

From an Ultimate Consumer.

Chancellor Day in a recent article on the Standard Oil case suggested that it might be of interest to hear something from the ultimate consumer of the company's products.

I have used kerosene for fifty years — in fact ever since it was first put upon the market — ten years before the alleged "octopus" came into existence. The first gallon was bought when on a shopping expedition to the city — it cost one dollar, but proved so satisfactory in solving the lighting problem that when used up another gallon was bought in the home market — a village seventeen miles from the city; that cost \$1.50. Now our five gallon cans are filled three times for that!

How did people manage to live in those days? Well, money (7 per cent.) and light, only, were dear; even letter postage had been reduced from 25 cents to five cents.

Fuel was cheap; the farmers were clearing their land as fast as possible, so there was plenty of wood. All kinds of farm produce was both cheap and good. A shilling (12½ cents) a pound for butter, a shilling a dozen for eggs were standard prices. And by the way few people under fifty have ever tasted good

cheese - such as the ² expert farmers' wives of those days made and sold or bartered at the village stores. But the "lights of those other days" consisted principally of tallow dips and ill-smelling whale oil lamps, supplemented in winter by the log fires in the huge old-fashioned fireplaces. There were spermaceti and wax candles for festive occasions (where people could afford them); in cities gas was coming into use, and experimenters were putting on the market various burning-fluids, both expensive and dangerous. Even kerosene at first, before capital had accumulated sufficiently to perfect refining processes, had to be handled with care.

Now all this is reversed. Oil is our only cheap commodity - the prices of all other necessities have soared aloft, like balloons, but these the comparison ends, unlike the aircraft, they never drop. The ultimate consumer, notwithstanding "there are so many of him", is the least considered of all people. But as Lawrence Sterne says: "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb", so there are some alleviations even in the hard lot of that "shorn lamb," the ultimate consumer. There are bargain sales, the installment plan, the 5 and 10 cent stores, Standard Oil, and The Industrial life insurance. So the young people can dress respectably, provide furniture and cooking

When they go to 3 housekeeping utensils, need not spend their winters in cold and darkness, and should death enter their homes are not dependant upon municipal or neighborly charity for the performance of the last sad rites. But some say the price of oil does not interest us. we use gas or electricity. Such an answer reminds one of the queen who when her palace was assailed by rioters demanding bread, exclaimed, 'Bread!' If they can't get bread why don't they eat cake?' And those who do not burn oil should remember that even to them it is as useful as the ballast in the balloon keeping down their own expenses for illumination.

It is hardly worth while for ~~one~~^{one} of the disfranchised sex to spend much time considering questions she will never be called upon to assist in solving but sometimes thoughts arise in the mind. For instance it was stated the other day that Trusts (which had seemed by common concession classed as utterly abominable) were divided into two classes: Good trusts and bad trusts. I could find no definition of the good trust, but three infallible

marks were mentioned as distinguishing ~~the~~^{the} bad trust. A bad trust is a combination forcing prices up and compelling all to pay that price. (That does seem to fit the meat trust.)

But a company that besides spending immense sums in perfecting its products, that also treats it

great army of employees (said now to number 70,000) so justly and so generously that it has never had any labor troubles in all the forty years of its existence and has yet reduced the price of oil so that fifteen gallons can now be bought for the price of one in the days before the Standard Oil company was formed, certainly cannot be with any justice accused of forcing prices up.

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