OVER THE HEARTHSTONE

Sitting back in a cozy arm chair with one's feet on the fender, it is interesting to muse during a quiet evening upon the history of the fireside.

Coal was first burned in England in 1245, but Edward I believed very strongly in the good old-fashioned logfires, and by Royal Proclamation forbade the use of coal on the ground that its smoke soiled the air. This king of prejudices had a short way with subjects who disobeyed his royal commands, and, according to a record found among the archives in the Tower, for more than a hundred years thereafter coal was in general use only in the North of England.

The Crofter's Hearrt

The first fires were made on the floor, within a small square of bricks, the smoke escaping — eventually — through a hole in the roof. To this day in certain parts of the highlands and north of Scotland, where only peats are burnt, this primitive method is followed. The writer has been in the "but" and "ben" of an old thatched croft on the moors of Scotland, and spoken to the great-grandmother who has lived therein for more than seventy years(she is ninety-six years of age now, and alert and active), and this delightful old residenter has declared that only once during the whole of that period has the kitchen fire (in the middle of the floor) required to be lit afresh—and that was about forty-seven years ago after a snow storm. The fire had been lit for the "housewarming" when she entered with her bridegroom had been extinguished owing to the heavy snowfall through the hole in the roof! It is the custom in certain parts of the highlands to put on a couple of peats every night before retiring. These smolder till the morning, when the peat ash is stirred up; more peats are then added, and soon there is a cheerful blaze to boil the big iron kettle which is ever on the hob.

Very few cottages are now left which still have the fire in the middle of the room. Generally in the crofter's kitchen in small thatched cottages, and also on many of the more substantial farm steads of the old type, ample hearth accommodation has been provided. It is not uncommon to see comfortably-sized recesses built inside the hearth and on either side of the fire where the "guid-wife" and her "man" sit after the day's work is done, surrounded by their "bairns," very much after the manner depicted by Robbie Burns in his epic of Scottish country life—"The Cottar's Saturday Night." Blocks of hardened clay or stone, raised from twelve to eighteen inches above the ground, make cozy seats for hardy folk! At all hours of the day and night it is the invincible rule that the large stockpot remains suspended over the fire. And no wonder this rule is so well observed, for it would be difficult to find a place elsewhere in the quaint abode to conveniently stow so cumbersome an object.

Henry VIII and a Highbacked Chair

In castles and in some of the very old houses of quality, both in England and Ireland as well as in Scotland, a brick or stone dais at the hearth, raised a few inches above the floor, may still be seen. Chairs or stools were placed thereon, and there the gentry sat endeavoring to warm themselves during the cold winter evenings. A large and clumsily constructed flue took off the smoke. The drafts were appalling, and it was in order to try and combat them that high-backed chairs and settees were devised. It is related that so exquisite was Henry VIII's sense of values that he gave the revenue of a building which he had confiscated, to an attentive subject who placed a high-backed chair before the fire for him, at a house at which he was a guest, so skillfully that His Majesty was out of all drafts.

Chimneys

From the days of the Henrys, strict laws were enforced to prevent ordinary people from attempting to "presume above their class"—by building a chimney! Only in a castle or a manor house was one allowed—and not more than one. Imagine chimneys being built of wood! Yet they were. According to the Liber Albus (White Book) of the city of London, it was found necessary in 1419 to enact "'that no chimney be henceforth made, except of stone, tiles or plaster, and not of timber, under pain of being pulled down." Owing to the restrictions on the Statute Book, it was not till the time of Queen Elizabeth that chimneys had become commonplace.

"Hearth-Money"

"Hearth Money," levied between 1653 and 1690, was a tax on domestic fires, and had to be paid to the king. The clergy had their innings also, by levying a tax known as that of "Smoke Farthings."

The First Fire-Irons

It is less than one hundred and fifty yeads ago since stoves were first used on a large scale. The only fire-iron in the time of Henry VIII was the fire fork, a two-pronged implement for stirring and shifting the logs. The devolopment of the tongs, poker and shovel came along with the eventual general use of coal. Crude strips of bent sheet-iron were, in the beginning, used as fenders.

