

# How Chicago Women Made War on Short Weights

## Remarkable Crusade to Protect themselves against Dishonest Dealers.

Miss Anna Berg, Second Vice President of the Club.

Some time ago a wonderful bonfire lit up Chicago's water front. It was the most spectacular pyrotechnic display ever witnessed here.

Thousands of fraudulent dry measures—bushels, half bushels, pecks, quarts and pints—together with great numbers of short-weight scales, were heaped in a pile along the lake shore, and the torch was applied.

The flames rose to the height of the city's tallest building, and the crowds that gathered to witness the spectacle shouted in delight as they witnessed the instruments of robbery go up in smoke. Measures are being accumulated for another such bonfire in the near future.

Many times Chicago's children, starving perhaps, have been arrested for stealing a loaf of bread, a piece of sausage or an apple to appease their hunger. The merchants showed no pity to the little offenders. Yet many of the same merchants were systematically robbing those who dealt with them by means of the short-weight fraud.

The crusade for protection resulted from a spontaneous uprising of women in all parts of the city. The dealer who at first would steal a few pennies from each purchase grew bolder with the seeming impunity he had so long enjoyed, and increased the amount of his thefts to nickels and dimes, and then to dollars.

Cold weather came, and dishonest coal merchants reaped a harvest by stealing the value of a few pounds of coal on each purchase made by the poor woman who bought by the basket and of hundreds of pounds on each purchase made by those who could afford to buy by the ton.

Baskets and sacks of coal were found to be from one-fourth to one-third of a bushel short of measure. It is estimated that the people of Chicago were robbed of \$3,000,000 last year by these coal thefts alone.

They organized themselves into a club, which started with a membership of about a hundred and grew like magic until it numbered more than 3,000 members. It is called the "Women's Full-Weight Club." It represents women of all classes, of all nationalities and of all sections of the city.

Upon investigation the club members found that on the city's statutes were laws which made short-weighting a punishable offense. Therefore, they set to work to have the law enforced.

They soon saw that their next step must be to get a man in accord with them at the head of the department vested with the enforcement of these laws. So the club asked the help of other women all over the city in behalf of the candidacy of Joseph Grein for the office of city sealer—which official has supervisory over weights and measures—and all solicited the votes of their husbands, fathers, brothers and sweethearts in his behalf. Hence the election of Mr. Grein by an overwhelming plurality.

Assuming office, Mr. Grein went to work at once unearthing scandal after scandal in the theft methods practiced by dealers and making arrests by the wholesale. Fourteen packers were arrested, and they squirmed most furiously, as Big Fish will do when caught in a net.

One hundred and twenty coal dealers made a demonstration equally spectacular when they were caught. At first amazed, then enraged, then merely remonstrative, they finally became humbled and submitted to the punishment imposed. Ice dealers endured the same humiliating experience. Dishonest grocers, butchers and men of all kinds who deal in weights and measures went through the same stages of discontent.

Mr. Grein unfolded the fact that it has been the custom of many business men in Chicago to teach employees in jobbing and commission houses, grocery stores and meat markets to cheat customers by means of short weights and measures.

He found that scales were set to give short weight; that it took five "quart" bottles of beer to make a gallon that carried produce was short of weight; that dry measures were altered by dealers so that "pecks" and "bushels" shrank enormously from their original capacities; that fruit boxes and baskets were built for the purpose of cheating the consumer; that enormous quantities of butter, lard and other groceries were sold were constructed for the same purpose; that fringes and tails in which butter, lard, fish, etc., were sold were often the rascaliest in capacity; that the same was true of paper sacks and paper boxes, and other containers in which all manner of groceries were sold.

For a time the city sealer was handicapped by deficient municipal laws. Undaunted by this, however, he set to work.

Next to the coal man, the ice man was found to be a notorious short-weight individual. He was selling six pounds of ice for one hundred pounds and thirty-five pounds for fifty pounds. Two hundred and forty-two ice men were arrested and convicted.

Three hundred and sixty-four grocers were arrested for practicing all kinds of devices to steal from purchasers. Some of them were pretending to sell sugar at less than wholesale prices. Two-pound packages of sugar advertised in these sales were found to be three ounces short. Often the packages consisted of very heavy

paper, and with paper, sugar and all would not weigh two pounds.

