SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson IV. Oct. 28, 1917.

Ezra's Return from Babylon.—Ezra 8: 15-36.

Commentary.—I. Preparations for the return (vs. 15-20). The first ten verses of the preceding chapter give an outline of the return to Jerusalem of exiles from Babylon with Ezra as their leader. This significant record is made: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." We have in the verses preceding the lesson a partial catalogue of those who went with Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem. The place of assembly was probably not far from Babylon, near one of the canals connected with Euphrates River at Ahava, though some think the people gathered near the Euphrates. When Ezra found that there were none of the Levites present to make the journey to Jerusalem, he sent for some of them in order that the temple service might be provided with ministers of this rank. Ezra's call met with a ready response and a considerable number of Levites became members of the expedition.

II. Prayer for protection (vs. 21-23) 21. I—Ezra speaks in the first person in giving the account of his great undertaking. Proclaimed a fast—Fasting was recognized as a means of successfully approaching God in prayer. Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast when threatened by his enemies (2 Chron. 20: 3). Jehoiakim proclaimed a fast (Jer. 36: 9), and Esther ordered the observance of a fast that she might approach the king on behalf of her people (Esth. 4: 16). Fasting indicates submission to God's will and humility, and is an expression of dependence upon God and faith in him. By fasting one places spiritual good above temporal. That we might afflict ourselves—"That we might humble ourselves."—R. V. To seek ..... a right way—This was an acknowledgment that Ezra felt his insufficiency for so important an undertaking, and an expression of his confidence in God's power and willingness to render aid. Our substance—Goods or property. 22. Ashamed to require ..... soldiers—Ezra had expressed to the king his confidence in God's protecting care over those who trust him, and it would be inconsistent to ask for a band of soldiers to ward off the attacks of enemies. The enemy—The route to Jerusalem lay through regions infested with bands of robbers ready to fall upon unprotected travellers. Ezra recognized the danger, but he was determined to depend upon the protecting hand of Jehovah, whose servants he and his companions were. Hand of our God—A symbol of the divine power, protection and love. 23. Intreated—True prayer is never offered in vain. The company gathered at "the river of Ahava," believed in the importance of their divinely-appointed mission, recognized the dangers of the journey and offered the prayer of faith.

III. Precautions taken (vs. 24-30). 24. Separated—Set apart for a particular and important service. Chief of the priests—Those among the priests who were leading men on account of their ability and perhaps because of their mature age. Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren—According to vs. 15-19 these were Levites. The passage, "Besides Sherebiah, Hashabiah and ten of their brethren with them" (R. V., margin), indicates that in addition to the twelve priests, twelve Levites were appointed to have the charge of the treasures. See v. 30. 25. The offering for the house of our God (R. V.)—A dedicatory offering. Which the king..had offered—The king and the chief men in his kingdom were deeply impressed with the power of the God of Israel and with the sacredness of worship offered to him, and were ready to contribute liberally to that worship. They joined with the Jews in their offerings for the temple service. 26. Weighed—Money was mostly reckoned by weight. Unto their hand—The treasures were carefully weighed and a strict account was kept of the amount in order that there might be no loss. They must deliver in Jerusalem the exact amount that was weighed into "their hand" in Babylon. Six hundred and fifty talents of silver—At $1,600 to the talent the silver would amount to more than $1,000,000, and the silver vessels $100,000. Of gold an hundred talents—The talent of gold was worth upward of $25,000, and the value of one hundred talents was at least $2,500,000. 27. A thousand darics (R. V.)—The daric was a coin worth about five dollars. Fine copper—A kind of brass in which was possibly a mixture of gold. This was an alloy highly prized by the ancients on account of the difficulty of its production and because of the high polish which it was capable of taking. The total value of the treasures has been placed at from $4,000,000 to $5,000,000. Ye are holy unto the Lord.—The priests and Levites had been set apart and consecrated to the service of the Lord. The vessels are holy also—They were separated from profane uses and were set apart for the temple service. A freewill offering—It is not the abundance of the gifts that affords satisfaction to the giver, but the spirit of devotion with which he makes the offering. 29. Watch ye and keep them—A sacred trust was committed to them for which they must give account and they were exhorted to exercise the utmost diligence. Until ye weigh them before the chief of the priests.. at Jerusalem—There could be no cessation of watchfulness until they had deposited the treasures intact with the proper officers at the house of Jehovah. Chambers—Rooms in the temple used as store-rooms and as places of meeting for the priests. 30. So the priests and the Levites received (R. V.)—From this it is reasonably certain that the treasures were committed to twelve priests and an equal number of Levites.