The Curfew Bell

The line in Gray's "Elegy"—"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day" —applies even yet in certain remote villages in Britain. As far back as the time of Alfred the Great, the curfew bell, in many western and southern countries of Europe, gave the signal for all fires to be put out and for people to go to bed. This precautionary measure was very sensible in these early times when so many people lived in wooden houses, and it had an appreciable effect in greatly diminishing the number of houses burned down. The couvre-feu was in regular use at that time. It was something like a Dutch oven with a handle. Glowing embers were pushed to the back of the hearth and then covered with it. In this manner the fire was effectually stifled.

No Need to Stretch It

THE ANTIPODES ATTRACT THE ANGLER

The northern coast of New Zealand is now the Mecca of the world's sea monster fishermen. Swordfish, sharks and threshers abound. These three giants were caught by Zane Grey, the well-known author.

Consult Women on All Questions

Dr. Fairfield Points Out Great Changes in England

"It would be impossible to pass any legislation in England without the approval of the women of England," Dr. Letitia Fairfield, O.B.E., told the Montreal Women's Club when she reviewed the changes which have taken place in the lives of professional women in England and women interested in public work., in Montreal recently.

"In every political party," she continued, "women are taking an increasingly active and important part. They have to be consulted on any question that affects the country at large or women and children in particular."

Dr. Fairfield is a physician and a barrister. She was appointed woman medical director of the Royal Air Force Medical Service in 1911, and is now divisional medical officer of the London County Council. She has held several notable hospital and asylum appointments, and is now in Montreal en route to the United States, in order to make a study of mental hygiene methods there.

The big change in the lives of professional women and women interested in public affairs was the coming of the vote. Dr. Fairfield maintained. Politicians did everything they could to remove women's grievances, thus trying to kill the measure by kindness. They gave them increased consideration in politics in order to keep them quiet, she said.

"There has been no confirmation of the alarming prophecy that women would band together to put men in their places," Dr. Fairfield asserted. "There is no distinct women's political party of any importance in England. We have, of course, groups like Lady Rhondda's Six-Point group that make a point of questions political and social that particularly affect women and children.

"Women are now admitted to professions from which hitherto they were excluded, for instance, that of chartered accountancy. The big step was the admission of women to the Bar."

Dr. Fairfield, who is a barrister of the Middle Temple, explained some of the difficulties which beset the English woman barrister under the system of barristers and solicitors. "Solicitors have to be the most cautious of individuals. Women are finding practising at the Bar, very slow going. But it must not be thought that they are not doing well. We have some exremely able women pleading at the Bar."

A Law Unto Herself

Buenos Aires Standard (English).: The things which all sensible Americans recognize with regret and indignation is that, though the riches of their country augment rapidly, the accumulation of wealth is not so rapid as the rise of the world's wrath against America. More than once Americans have admonished England that her resentment was resented. But how can a country, a people, half a world, be kept from feeling and voicing their thoughts? . . . Americans insist upon their divine right to say what they please when and how they please, but in her Joblike misery Europe must not cry out as the patriarch did, or "curse God and die." . . . The only hope for the future is that the vast number of Americans actively striving to cultivate and bring to perfection a better understanding will in time succeed in getting the Middle West to recognize that it is not a good thing for it to be like Peter Bell: "Full twenty times was Peter feared for once that Peter was respected."

Communism and the Soviets

Echo de Paris: The seizures made in Pekin, and afterwards in London in the Soviet headquarters, showed clearly that they were centres of espionage and social disintegration. Why should they be anything else in other countries? We know that they are not. The Communist idea, faithfully and ardently represented by every Soviet agent, cannot be reconciled with the spirit of patriotism and national feeling. It is therefore useless for us to struggle against Communism, unless we commence by breaking relations with the Soviets. Communism is part of the Soviet Socialist machine.

"Don't get up from the feast of life without paying for your share of it." —Dean Inge.

Brown—"I'm trying to find some one who knows me to go security on my note." Sykes—"Don't you think, my boy, you'd better look for some one who doesn't know you?"

"Miracle" Wheat

L. H. Newman, Dominion Cerealist, Shows that this Wheat is More a Promoters Variety Than Farmers Friend

There has appeared recently in a number of leading agricultural papers an article entitled "King Tut's Wheat Grown in the West." The article refers to certain results obtained by a Soldier Settler living near Edmonton, Alta., and gives the impression that the wheat in question was discovered in 1922 in the tomb of King Tut-ankhamen. As a matter of fact the records show that this wheat was known as far back as 1840 when one enterprising gentleman offered heads at $5 each.

