

Fergus County Argus.

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OFFICIAL PAPER OF FERGUS COUNTY.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY

JOHN M. VROOMAN, Editor and Proprietor.
HALSEY R. WATSON, Business Manager.

LEWISTOWN, MONT., Aug. 19, 1903.

Grover Cleveland is not going to scare the fish nor flush the birds by talking politics.

A recently published work is entitled "Advice to Plain Girls." Just as though there were any plain girls.

Probably Corbett was getting a little short of money and was willing to take a few fierce jabs for \$10,000.

A life sentence for Jett and White is severe punishment considering that their crime was committed in Kentucky.

Vesuvius is getting active again. Possibly the old volcano is desirous of showing such amateurs as Mont. Pelee and La Soufriere a trick or two.

The newspaper paragrapher who attempts to make an Elk pun is taking a great hazard. Wouldn't it be well to advertise for a joke that was really humorous?

David Bennett Hill is said to be formulating the platform of the next Democratic national convention. Without consulting W. J. Bryan? Impossible.

The cattle market is off a good many points and growers in some sections of the state will be in no hurry to place their beef on the market. Some will not ship at all unless the market improves.

As was anticipated, Mr. Jeffries got the best of the argument with James J. Corbett. The latter is now out of the game and should engage in some honorable calling. He will realize about \$10,000 out of the fight.

The Commercial Banking Co., of Duluth, has closed its doors because of embezzlement of \$45,000 by a trusted bookkeeper. He lost the amount in stock speculations, of course. It is another instance of the folly of trying to get rich quick.

The Colombian government is putting up a strong fight against the ratification of the Panama canal treaty. It looks as though the United States would be compelled to take the Nicaragua route or resort to extreme measures in forcing the Colombians to terms.

Senator Tillman, he of the iron jaw, recently lost his purse containing a number of railroad passes. Upon surprise being expressed that he would accept such passes he insisted that they were thrust upon him and he was obliged to take them. All of which is very thin.

Senator Daniels, of Virginia, is grooming himself to oppose any financial legislation the Republicans may propose in the next congress. Opposition and obstruction has always been a long suit with his party and the senator is expected to be true to its aims and traditions.

The Railroad Age records now only five unimportant steam railroads, from four to twenty-eight miles in length each, which have failed to meet the interest on their obligations during the past six months. This is a different showing from that made ten years ago when railroad receivers were being appointed every few days.

Judge Henry Smith, of Helena, recently fined a prominent business man of that city \$100 for dynamiting fish. This is the proper medicine to administer to those so lost to decency and a true sense of sport. The dynamiter of fish should be watched in every county in the state and given his just deserts when detected and brought into court.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found many kind words written of our twentieth anniversary edition by state contemporaries. To say that we appreciate such generous expressions on the part of the fraternity is putting it mildly. We feel unworthy of some of the praise bestowed, but it will be our aim to deserve it in the future.

The Helena base ball club has withdrawn from the Pacific Coast National League and abandoned the field. A state league should be organized for next season embracing seven or eight cities. There are some good players in the state and they could make the game interesting without any great expense. No doubt Lewistown would be represented if a league is organized.

It is evident that the Montana railroad will not reach Lewistown as early as has been expected. While all of the crews are now at work inside of the gap and are coming this way as rapidly as possible under

many adverse circumstances, there is considerable heavy work yet to be done between Lewistown and Rock creek. Even in Lewistown there is six weeks' work ahead of contractors. The fill above the cemetery will keep the graders busy for several weeks, while there is a good deal of work to be done on the Day ranch. We would not be surprised if we did not hear the whistle of the locomotive before the first of November.

It is to be hoped that the strife between the cattle and sheep men in the northern part of this state will not reach the serious stage reported from sections of Wyoming. Montana has been practically free from stock wars in the past. Although some bitter feeling has existed between cattle and woolgrowers over range and water there have been very few cases of criminal assault as a result of their differences. As all have equal rights to the public domain it is absurd for one party or the other to take absolute possession except by force. Priority of occupancy may establish some moral right but no other and when men resort to violence to use exclusively, what does not belong to them, they should be severely dealt with by the courts having jurisdiction. The range war in Wyoming has developed into outlaws and nothing less. Montana should be spared such a disgrace.

