap cotton flannel costs around \$1.

When you come to ladies wraps I believe you can do better here than in the states. Twenty dollars will buy a very neat appearing cloak. And in men's suits it is noted the prices are very reasonable also. In the matter of jewelry prices have evidently been sent away up to what they used to be on account of the sales to the boys of the United States.

Washing Methods of the French Housewife

Perhaps in no way does one notice so great a contrast between nations as in the methods employed here by the French in the washing of their clothing. Where it be in the little village or on the farm, or here in the city where a large river passes thru, the one way used mostly is to go to the water and wash,—never to bring the water to your house. The farmer has a little pool of water near his house in many instances, where the cattle are watered and where the family wash is done. In many instances, as we have driven through the farming communities we have noted that there was more or less of a green scum on the water. Here in the city the river is roily a good bit of the time and never looks very clean. And yet in this river a great many washings are done. The most common method seems to be to take the clothes to the edge of the water where there is a convenient masonry ap-

proach reaching to the level of the water, at whatever stage it may be. In this matter of easy access to the water I never saw it so conveniently arranged. A woman will kneel down on the ground or masonry work and begin. A wooden paddle about six inches square with a two-foot wooden handle, a piece of soap and the river completes her outfit. By pounding, rubbing and dipping in the cold water the work is accomplished. A much more back-breaking job than the ordinary United States wash tub to say nothing of the cold water and the out-of-door work. Another method employed along the river, that seems to be more practical is that used in boats moored to the side of the river. These boats are possibly fifty feet long by twenty-five feet wide and are covered with a roof. In them big boilers are placed, beneath which are fires to heat water. The first described methods are also used in addition to the boiling water except that the women stand up to their washboards which are a sort of leaning board placed on the edge of the boat. The mystery to most of us is how they get the clothes so clean by using only the river water. Nantes has one of the finest water supplies in France and the service is excellent. But apparently comparatively few make use of it for washing purposes in their homes.

Very Little Fuel for Heating

Rooms or houses in this city are seldom heated very much. Fuel is high. Soft coal is selling around \$25 a ton. The people make a composition for fuel that is pressed in large bricks for furnaces, and what looks like large eggs is made for the smaller of the stoves. Wood is seldom used for fuel. No trees are allowed to be cut down except with permission from proper authorities, and all the branches are carefully saved and sold to be used for coarse brooms, etc. You will see many a quick growing tree that looks like an old grape vine that has been trimmed back for years and years. If you go into a hardware store to buy a cook stove one of the advantages pointed out to you is that the fire pot is just large enough so that it will do the cooking properly without taking much fuel to run it. Many bedrooms and living rooms are heated by a little stove set in a fireplace, nine-tenths of the heat of which goes up the chimney. But the people do not heat their rooms much. They seem to be used to going without heat.

A Wonderful Garden Spot Around Here

We in America would find it difficult to cultivate our land as thoroughly as do the French people hereabouts. As you drive from this city to the seashore and pass through the farming territory you are greatly impressed with the economy in the use of the soil. Every bit is cultivated as far as possible. What would surprise you fully as much is the fact that the house and the barn are one. The front yard and the barnyard are all the same and the level of the yard is the height of the living rooms. And the wooden shoes worn are found to be just the thing. They are slipped off on entering the house.

Today, as I write, the cattle are grazing in the fields where the grass is growing in abundance. Vegetables are grown in profusion and there are many kinds I never saw before. The fences on the farms are mostly hedges from which are also gathered a good supply of twigs to make baskets from, brooms and a hundred other things and uses.

I had the pleasure, late in November, to pick from one of these hedges some of that delightful holly that we in the states use for holiday time, only the kind I got was not flattened out the way it is when we get it. Many of the barns of the farmers are made of straw over a wooden framework. The roofs oftentimes are growing a good crop of grass. The houses are all of stone with dif-

ferent stone trimmings or red brick. Slate roof is the only roofing material you see. Nearly every window sill is covered with zinc. With the same amount of rain in the States anything but metal would not stand the weather for long.

Have Seen Glenn Griffith and Leone Brown

Perhaps no greater pleasure has come to me since I left the United States than in the last few weeks, to meet first Leone Brown and then Glenn Griffith.

Leone came into the hut one day and coming up to the canteen window, held out his hand with a glad cry and said if the counter was not so wide he would put his arms around my neck and kiss me, he was so glad to see me. I found him rugged and healthy and from what he told me of his work I judged he was nicely provided for. He was in the hut a few times and told me some news from home and I also told him some. He may now be on the way home for all I know, for he intimated that his bunch might be going that way beforelong.

Glenn has been having a most wonderful time. He has been with a small, selected bunch of men called the "sanitary train" and they have been all over the country of France from one end to the other, and he has not been sick a day and never looked more healthy to me. At the time he was sleeping right out of doors night after night, with others, rain or no rain and said he had not slept in a bed since he left me. His bunch were at one time slated to parade in New York City on Christmas day, but he told me later there was no telling when he would be home. He and I had a good visit in my room exchanging the news.