The above variety belongs to the Poulard subspecies of wheat, being somewhat intermediate between the common and durum wheats. It has numerous aliases, the most common of which are Egyptian, Eldorado, Many Headed, Miracle, Mummy, Seven Headed and Alaska. It has always been easy to interest people in this wheat owing to its branched head. If an unbranched head will yield so much surely a branched head will yield much more. While head for head this may be true, yet experiments have not shown that it holds good acre for acre. This wheat was probably introduced into North America from Europe or Egypt in Colonial days. It was received by the Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture in 1807, since which time it has appeared periodically under one name or another.

In 1908 the United States Department of Agriculture began an extensive investigation of this wheat, which investigation continued for several years. In the meantime it has been tried by farmers al over the United States, but it is not now grown anywhere as a commercial crop. The fact tha tt ihas never become established in spite of the remarkable advertising it has received is a good indication of its inferiority. Promoters, however, resurrect it periodically, and owing to its striking and unusual appearance, manage to sell it to the unsuspecting farmer at exorbitant prices.

The essential facts concerning Alaska wheat have been summed up very nicely in a bulletin published by the United States Department of Agriculture—Bulletin No. 357, 1916, P. 27—at the conclusion of extensive tests conducted at many points in the U.S., as follows: (1) That it has been used in this country very often as a means of deceiving people and very seldom as a farm crop; (2) that it has failed to produce even fair yields when tried in many parts of the country, and has never been known to produce extraordinary yields; (3) that it is not a good milling wheat; (4) that the branched head is not a sign of superior yielding power.

Anyhow He Was Fired.

"Just heard Jerry got fired out of the pantomime."

"Zatso? Wonder what the trouble was."

"Don't know, 'less he couldn't learn his lines."

War Memorials

Berlin Borsen Courier: It seems as though a curse lay upon all speeches made since the War at the inauguration of memorials to the dead. The nations of the world were willing to forget the past, but their statesmen do everything they can to revive the ancient hatreds. . It is not therefore surprising that material disarmament makes little progress, since the spirits of men do not wish to be disarmed.

"Rembrandt painted about 700 pictures. Of these 7000 are in existence."—Dr. William Bode.

The only legal theft—a stolen base.

Agriculture to Observe Jubilee

Hon. W .R. Motherwell Tells of Comprehensive Exhibition Plans

Ottawa.—"Every branch of the Federal Department of Agriculture will be represented in the celebration of 'Canada's Agricultural Jubilee'," declared Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, recently, "and they are altogether aside from the provincial education and livestock displays which will be a part and parcel of this presentation of the greatest of all of the Dominion's basic industries."

The Minister explained the ramifications of the Federal Department of Agriculture, which has under its wing a great number of branches affiliated or immediately connected with agriculture. They include the experimental farms, live stock branch, health of animals branch, biological laboratories, seed branch, horticulture, dairy and cold storage, entomological, fruit, national live stock records and the various extension and other incidentals arising out of the sub-departments.

Alberta, which has had its banner crop year, has notified the Minister that its exhibit will comprise grains from this year's yield, and that its display will be most comprehensive, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Ontario are putting forward special efforts while Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan will be well to the front.

In addition to the Agriculture Jubilee which will be staged at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto from Nov. 16 to Nov. 24, Canada's national apple week is also to be recognized in the Eastern Provinces with the "Royal" as its Eastern scene while in the Western Provinces, Oct. 24 to Oct. 31 has been set aside as "aples for health" week.

Pictured

Business and trade in Great Britain are not in the serious condition that has frequently been reported in this country.

The Tory party makes its mistakes, but Britain is steadily pulling out of its difficulties. It has lost some of its foreign trade, but the figures are showing improvement. One important fact is that with all the "lost" trade the "poor rates" are coming down, only holding stationary in localities where the guardians of the poor are mostly representatives of the always extravagant Lavor-Socialist party. There could be no better test, because the reduction in pauperism clearly demonstrates that the unemployment figures are not so serious as they seem. British business moves slowly, but is backed by character and intelligence, with the result that when gains are made they are kept. The tax burden is still very heavy, but it is clearly resting more easily.

Why Not Prohibit the Corn Crop?