The worst shortages on the part of grocers were in packages put up ready for sale. Packages of potatoes supposed to contain a peck would often contain but ten pounds, when a full peck should weigh fifteen pounds.

Everyone of the grocery men arrested were convicted and fined. Mr. Grein will recommend the passage of an ordinance that will force all grocery men to sell by weight instead of by dry measure, that such cheats will be rendered impossible in the future.

In a raid of the Chicago meat markets the flying squadrons made 232 arrests. Many butchers had iron nuts attached to the back of scales to make the scales weigh more than indicated. Slices of bacon were found pasted to the underside of the scale pan for the same purpose.

Even the peddlers were not to be outdone. There is a law compelling peddlers to have their measures tested by the city sealer, after which the sealer's official stamp shall be placed on the bottom as indication that the measures are correct.

After having the measure examined and stamped, however, the peddlers would saw off an inch or so from the bottom, bring in the sides to correspond, and thus a measure, still bearing the official stamp, would measure from one and one-half to three and one-half quarts less than it should contain. Or, perhaps, the peddler would have a row of potatoes or apples glued to the bottom of his measure, and he would rapidly fill and empty the measure without the purchaser ever noticing the cheat.

Three hundred and seventy peddlers practicing these frauds were arrested and fined. The same kind of frauds were also practiced by grocers and market men.

Finding no city law authorizing the punishment of dairymen for wholesale robbery, the city sealer caused the city council to pass an ordinance providing that the capacity of milk bottles be blown in the glass on each bottle.

Under this new law eighty-seven milk dealers were convicted, but not until the consumers had been cheated out of thousands of dollars by the men who would thus steal from babies—the principal consumers of milk in Chicago.

Big department stores of Chicago were found to be selling short-weight packages of butter. A number of arrests were made, but the store heads saved themselves by quipping the arrest of the city sealer in quipping the arrest of the dairymen and creamery men from whom the butter had been purchased.

Manufacturers of many high-priced canned goods were stealing from a half to a pound and a half of cream from the purchaser on every five-pound package. This cheat was effected principally by heavy paper boxes containing confusion of partitions and strapping paper, with but little candy

The consumer thereby was made to pay eighty cents a pound for paper when he thought he was buying candy.

Two-pound boxes of chocolate creams contained only one pound and eight ounces of candy. Ninety-four candy dealers, including proprietors of some of the leading establishments of the city, were brought before the bar of justice and punished for these offenses.

During the Chicago cleaning up the officials of Mr. Grein's office inspected 16,159 scales, and in such case forced compliance with the city standard of accuracy. They made more than 2,000 arrests of grocers, peddlers, meat market dealers, tea and coffee dealers, confectioners, parkers, department store proprietors, ice men, farmers, fruit-stand proprietors, coal dealers, and peddlers.

Such is the result of a determined effort on the part of Chicago women to protect themselves. They have shown conclusively that the purchasing public can be protected if it will only decide to protect itself.

The model pictured shows one of the new drooping brim shapes so fashionable this season. Fine natural color leghorn was used. It was slightly stiffened by a narrow taffeta silk cord, applied both under and above an inch and a half from the brim edge. Soft black satin ribbon was lobbed about the high crown, and was tied in a large, flat bow at the left side of the brim at the back. The roses were in various shades of pink, the foliage being largely composed of the finer grasses used along with the rose leaves.

Camellia's Varnish Stains make a splendid finish for hall and dining room floors. They come in light and dark oak, also in cherry, mahogany, etc. A 75c. can will do an ordinary room. Ask for the latest color card. W. A. Mitchell.

Another Successful Year of Leading Canadian Factory.

Montreal, Jan. 19.—The annual meeting of the shareholders of the Slater Shoe Company was held at their offices in Montreal a few days ago. The address of the president laid stress on the continuous upward progress of the company's business since the standard price Slater Shoe became the feature of their business.