IV. A prosperous journey (vs. 31-36). 31. first month—This was the Jewish month Abib, or Nisan, corresponding nearly with April of our year. The company arrived in Jerusalem about the first of July. The distance in a direct line is five hundred miles, but it is probable that Ezra and his company went nearly nine hundred miles to avoid difficult desert marches. delivered us from....the enemy—They were saved from the attacks of those who would naturally have fallen upon them for the immense wealth they were carrying with them. such as lay in wait—It is not stated whether any attack was made upon the company or not, but in either case the Lord protected them, or in causing their defeat if they tried to plunder the returning exiles. 32. abode there three days—Thus allowing time for rest and for making plans for future action. 33-36. The next step was to deliver the treasures to the priests and Levites authorities to receive them at the temple. An account was taken of the weight of the silver and the gold, as well as the number of the sacred vessels, which would correspond with the inventory which was made before leaving Babylon.

Questions.—Who was Ezra? What aid was given him by the king of Persia? How long had it been since the first return from captivity under Zerubbabel? How many accompanied Ezra from Babylon to Jerusalem? What was the value of the treasures carried with them? What was the occasion for a call to fasting and prayer? How was the faith of Ezra shown? How long were the people in making the journey?

PRACTICAL SURVEY.

Topic.—Armed faith.

I. Exalted God before the heathen.

II. Directed the people to seek God.

III. Prepared against misfortune.

I.—Exalted God before the heathen. Ezra was about to conduct his brethren on a perilous journey to Jerusalem. He did not wont Artaxerxes to take the place in his plans which belonged to God. He wanted to show that God was the object of his supreme confidence. When making request of the king for authority to make his proposed journey, he declared his faith in God and his providence to promote the interests of his people. Ezra knew that he had but to ask an escort from the king. He had influence enough at court to have procured such help. His faith impelled him to forgo the protection of a Babylon guard. He considered that to reveal any anxiety would appear to a heathen king like a practical denial of the overshadowing providence of Jehovah. A band of soldiers would have hidden the "Shepherd or Israel." With the spiritual perception Ezra saw that his declining the escort would leave open to view God and his gracious and glorious government.

II. Directed the people to seek God. Ezra was accompanied to Jerusalem by members of the same families as Zerubbabel had taken with him. They were on their way from captivity to liberty, from exile to their ancestral home, from the land of idolatry to the scene of true worship. They were in a position of great responsibility, being entrusted with the care of many treasures for God's house. They were in danger of being attacked. They were not organized for defence. Ezra was not indifferent to the danger to which he might be exposed in marching without a band of soldiers. They trusted in the God of infinite power, who governs the world and can dispose all things in it to such ends as are agreeable to his will. The journey from Babylon to Jerusalem under the guidance and protection of Jehovah was somewhat comparable to the journey of their forefathers in their exodus from Egypt under the fiery, cloudy pillar as they journeyed to Canaan. Not by presumption, but by fasting and prayer they obtained the assurance that God would honor their faith and preserve them. Their fasting was to express their humiliation. By prayer they committed themselves to the guidance and protection of God. It might be expected that under such a leader as Ezra with such encouragements all the remaining Jews would have joined the returning company. Ezra's plans were examples of courage and caution.

III. Prepared against misfortune. Ezra was zealous for the honor of God, courageous in sacred toil, devout in daily life, and could act alone when necessary. He traveled unattended in an important crisis rather than compromise divine truth in the estimation of the king. He would not substitute a carnal expedient for a spiritual preparation. The hearts of the people were strengthened to follow his leadership with true faith in God. Ezra took particular care of the treasures of God's sanctuary. After fasting and prayer, before the caravan moved from Ahava, Ezra made arrangements for the custody of the offerings with which he was entrusted. It was fitting that the priests should carry the things that belonged to the temple. "To no other guardianship but that of the possessors of a symbolic and ceremonial purity could the vessels of a symbolic and ceremonial worship be entrusted." With exactness Ezra charged them with their trust. The safety of the treasure meant much to him. In answer to the humble prayers of Ezra and his company, God gave them guidance and guardianship all along the journey to Jerusalem. They reached their destination with joy and without misfortune. It was the end of a toilsome march. It brought the satisfaction of a long cherished hope of re-union with their own people in the true worship of Jehovah. Their faith was rewarded. Ezra and his company were just such characters as were needed in Jerusalem at that time T. R. A.

Profit by These.

Do not be content with, following good advice; catch up with it.

Keep an eye on the job ahead, but keep the other eye and both hands on the job you have.

There is plenty of room at the top, because those who get there are the few who started early to avoid the rush.

The man who goes half way to meet Fortune is more likely to find her than the man who waits for her to knock at his door.