The City of Nantes lies beautifully and is quite hilly in places as the streets run from the river front, but the other parts are more level. The streets are well paved and the trolley system is rather complete and well handled. One of the peculiarities of the system is the matter of hauling passengers on the cars. People are allowed to stand as many as can get on either platform but are not allowed to stand up inside. When the inside seats are filled the excess passengers have to remain standing on the platform. I believe that is a good stunt as it always leaves the aisle free to get in and out through. The fare on the cars is only four cents and soldiers travel at half fare.

Foot Warmers

Passing by a store one day I saw some curious little wooden boxes and stopped to inquire what they were for; I was told they were foot warmers, cheap little wooden boxes about six inches high, ten inches long and six inches wide. The top is made of lath, put on as you would put it on a chicken coop. A hot stone or brick is placed in the box and "my lady" while seated at her work "plants" her feet on the box. Some have handles like a pail, with which to carry them about.

Miscellaneous Notes

Traveling through this part of France, one is caught wondering how it is that all look so near alike. The women wear their hair alike in most cases, parted in the middle, combed down smooth and done up low in the back. I have seen scarcely anything but black cloth for clothes; no bright colors; for overalls the men wear a loose flowing jumper reaching to or below the knees. Very occasionally one notes a young woman who has had the courage to do her hair up a la American, and she must be the object of criticism of her neighbors.

I am inclined to believe that the expression, "a dog's life" originated here. The dog is as much in use as the horse for drawing vehicles; much material is handled on push carts, only here they are pulled instead. One or two dogs are crudely harnessed and aid in pulling the load. More women than men use the carts. Fre-

quently the dog will do all the pulling. They are well trained and work very hard. The carts are practical, durable and convenient.

I will leave off here for this time:

Respectfully,
H. H. SHIPHERD

Can Farmers Go it Alone?

In Washington right now, there is a continuous hearing going on with the Food Administration upon the price to be paid for butter and butter fat for the next six months or year ahead. This will be followed upon other milk products.

The manufacturers and dealers are interested, organized and on deck to look after their interests. They are protected by sur profits fixed by the government, but are chiefly interested in the amount of business they will do—lower prices giving them a larger volume of business and consequently greater profits. The government is interested in getting these products as low as possible for the army and navy and for allied governments, thus leaving the farmers to stand the brunt of the low prices.

The farmers, except through their organizations, are not represented as these hearings.

The government maintains that because farmers have not gone out of business during the last year, their business has been prosperous and that last year's price should prevail, notwithstanding the recent advances. The government maintains that feed is cheaper and conditions no worse for dairying, etc.

The representatives of the milk producers who are here and have been struggling for a price that will give to farmers at least their cost for milk and butter fat feel the need of a general organization of milk producers over the entire country.

If the industry is to succeed or thrive it must organize. Farmers can no longer "go it alone" in these days. The National Milk Producers' Federation now comprising all the greater associations of the country, with hundreds of thousands of members, governing every branch of the industry in the country from New England to the Pacific coast, propose to extend these organizations for the protection of all of their members and if possible to preserve the industry.

They believe that the farmers should form locals everywhere no matter whether they sell whole milk, cream, butter or cheese. Milk producers should send to the National Milk Producers' Association for a form for organization and get into the game. This is not a money-making scheme; it is solely productive and protective for the farmer.

The National Milk Producers' Federation is attempting to save farmers from the evils that are being inflicted upon them thru the sale of worthless and deleterious products which are mixed with feeds and are being sold at excessively high prices by certain mixed feed dealers. It very strongly favors the enactment of suitable legislation to remedy the situation.

This organization is acting in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture in making its plan for further organization.

Secretary-Treasurer is George Brown, of Sycamore, Illinois. All communications should be addressed to Charles A. Lyman, Assistant Secretary, 615 Woodward Building, Washington, D. C.

MILO D. CAMPBELL,
President, Coldwater, Mich.

Save the Wood Ashes

Those who are now using open fireplaces or are burning wood in the old oak stove, should look ahead to next year's gardening, and save the ashes to be used as fertilizer. It is reported that the average composition of wood ashes derived from hard and soft wood timber and produced in the household fires is about five per-

cent potash, 2 1-2 per cent phosphoric acid and 35 per cent lime equivalent to 70 per cent lime carbonate. However, the composition of ashes varies widely. It will range from 1 1-2 to more than ten per cent of potash, 1 1-2 to five cent of phosphoric acid and from 20 to 55 per cent of lime.

Causes of Variation

This variation may result from the kind of material which the ash is derived from. The small stems of trees and bushes, skins of the fruits and other waste parts of fruits and plants are rich in potash. For this reason the ash from the household garbage is especially valuable. The ordinary commercial fertilizer ashes on the market are generally much lower in analysis than the average given above. The purchase of ashes should be based upon an actual analysis, if any large sum is involved.