It never affords us any pleasure to criticize a public servant. We would rather write a thousand words in praise of a man than half a dozen of a fault finding nature. In our editorial last week on the management of the postoffice Mr. Stephens took some exceptions. In one place we make the statement that "out-going mail is lost or detained altogether." Mr. Stephens construed this to mean that all of the out-going mail had been lost, something we did not say or mean. We did not wish to convey the idea that a whole sack had been lost and never recovered. A parcel or letter is mail and no other construction can fairly be placed upon the above statement, which we believe to be correct. But without regard to particularizing complaints have been numerous and strong of late as to the slack business methods in the postoffice and they have come from the largest business houses in town, as well as from citizens in general. Undoubtedly much cause for complaint is due to the narrow quarters and insufficient help, but this will soon be obviated, when we hope to have a postoffice conducted on up to date methods, both as regards the handling of the mail and in the registry department. The postoffice is now entitled to an additional clerk and he should be secured as soon as possible.

The last session of the legislature did an unwise thing in changing the open season for prairie chickens and grouse from September 1st to August 15th. For a number of years August 15th was the beginning of the open season for these birds when, for good reasons, the law was changed to September 1st, standing at that date for two years, we believe. That it should have remained at the latter date is the opinion of every man who went out for field sport last Saturday. Nearly all of those who went to the mountains for grouse or chickens report a great many small birds. In one instance a hunter came upon a female prairie chicken with a brood of small and young that he would not fire a shot at the covey, but stood and gazed in admiration at the mother as she made a determined and successful fight to protect her helpless little ones. Owing to the backward spring the chickens were late in hatching, in some instances doubtless the broods were from a second hatching, giving them insufficient time to develop before the season opened. As the springs are usually severe in Montana September 1st is none too late for the commencement of the open season. The birds are then large and strong as a rule and afford the wing shots greater sport and better results for the time and money spent in hunting. Shooting a bird into fish bait is neither a pleasant nor a profitable pastime. No doubt sportsmen will find the same conditions prevailing in all parts of the state. The law should be changed to September 1st and never made any earlier. A month could well be cut off from the latter end. Two months is long enough for an open season.

ITS BAD INFLUENCE.

In commenting on the truism expressed by President Roosevelt as to the degrading and brutalizing effects of lynchings upon the minds of men and the danger of its becoming widespread, the Minneapolis Journal editor writes as follows, showing the wicked excesses which led to the downfall of Rome:

"This is a very fearful aspect of the case. It was the bloody tendency which grew into the Roman character and brought 19,000 men into the sea fight of the Emperor Claudius to slaughter each other for the pleasure of the emperor and his entourage on a single occasion; which drenched the ground with the blood of 5,000 wild beasts and thousands of Jews for the delectation of Titus at Berytus. The splendor of pagan Rome was stained and impregnated with blood. Nero's huge statue, with radiated head and symbol of the sun-god, which towered a hundred feet above the Flavian amphitheater, stood for all that was brutal in the Roman imperial state. The morbid craving for blood and torture was the dominant note. The old games became tame and insipid. The Roman gentle-

man and the Roman artisan, the soldier and the slave, called for new novelties of slaughter, new forms of torture. Women descended into the arena, dwarfs and deformed persons were turned into it to fight each other unto death. New wild beasts were sought in Africa to give the spectators at Rome new forms of pleasure and excitement, and, during the combats, the screams and shouts of the audiences were no less hideous and ferocious than the snarling of the beasts. There was a blunting of susceptibilities such as came to Torquemada's inquisitors, who roasted men and women on spits and flayed them alive, after the fashion of lynchers of negroes today. All such indulgences destroy the nerve of sympathy with suffering which distinguishes the human from the brute creation. And to this condition we are inevitably gravitating. Every additional process of torture by a lawless mob weakens the moorings of the law, demoralizes the country, makes a mockery of justice. Indisidiously is this desolating barbarism undermining society. It must be destroyed or it will surely destroy us."

