THE FAIR

By Douglas Malloch.

We wrest no subterranean store from out of caverns deep and dark,
Nor with the blood-red hand of war make harvest of a nation's tears.
Ours is the wealth of God's good soil, and on his earth we leave no mark
But furrows of the farmer's toil, the business of a thousand years.

Here we assemble what we grew, here we have gathered of the yield,
The products of the work we do, our answer to the ones who ask.
These are the children of the seed, arisen in the fertile field,
A world of weary ones to feed—a noble duty, honest task.

Even in joy of labor done we have our hour for deeper thought,
To see the glory of the sun in smiling fruit and golden grain;
E'en in the frolic of the fair we realize how God has wrought
Till herds increase and blossoms bear, fed by his sunshine and his rain.

All mindful of our work again another season yet to be,
Let us come forth rejoicing then to pass a merry week away—
Proud of the treasures that are ours, with merriment and industry
Taking of earth both fruit and flowers, taking of life both work and play.

FAIR TIME AGAIN

The Purpose of Our Own Festival and a History of Some Others

WHY is a fair? We can't all answer that from a single viewpoint. It means something different to practically every one of us. There is no doubt, though, that the feeling of gayety is universal—even to those who must work like Turks to make the occasion a success.

The man or woman with a grouch has no business at our fair this year. You must go prepared to enjoy the blare of band music and the million noises that aren't music. You must be keyed up to revel in the sight of thousands of chattering holiday makers, of bright decorations, of pretty girls, of sideshows and ballyhoos, of popcorn balls in red tissue and sweating glasses of orangeade, of sizzling sandwiches and ice cream cones, of live-stock and household and implement displays, of pattering trotters and pacers and running horses, of buzzing grandstand, of golden sunshine and yellow dust-clouds. Yes, and tired feet and whimpering babies with heat-rash and smart alecks here and there—for we haven't reached the land of perfection yet.

Now let's peel the surface off the situation and see what's inside. This year's fair is going to be a pretty fine advertisement for our whole community—the surrounding farm lands and farmers, the town and its enterprising, public-spirited merchants. And really that is the rock-bottom purpose of holding a fair—advertising. It is a community aim and effort to show its people how much they amount to, and to show outsiders that this is a mighty good place to live in—prosperous, progressive country and neighborly people. A man looking for a place in which to settle down couldn't reasonably ask for anything more or better.

Courtesy to Visitors.

The folks of this community understand one another. Our farmers know the town business men with whom they deal. Our business men are pretty well acquainted with most of the people who come into their stores. Now we want to show—all of us—our spirit of kindliness and intelligence to the strangers within our gates during the festival season. It is the best sort of advertising we can put forth.

It is inestimably worth while to us if visitors go home and say: "I always like to attend their fair. The whole town seems to wiggle its latchstring at me. And they're the 'whitest' people!—go out of their way to be polite—ready to give information or do a little favor—I'm certainly going back oftener and get acquainted with some of them."

In order further to answer the question which introduces this article, we take down our handy reference book—a large red volume—and turn to page 426. Therein we learn that the word "fair" is derived from the Old French "feire," the modern French "foire," the Italian "fiera," the Latin "feria," meaning holiday, and that this is connected with the Latin "festus," meaning feast.

In the United States there are no fairs of the kind that have been common in the Old World. The term here is applied to a variety of exhibitions, such as church, charity and agricultural exhibitions, and local, state, national, or international expositions or fairs. The fact is, the term is applied to all exhibitions where people are expected to bestow patronage or make purchases.

Bits of Fair History.

The most common kind are agricultural fairs—county and state, as you know. This kind got their start as a regular thing in America in 1819. At Albany, N. Y., there was a prosperous merchant, Elkanah Watson, who believed that such an enterprise would encourage farming and manufacturing and help business. He used his influence with the state legislature, and that body appropriated $10,000 yearly, for six years, for premiums on agricultural products and family manufactures.

Since then annual county, district and state fairs are quite generally held. The district and county fairs especially are held, not mainly for the sale of goods, but for advertising purposes—as we have said. City street fairs, where amusements of various kinds are furnished, are intended to promote the welfare of the city by attracting traders to them. The same goes for world's fairs which are held in this country. While commodities are sold, the primary object is to advertise.

In the Old World the fair or bazaar is an ancient institution. If we could find files of the daily papers and country weeklies when old Mr. Pharaoh was kinging for a living, when Professor Plato was discoursing on pure democracy and the what and how of a republic, when the thousand and one events of the Arabian Nights Entertainments were being worked out, we should probably find articles like this one—an editor's write-up of the annual fair in his town.

