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DEAR WHEAT

Highest in Napoleonic Wars

(BY T. S. OPIE, B.A.)

"While man cannot live by bread alone, he cannot go on living, even a good life if he really fall short of bread."

Mankind, owing to economy of attention, becomes aware of the shoe only when it pinches. But shoes can be discarded, and so can the majority of the objects of human consumption except wheat. Variations in the price of wheat have little or no effect on the demand. Hence the demand for wheat has been characterised as inelastic. Whereas if the price of motor cars decreased 50 per cent, probably the number of purchasers would increase 400 per cent.

A slight falling off in the wheat supply means high prices disproportionate to the scarcity. To persons existing on the so-called subsistence level such upward movements in the price of the staff of life cause hardships ranging from deprivation of comforts to deprivation of necessities. Bread prices, according to some of the older economists, were thus an index of the social condition of labor at any period.

Fortunately violent fluctuations are not frequent nowadays. Improvements in the means of transport have made the wheat market world-wide so that scarcity in one country may be offset by a bumper harvest in another.

At one time, however, during the late war the price of British wheat rose to 10/5 a bushel while bread brought an average price of 11d. a 4-lb. loaf, although these prices may seem high, they appear almost insignificant beside those reached during the Napoleonic wars. In October, 1812, wheat rose to 21/1 a bushel, with bread raising power of money was And the purchase than in 1917! Wheat at greater in 1812 and 1/11 would have been 24/2 and bread 17. At no time in the history of the cereal have such prices been exceeded.

Wheat supplies from Russia were cut off by the late war. This also happened during the Crimean war in 1853-56, when wheat rose to 9/4 a bushel and bread to 1/4. But if the price index number for 1917 be applied to these figures, 16/4 and 2/4 are the prices in terms of modern purchasing power.

Compared with the two great wars of the 19th century, consumers of bread in the recent war can think themselves lucky that they were not living in the "good old days."

Professor Horace Lamb, F.R.S., who was Professor of Mathematics at the University of Adelaide from 1875 until 1885, when he was appointed to a similar chair at Owens College, Manchester, has recently been awarded the Copley Medal—the highest distinction granted by the Royal Society (London). The medal is given exclusively for great discoveries or great generalizations in science. Professor Lamb has gained it for his researches in molecular physics. Among other eminent men of science who have received the Copley are Robert Brown (the great botanist), Charles Darwin, Huxley, J. D. Hooker, Frankland (the chemist), and Lord Kelvin.

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The Rupert Brooks literary prize of £25 for 1923, which was offered for the best one-act play written in Australia and New Zealand, has been won by Miss Millicent Armstrong, of Clean Hills, Gunning New South Wales. There were more than 100 competitors. The judges—Professor T. Jolley Smith, (Melbourne), Professor Archibald Strong (Adelaide), and Mr. Gregan McMahon (Sydney)—regarded the winning play, entitled "Frought," as possessing literary and dramatic merit of a high order.

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THE NEWS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1924.

FAITH IN THE LEAGUE

(By Professor Coleman Phillipson.)

There are many Australians who cannot set their minds at rest in regard to their country's security and protection under the provisions and organisation of the League of Nations. They point to their defenceless and vulnerable position in the Pacific, and ask how it is possible in these circumstances to maintain with certainty and permanence the White Australia policy, to which, undoubtedly, the vast majority of Australians are indissolubly wedded.

There is a tendency to depreciate the establishment of the League of Nations, to question its ability to safeguard the great Australian national aspiration. Not infrequently one hears the desire expressed that we might revert to the old pre-war conditions of unlimited armaments and British naval supremacy in the form of the two-Power standard. This implies a wish to revert to the old age of warfare, when it was considered as the panacea for all international ills, as the "ultima ratio" of kings and dynasties, which might be brought into operation on the least pretext. It implies, too, scepticism concerning the League's effectiveness to preserve international peace.

The League and Peace

The League has already justified its existence. It has directly settled several serious international differences and indirectly has contributed to the adjustment of others, such as the recent Italo-Greek crisis.

There is no doubt that the existence of the League, if it will not prevent all wars in the future, will lessen the chances of war and make peace more certain than ever it was before. The Covenant does much to liberate the world of nations from the bondage of barbarism, and to remove people farther from the valley of the shadow of death.

Let only the League be the means of bringing together the representatives of the different countries of the world on a friendly basis and settling satisfactorily this or that dispute which may arise, and a sense of confidence and security will thus grow up which will create the peace habit. The existence of a peaceful world on an enduring basis really depends on the creation of a deep and sincere spirit of peace in all peoples and in all sections of every people, on a conscientious desire everywhere and always for fairness, honor, and justice, and above all on a firmly rooted disposition to observe and submit readily to the law established and to the decisions pronounced by such an authoritative tribunal as the Permanent Court of International Justice.

Belief in Ideals

The League will certainly do much to foster such spirit, desire, disposition, and habit. Before every nation regarded, and could hardly help regarding, under the old regime, every other nation as a potential enemy. With the establishment of the League every nation is invited to regard, and has excellent opportunities of regarding, every other nation as a partner in the society of States and as a potential friend, if not as a real friend in the full significance of the term.