THIS SEASON'S WOOL MARKET.

This season's wool market is now practically closed in Montana though a number of clips from this county are enroute to the eastern markets.

Although the prices paid were generally better than last year the growers will hardly realize as much out of their industry owing to the losses sustained during the winter and late spring.

In some instances the prices paid were not satisfactory, the quality of the wool being considered. Particularly is this true of small clips. It would seem that when men are running small bands and able to give them better care the clips would be in better condition and command the top price. While some small clips have done so it was noticeable that generally speaking they were from one to three cents lower than the large clips. Now, this may be due to the inferior quality of the wool, but it can hardly be true in every instance. In fact, we are advised by a large and well known grower that it is not from facts that came under his own personal observation. Some of the buyers look almost contemptuously on a small lot of wool, and giving it scant examination, mark a price and pass on with apparently the utmost indifference. He may want the wool and expect to get it, and this is a way he has of getting it at his own price.

The grower is on expense, the amount is too small to ship, and he is in urgent need of money, so he lets it go, even though he knows that it is just as good if not better than some of the large clips in the same market. It may be, too, that a grower has not a good knowledge of the value of his wool and is no match for the shrewd buyer, whose business it is to get wool as cheaply as possible.

Another thing, the buyers stand together, they are the autocrats of the wool market. They have a perfect understanding. On the other hand the growers are unorganized. It is a "go as you please" with all of them, a condition which leaves them at the mercy of the buyers.

A few years ago, many woolgrowers, owing to the demand for mutton sheep, took to breeding for a heavier sheep, hoping to profit by the change, even though they lost in the value of the fleeces. The decline or fluctuation in the mutton market has caused some to regret the change and they are going back to the Merino sheep as rapidly as possible.

Surely, if men are going to run small bands they should have the very best wool producing sheep. The time is coming when all sheep bands will be smaller, but the quality will improve. No doubt there is some poor wool sold in this county, but it should be the exception, not the rule, if money is to be made out of the business. And when a grower has a good clip he should receive what it is worth.

The Helena Record, commenting generally on the market just closed, mentions some things that may be worthy of consideration by growers. It says:

"After an extremely satisfactory season the wool market of Montana has now really come to an end for 1903. Reports from all over the state indicate that within a few days the buyers will be ready to move on. Prices paid as compared with last year have been good, as a whole, though there have been disappointments. The average price paid will be shown to be higher, so those who are well informed are inclined to believe; but this will be offset in making the estimate of net returns to the flockmaster by the losses that were suffered late in the spring.

"Buyers of wool are not inclined as a rule to take the public into their confidence upon the matters of detail that enter into the value of the fleeces, but one of them is authority for the statement that the quality of

Montana wool is improving slowly but surely, and that the time is not far distant when we may expect to receive higher prices, relatively to the general run of the market, than have ever been paid before. To give the elements that enter into the buyer's estimate of the value of the fleece he is called upon to bid for in the course of a year would be to write a big volume on the general subject of wool; but it is admitted first that a better grade of wool sheep costs no more to raise than the coarser variety, and that the better the facilities for wintering the stock, the greater the value of the fleece. Specimens of staple looked at under a strong magnifying glass readily disclose the difference between the wool from the sheep that has passed through serious hardships, with bad weather and frequent periods of insufficient feed, and the fleece of the animal that has been well cared for. The 'spinning quality,' which is the union of strength and length and continuity in the staple, is the essential feature. It is this quality that suffers from neglect and is improved with care. It contributes to the profits of the sheep raiser. The history of the market in Montana in 1903 has been that the high prices were received by men who gave this detail of the business the greatest attention.

"This state is not in danger of losing its place as the 'banner' wool-growing state of the Union; and yet there is little to be deduced from the census of numbers alone. There will come a time when the ranges will contain all the sheep they can give room to; there need not soon be a day when quality has reached its highest point. When we have reached the limit of numbers, there will still be room for progress. And it is certain that sheepmen are coming more fully to realize this fact. Montana wool at the shipping point is now worth more than Wyoming wool because it has a longer staple, because it is stronger, and because the sheep receive better care. In some sections of Montana this year, hardly a pound of wool was sold from sheep that had not been well housed and winter fed. The lesson will be emphasized when the statistics of the year have been prepared for presentation in detail.