Again, the composition of ashes depends upon the kind of fire from which it was produced. Intense and prolonged heat results in the loss of the fertilizer constituents, especially the potash. For this reason, ashes from kilns and furnaces are often from one-third to one-half lower in fertilizer value than those from household fires and a larger proportion of the constituents is insoluble. A cord of ordinary mixed hard and soft wood will weigh approximately 3,150 pounds and will produce in a large furnace about 20 pounds of ash. In a household fire it will produce from thirty to forty pounds of ash. A bushel of ashes will weigh about 48 pounds.

Coal ashes have relatively little fertilizing value but they may be an advantage in certain soils; they are particularly useful to assist in breaking up a stiff clay.

Sending Men Into Service

In the past two weeks the recruiting station of western New York has sent 103 men into the service. Weekly reports indicate that the Buffalo or Western New York district, has been engaged in a lively campaign, and has been surpassed only by the New York district and the Boston district, which comprises very nearly all of New England. In these days New York City and her stations gave 145 men to the navy and Boston 125.

Lieut. Commander Chas. F. Ulrich, in charge of the Western New York district, has made every arrangement so as to cover the territory that the message to the navy will reach every man out of a job. Sub-recruiting stations have been opened at Rochester, Syracuse, Utica, Elmira, and Watertown, New York, and at Erie, Pa. A traveling party of three men is now on the road, holding meetings in smaller towns and cities.

Transportation from any town in the district to the nearest recruiting station will be sent to applicants writing to Buffalo. The district includes four counties in Pennsylvania, Warren, McKean, Erie and Crawford. Numbers of men have availed themselves of the transportation offer.

Apprentice electricians, and machinists and men practiced in 53 other trades, are being enlisted. Men having a few months' experience in a machine shop, or with dynamo, switchboards or methods of wiring may be enlisted for the schools at Charleston, S.C. and Hampton Roads, Va. Promotion to the rank of petty officer, with increased pay and allowances, is assured at the end of the course in either school.

The best jobs of their sort in the world are waiting for the men who are now hanging around the doors of employment agencies. Thirty days furlough with pay will be given every returned soldier, sailor or Marine who re-enlists.

General Jump in Feeds

The price of feeds in general advanced somewhat during December, so we understand from the reports that come from the

New York State College of agriculture at Ithaca.

The greatest advance has been in the price of wheat mill feeds, and the removal of all specific maximum margins on wheat mill than ten per cent of potash, 1 1-2 to five cent of phosphoric acid and from 20 to 55 per cent of lime. However, the permissible annual net profit to any feed dealer is six per cent on his total gross sales and this profit continues to be calculated on sales of all feeding stuffs, including wheat mill feed.

A reasonable advance in wheat mill feeds is justifiable but anybody making unreasonable advances in wheat mill feeds makes his own interests as well as himself liable to prosecution under the Le er act of August 10th last.

The price of sacks dropped a great deal in December. Feed dealers have been selling feed in second-hand sacks not to exceed three dollars a ton over the bulk price and one quotation charges the sacks at twelve cents apiece, returnable within 30 days at that figure.

Attention is called to the fact that many dairymen are feeding their young pregnant heifers on roughage alone. It seems to the state college workers that this is a poor practice. Even with feed at the present prices, it is suggested that young pregnant heifers not yet two years old ought to have from two to six rounds of concentrates a day in addition to the roughage. The reason for this is to get size on these animals. Roughages will not put sufficient size and fat on them to grow, produce young and yield as they can or as they should in the first season of lactation.

Good Butter Sells Readily

The home butter maker who is that the trade wants a uniform and neat appearing product. The butter should be colored, salted, worked, and packed in a systematic, business-like way.

Among the essential items that should not be overlooked by the home butter maker, according to the dairy department of the New York State College of Agriculture are the following:

1. All utensils should be carefully washed and after being sealed thoroughly, should be placed in a dustless and flyless atmosphere. More harm than good is done by the old custom of placing the pails, dippers and other utensils in the sun, for not more than once in a thousand times are the utensils placed where dust and flies do not lodge on them.

2. Use good judgment in keeping the milk clean.

3. Skim or separate a cream that will test about thirty per cent fat. If too thin, it will not churn easily.

4. Add about one quart of buttermilk to ten quarts of cream to sour it. Hold the cream at a temperature of about seventy degrees F. until it has a mild acidity.

5. Churn at such a temperature that the churning process will require from thirty minutes to three-quarters of an hour. In small churns the necessary temperatures are usually from 58 to 65 degrees F. The churns should be stopped when the granules are about the size of a kernel of corn, and then wash with about as much water as there was cream at a temperature of from 52 to 56 degrees F. Remove the churn two or three times and drain it. Then repeat the washing. The purpose of the washing is to carry away the buttermilk on which bacteria live. This improves the keeping properties of the butter.

7. Salt and work the butter. It is much easier to distribute the salt when the butter is rather plastic than when it is cold and hard. Therefore observe temperature control. Work the butter until experience tells you that the mot-tles will not appear.

8. Pack carefully scalded and cooled jar or other container with the butter in it. If the butter is sold one pound prints are