Louisville Herald-Post: Andrew Volstead's determination to deprive the great American home of its brew by invoking a section of the prohibition law forbidding "possession or sale of materials designed for use in manufacturing intoxicating liquor" reads like an act of desperation. . . . Mr. Volstead's move is simply a confession of the futility of trying to enforce an unenforceable law. It proves that the country cannot be dried up by proceeding against alcoholic liquors alone, so the baffled dry agents proposes to stamp out all the sources of alcohol. The farther back they go the bigger they make the problem and the sooner they will crystallize the general sentiment in favor of reasonable modification of an unreasonable law.

Italy is shaped like a boot and Mussolini is doing his best to put the kick into it.

Grisdale Answers British Pressmen.

Amusing Passages When Canadian Gives Interview in London

MILK DELIVERY

London.—Some amusing passages occurred between Dr. J. H. Grisdale, Canadian Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and a considerable body of British newspapermen who were invited to meet him at Canada House recently.

To the first question asked him, "Does farming pay?" Mr. Grisdale delivered an optimistic account of this year's Canadian crops and cattle raising. His audience seemed surprised to hear that tobacco growing was successfully followed in Canada, although as far as the British market for the weed was concerned, Mr. Grisdale declared that the Briton's tastes were hard to change.

"All this is very cheerful about Canada but can you suggest any remedies for British agriculture," declared a pressman connected with a paper which has long been deploring the present state of the British farmer with a hardly concealed desire thereby to "throw a monkey wrench" into Premier Stanley Baldwin's machinery.

"I could but I had better not for your publication," replied Mr. Grisdale, whereon the pressman good-temperedly intimated it was scarcely worth while asking any more questions.

Mr. Grisdale then permitted his hearers to record his opinion on milk products handled in Canada by farmers' organizations who maintained their interest in the product until it reached the consumer. It was handled more experitiously and, in the cities, more hygienically.

Milk Handcarts.

The Canadian minister declared that the little milk handcarts seen here would be considered a joke in Canada. Some of his audience assured him that delivery on a large scale was not unknown here. The small delivery was gradually being eliminated in London.

"Mighty gradually I should say," responded Mr.. Grisdale, who asserted that delivery here was very much behind the method employed in Canada in the matter of speed.

One newspaperman reared in Devonshire, (very few London pressmen acknowledge the Metropolis as their birthplace) was instantly on his feet to explain the speed with which Plymouth received its morning milk. Another man from Norfolk rendered like testimony to the early bird character of his native county.

Mr. Grisdale then proceeded to express his opinion that English and Scottish farmers employed an unnecessarily large number of men—anything from a third to a half too many. . "I have also noticed here two men working one horse whereas we should have one man working two horses." He admitted that British cattle were well fed but had seen a lot of stables of which he did not think very much.

"Our farmers are very hard up," suggested a representative of a newspaper which is despondent about the British agriculturist.

"Your beef is well fed and you do not market it precipitately as we," admitted the Deputy Minister.

Planning Battle

Liberals in Britain Preparing to Stage Dramatic Comeback

London.—The Liberals are preparing to stage a dramatic comeback at the next election, according to Liberal headquarters, and recent events they assert have given them the greatest hopes for a spectacular revival in spite of the sneers of the Tories, and of Joynson Hicks' prediction that the next election will see the extinction of the Liberal party, they believe they will capture many seats both from Labor and the Tories.

Filled with such optimism, Liberal speakers throughout the country are explaining their agricultural and industrial policy and are holding up Lloyd George as the model statesman. Sir Herbert Samuel now intends contesting a seat in the next election, probably in Lancashire, and everywhere throughout the country there is the greatest Liberal activity.

The Liberal program includes a return to free trade, and re-organization of industry, and particularly mining, also the encouragement of small holdings in agriculture, and efficiency in marketing products. The liberals believe there is a definite turn towards the policy founded on Liberal principles.

Lunch A La Carte.

"He has lunch a la carte every day?"

"Yes; eats at one of these lunch wagons at the street corner."

Ontario Comes Third

CANADA'S CHAMPION AND HIS COMPETITORS

Mexico's boy orator, Arthuro Garcia Formenti, won the International championship at the recent contest in Washington, D.C. He is at the right, above, with Miss Dorothy Carlston, United States champion, next to him and Frederick P. Hotson, Canadian champion, who took third place, at the left. Georges Guiot Guillian, the French champion, at the left in the back row, took second place. The other contestant was James Keith Watson, champion of England.