"It is probable the system of marketing wool will some day be improved. This will be brought about when the grower has attained a more intimate knowledge of the value of the product he raises. Only a very small percentage of sheep raisers are qualified to discuss on even terms with the buyer the value of the fleece. The buyer, who makes buying his business, is not generally blamed for driving the best bargain he can for the firm whose interests he is paid to serve. Still, competition is only competition in outward semblance only, and there will come a time when the grower will have more to say about the price. The present system is probably as good as can be expected now; but in the coming days of a better product and a closer knowledge on the part of sheepmen of a vital part of their own business, the system will still further be improved upon."

A FEW BOUQUETS.

Something more than the anniversary of the founding of a newspaper is suggested by the splendid special number of the Fergus County Argus, issued last week by the publisher in honor of the completion of the twenty-second year of the history of that paper. The Argus tells a story of progress that is familiar to Montanians. It speaks of the growth of Fergus county since the day when the first type for a newspaper plant was carried into Maiden in a sack, being badly pieced as the natural consequence of this method of handling, and furnishing no end of work for the printer, who was also his own editor and "devil." But the Argus, started in Maiden, has since removed to Lewistown and is now in the vanguard of the newspapers of the inland empire. Changes have been rapid in the two decades in which the Argus has kept in touch with the people. Lewistown was not known twenty years ago, the settlement at that place being known as Reedsfort. The town was named in 1884 after old camp Lewis and the Argus, which had been known all the time as the Mineral Argus, was removed to the county seat of the present county. The present publisher, John M. Vrooman, acquired the interest of Charles S. Fell, who afterward joined B. F. Yerkes in the publication of the Bozeman Chronicle. In 1883, he tells in the special issue of the Argus of the advance of the county, and there are other articles of interest by Fell himself, by Tom Stout and John B. Ritch and others.

The wealth of Fergus county is now seven times as great as it was twenty years ago. The county has grown to take the lead in stock growing and in the production of sheep and wool, only one county in the state now containing more sheep than Fergus. The agricultural interests have grown apace. In the year 1883, when the Argus was started, the mines of the entire county employed 290 men and yielding \$5,000 a month in gold. Now the mines employ 1,000 men, another 3,000 derive their support from the industry, 25,000 tons of ore are milled every month and the monthly output of bullion is \$100,000. The county has several promising towns. It has ten times the population, and the business done by the merchants is greater in proportion than in any other section of the world.—Montana Daily Record.

Instead of waiting until it shall have attained its full majority, the Fergus County Argus takes advantage of its vigor and buoyancy of youthful spirit to anticipate that important event by one year and celebrates its twentieth anniversary by the publication of a special edition, printed on heavy book paper, illustrated with some very good halftones. Embellishing the first page is a reproduction, in miniature, of the first page of the first issue of the Mineral Argus, as the paper was then known. The Argus of twenty years ago and the Argus of today are entirely different productions, and the difference is of such a nature that it must be pleasing to its owner. Dur-

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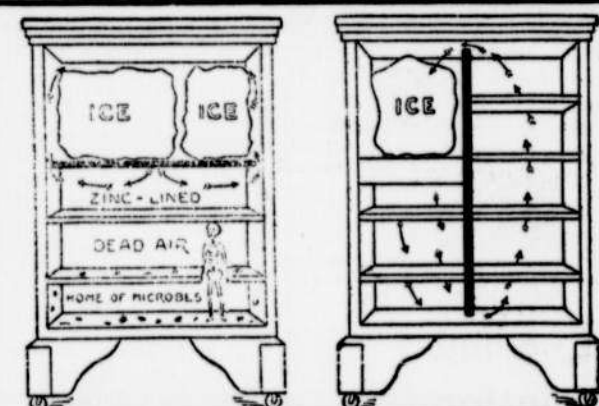
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