The Slater Company were the first Canadian manufacturers to adopt newspaper advertising as an adjunct to the more economical selling of their goods. In five years their business has more than doubled. In 1906 the increase over 1905 was exactly \$200,000. While this year achieves the largest gross increase in a single year, it is also by far the largest percentage of increase in twelve months. The orders for the first two months of their present fiscal year exceed those of the corresponding months of the previous year by \$150,000.

Ninety-eight new agencies were opened by the company during the year. Orders came unolicited from many foreign countries, including South Africa, the West Indies and from the continent. The president pointed out the need for more factory accommodation. "We have outgrown our present quarters," he said. The directors arranged to hold a special meeting to deal with factory requirements and extension.

The financial report of the secretary-treasurer, with the dividend declaration of 7 per cent, on both preferred and common stock, and a substantial balance added to the rest account, was received with approval by the shareholders.

The Board of Directors were elected as follows: Charles E. Slater (President), William Starke (Vice-President), Anson McKim, J. N. McKim, W. F. Horland, William Smith, J. W. Woods and Major Robert Starke.

OUR INDUSTRIES PAY.

Made a Bluff.

FASHION'S FORM.

Life-Savers Hoaxed.

Will Give Confidence.

The Federation of Trade now a membership of over

Mrs. J. J. Shaeffer, President Women's Full Weight Club of Chicago.

Mrs. Henry Schmitz, First Vice President of the Fighting Organization.

Joseph Grein, City Sealer of Chicago.

House-Cleaning. Brushes, Stoves, Sultans, Electric Stoves, Shoe Brushes, Scrubbing Brushes, Sink Brushes, Fibre Pails, Wooden Pails, Fibre Tubs, Wooden Tubs.

JAS. REDDEN. BANK OF MONTREAL. Paid Up Capital. Rest.

Has More TO CORNER KING AND CLARE.

A NOISELESS CAR. One grade only, that is McLaughlin has been of thirty-eight years. His stylish, substantial and they cost a little more, others, but think of the to know that when you ing your carriage is no break down before you. Then, too, they run cool, er, and are more attractive cheaper rig. Get one and fashion. For sale at \$2. P.

For every variety of R. Bargains and Insurance. SWIFT'S REAL ESTATE INSURANCE AGENCY.

AUCTION SALE. J. W. WHITTON, 252, TRINITY, 2307, Black Walnut, Suite, in Brussels and other Carpets, and Bull Back, Oak Couch, Extension Table, Clock, Picture, Curains, Rocker, Cheville Curtains, Famous Refrigerator, new, with Kitchen Table, Crochery, Enamel Ware.

Auction Sale. 392 Alfred Street, TRINITY, 2307, Black Walnut, Suite, in Household Effects of Mr. S. consisting of Wilton, Brussels Carpets, Fine Oak Oak Cabinet, Oyster Table, Curains, Rocker, Rattan and other Rockers, Oak Oak Hall Rack and Seat, Cushions, Lace Curtains, Blinds, Gas Range, Refrigerator and numerous other articles.

Auction Sale. Mrs. M. CLERHUEW, 252, TRINITY, 2307, Black Walnut, Suite, in a.m. Gerhard Heintzman, Piano, Mahogany Music Box, Table and Chairs, Rattan Tray Curains, Oak Extension Buffet, Oak Dining Chair, Natural Birch Bedroom Suite, Brass Bedstead, Spring and Happy Thought Range, Crochery, etc. Piano sold at 12.

To Contract. TENDERS WILL BE at the office of the undersigned and specifications on file to 12 o'clock, noon, on the 25th instant, for the works required by the reconstruction of the business premises of Messrs. & Birch, Brock street, in Lowest or any tender of accepted.

Monument. Foreign and Domestic Marble, Granite and other lowest possible prices. JAMES MULLEN, Opp. Y.M.C.A. 372 P.

TAKE NOTICE. Between Season's we will very small profits. That is the. Try us for the fun Second-Hand Store, 238 P.

Will Give Confidence. Alexander Day, of the St. Club, Toronto, has been at the charge of the Dominion company's show, shall load ment, and is now having burgh, where the factory Trap-shots throughout Canada sportsmen generally will confidence in the dominion, knowing that Mr. D. "a finger in the pie."