Barter and Exchange Places.

People throughout Europe look upon the fair as a meeting held for the purpose of exhibiting and selling goods. Originally fairs were held at stated times and places, some for the sale of a particular class of merchandise, others for the sale of goods of a general character. People resorted to them to exchange goods and to collect their stores to last for several months. Princes and the magistrates of cities encouraged them and some of the privileges granted long ago still remain in force.

Such fairs as these flourish today on the outskirts of civilization, as in Siberia, Manchuria, Asiatic Turkey, where people live isolated for long stretches of time and do their buying no oftener than once or twice a year. They originated in the church festivals, which were found to afford the best opportunity for commercial transactions, the concourse of people being such as took place upon no other occasions.

Other European Practices.

In some parts of Europe persons of all ranks still wait for the great annual fairs to make their principal purchases of articles of every description. This applies especially to parts of Europe where trading facilities—including transportation, advertising announcements and the like—are not as highly developed as in all parts of America today.

One of the most noted of the old fairs was that of Saint Bartholomew in London, founded at the beginning of the twelfth century.

The greatest fairs in Germany are those of Frankfort, Leipzig and Brunswick. Other noted and historic fairs held yearly or semiannually in Europe are those of Zurzach, Switzerland; Budapest, Hungary; Sinigaglia, Italy; Lyons, France (before the war), and Nizhni-Novgorod, Russia. The last named yearly attracts buyers from all parts of Europe and central and northern Asia, and merchandise worth $100,000,000 changes hands. At Mecca, in Arabia, the fair is held in connection with the annual pilgrimage of Mohammedans, and is one of the most picturesque in the world.

We hope this array of solemn facts—all guaranteed to be reasonably true—will not put a damper on your frivolous mood and spoil our own fair for you. Doll up in your gayest drapery and set your heart on having a regular picnic this year—just like the year you were sixteen and had a sweetheart; when you had tintype pictures made together and exchanged them. Remember?

VALUE OF FAIR TO OUR PEOPLE

Agricultural and Industrial Show for Both the Town and Country Folk.

AN EXCHANGE FOR NEW IDEAS

Besides, It Appeals to All of Us Who Want to Be Amused While We're Learning—Closer Touch With Home Lives of Neighbors.

The fair is an educational clearing house. It is an agricultural and industrial institute for residents of both town and country. It is a short course in better farming and better living. It is a physical demonstration of why the man who farms with his head instead of with his hands must inevitably succeed.

It is a comprehensive exhibition of what the ambitious boy or girl may achieves in agriculture, live-stock raising, dairying, horticultural, home, gardening, domestic science or household economy. It is an exposition of the marvelous improvement in farm machinery and agricultural implements. It is an object lesson in the great part which improved machinery plays in the development and cultivation of the farm and the increased prosperity of the farmer.

Look for Yourself.

The chief educational value of our fair lies in the fact that it is demonstrative in character. The eye is a more convincing instructor than the ear. We are slow to accept and believe in any new method until we have had optical proof of its superiority over the old.

Often it is difficult to secure the attention of the busy man or woman long enough to give such a demonstration. Not infrequently it happens that farmers who would be most benefited by better methods of farming are not sufficiently interested to be present at any special meeting called for the purpose of discussing the subject.

But the fair appeals to that trait of mankind which demands entertainment and amusement and becomes a common forum for the discussion of all matters having to do with agriculture, industry, the home and the school.

In this clearing house of education the farmer learns what the manufacturer, the merchant and the banker are and have been doing to make his labor less arduous and his farm more profitable and the town resident learns what rapid progress is being made in agriculture. A bond of common interest is created which means much to both town and country.

Value to Everybody.

The farmer learns by actual observation of the newest devices and improvements in agricultural implements. He learns their use and benefits. He learns in what way they assist in soil cultivation, in plant growth, in sowing, in harvesting, in threshing. He learns the economic value of the more modern machinery, of the silo, of motor power on the farm.

The urban dweller is furnished a vivid picture of the agricultural resources of the community. He learns about the fertility of the soil in the vicinity; of what is being done to increase the farm yield; to improve the quality of the stock, and to multiply the total dairy product.

Every man and woman, whether town or country resident, is brought into closer touch with the home life of others. All imbibe that broader education which means co-operation—that ideal education which is service to self and all humanity.

COME AND SEE US

YOU will find the latchstring of this newspaper office hanging out all ready to be pulled during fair time, and once inside you will be met with cordial welcome. If we don't know you personally, this is a first-rate opportunity to get acquainted. If you're an old acquaintance, you'll have the advantage of not feeling like company.