From being a possible means of preventing war, the League may well become, as it is hoped, a great living organ also in the peaceful relationships of States, and so may contribute greatly to the realisation of a wonderful dream—the brotherhood of mankind.

Despite the various troubles that still exist in certain parts of the world, there are signs in many quarters of the dawning of an age of a new humanism, implying a clearer recognition of the truest and highest interests of human life, a growing belief that mere material possessions—the superficial trappings of life to which so many have unworthily succumbed—are after all not an adequate substitute for the intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual interests of humanity. These supreme interests of mankind can be properly cultivated and promoted only when the world is at peace, and when there is no fear of the mailed fist of this nation or the aggressive ambition and tortuous diplomacy of that nation.

Vision and Cynicism

It is the easiest thing in the world for anyone to indulge in careless cynicism or self-complacent scepticism. One who has surrendered himself to the sinister doctrines of Machiavellianism or the brutal conclusions of the so-called "realpolitik" is, of course, prone to sneer at the generous ideals set forth by ardent and far-seeing minds. But it is as easy to be a scoffer or to stand aloof as it is to be a destroyer.

Surely it is far the better part of man to devote himself to build and to join others in building and preserving a beautiful structure. To be sure, this is not merely an honorable and noble task from the point of view of high human ideals, but it is a task that will also result in solid and even material benefits to all, present and future generations alike. Nothing truer has ever been said than this—where there is no vision the people perish.

The conflict between brute force and idea has been frequent. In the end idea has always triumphed. Those who sought to crush truth and right and vision by means of the cup of hemlock or the crucifix or the stake or the rack have vanished from the earth for ever, and their memory is held up to obloquy; while their immortal victims have exerted and will continue to exert a potent influence on mankind, and will be remembered for ever with love and veneration.

Let us therefore continue our faith in the League, and see that it grows up straight and strong. If we do so, and succeed even a little in advancing the interests of peace and helping to remove the old nightmare of bloodshed and destruction, we shall rejoice in the evening of our life that we have contributed to the bringing about of this great consummation.

"IN THE BLOOD"

Politics Attract Dr. Basedow

PARTY SYSTEM CRITICISED

Dr. Herbert Basedow, M.A., B.Sc., attributes his decision to try for political honors to the fact that it is in the blood.

His father entered the Assembly nearly 48 years ago as member for Barossa, the district for which he will be a candidate. Later his father served that constituency in the Legislative Council. He was Minister of Education in the Morgan Government. Dr. Basedow gathers confidence from the fact that his father topped the poll on each occasion.

"Although my professional pursuits and private inclinations are all that a man could desire," Dr. Basedow said, "I feel that I have arrived at that time of life when one should take more active interest in the doings and progress of the country which has nursed one from the cradle onward. That is why I have made up my mind to contest the electorate of Barossa in the interests of the Country Party. If I could have come out as an Independent I should have preferred it."

"The party system is the curse of present-day legislation, because in the turmoil of the bitter political warfare that is waged the question of the country's good is often relegated to a place in the background. Under the system, moreover, we do not get the best men to represent the different communities, and I think I might add that the representative men of any party which happens to be in the majority are apt to be less careful and therefore less efficient than they would have to be under the non-party system."

"Only a decade or two ago a Government, if it did not keep its wits about it, would not know whether it would survive a debate from one day's end



Dr. H. Basedow,

Who will contest Barossa in the interests of the Country Party.

to the other. Those were the days of the survival of the fittest, when true manhood and effective statesmanship came to the fore. I must admit that in this regard a Coalition Government, such as that in control of Commonwealth affairs at the present time, has something in its favor; one party is a check on the other, and each keeps the other on the qui vive.

PARTY EVILS.

"The man who would purify our representative system from party evils will merit the respect and everlasting obligations of his fellow-countrymen. There is no doubt over-legislation, combined with the daily increasing industrial disputes, is seriously affecting the productivity of the land. Vigorous and primary production is the keynote to an attractive immigration policy. Australia with the capacity to produce unlimited quantities of meat, wool, wheat, wine, fruit, and minerals should not have to go begging for migrants."

"Subsequent to a visit to the Northern Territory to examine a new mineral deposit of great promise I shall begin my campaign. It is regrettable that the Liberal Party could not come

AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION.

English Professor's Comments.

LONDON, January 3.

Addressing the Classical Association on his recent visit to Australia, Professor J. W. Mackail, of Oxford University, stressed the desirableness of an interchange of such visits. He declared that the trip had made him realize acutely that Britain had much to learn from the dominions. Dealing with Australian universities, he expressed the opinion that the arts faculty suffered risk of becoming a mere faculty for training teachers. It would be a thousand pities if it became particularized, like agricultural or mining. Intellectual trade unionism, he added, was the greatest of all dangers threatening education generally, because it was most pernicious in its influence.

Referring to Queensland, Professor Mackail stated that he had been universally assured that the policy of Labour Governments was to help universities. He considered that Australia was in advance of Britain in regard to the encouragement of classics and secondary schools, and he had found less of the overcrowded curriculum which impeded concentration of effort in Britain.

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The Rev. E. S. Kiek, M.A., B.D., Principal of Parkin College, has been appointed lecturer in modern history at the Adelaide University.