The men who succeed beat when they work for others are those who see that in doing so they are also working for themselves.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE FOR THE BEGINNER WITH SHEEP

Common Sense Boiled Down and Practical Pointers Told Plainly From Experience---By W. H. Underwood.

I have maintained a flock of good sheep on my farm for a good many years and have always found them very profitable. Why more of these animals are not raised is something I can hardly understand. There are many reasons for raising sheep. First, is the money that can be obtained for the wool and mutton. It is needless to say that there is a big demand for these products and every indication points to a big demand for many years to come.

This class of animal should be maintained to aid in keeping down weed life. When weeds are young and sappy, sheep are in a sense insatiable devourers of the same. There are but few kinds of weeds that they will not trim down and consume and turn into good mutton if they have access to the same at a comparatively early stage in the growth of the weeds. When other pasture is not over abundant, this cropping down of weeds wil be more complete than under other conditions. They are equally ravenous also for the seeds of weeds. When these have been formed and even when mature and consumed by the sheep, they are so finely ground that they do not grow when dropped upon the ground.

ducts which would otherwise be wasted.

Sheep ought to be raised because of the influence which they exert upon fertility. No class of animal raised on the farm will equal them in the favorable influence thus exerted. This arises first from the readily available condition in which droppings reach the soil; second, from the scattered condition in which they reach the land, and third, from the general distribution of the droppings all over the land. In this way sheep leave the land richer in available fertility when they graze upon it than it was when the grazing began. Thus it is that the proverb has arisen that the sheep has a golden hoof.

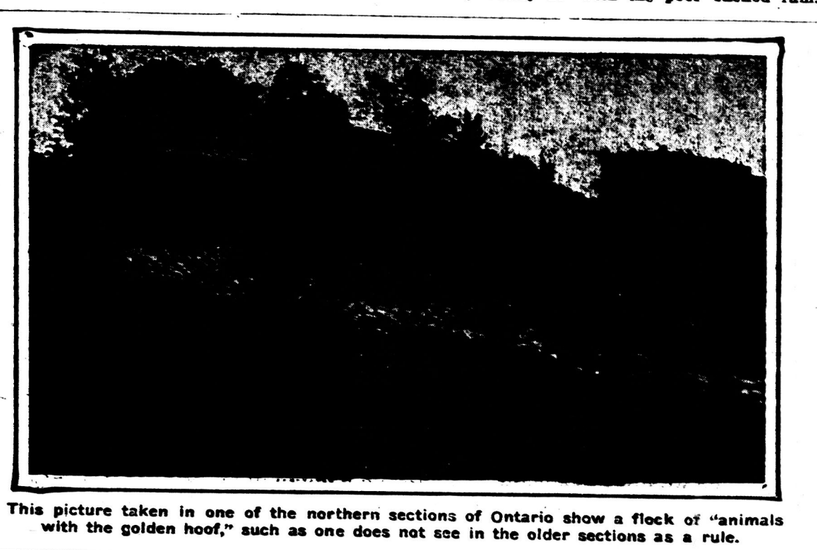
Sheep are docile and easily cared for. Most of the care they need is required when other farm operations are slack. The returns from sheep are quick and many, profits made principally from pasture, with a little concentrated feed to finish up on; a very small amount as compared with the grain feed necessary to finish other farm animals for the market.

In starting a flock of sheep, some advocate the purchase of pure bred animals, such as a bunch of ewe lambs. This means a heavy outlay at

for a beginner to learn about growing sheep, and experience can be bought much more cheaply with a small than with a large flock. One may find that he does not like sheep. This being so, he had better not try to grow them, for in all probability he will not give them the attention they need. With only a few ewes to start with, a large flock can soon be grown. The flock ought to double itself every year, and this increase will be about all the average beginner will be in position to handle well for a few years.

USE PURE-BRED RAM.

Afte rthe ewes have been secured, one can well afford to pay a good price for a good ram. It is impossible to get a ram of too high quality. The better the quality in the ram, the better the quality one will get in his produce. This is true regardless of the quality of the ewes. In the selection of the ram choose for constitution, vigor and masculine characteristics generally. It is always desirable to avoid certain physical defects, such as what is commonly called a bad back, low back of the shoulders, or sharp withered, steep rumped, narrow over the heart girth and flat ribbed. All these undesirable characteristics go with the poor backed ram. A broad



This picture taken in one of the northern sections of Ontario show a flock of "animals with the golden hoof," such as one does not see in the older sections as a rule.

SHEEP GRAZE EVERYWHERE.

Sheep should be kept to consume the waste products. On every farm these waste products abound more or less. They abound not only in the form of weeds, but in the form of grasses of various kinds. These are found in quantities in the grain fields after the grain has been harvested. They are found in the highways beside the farm, and they are found along fence borders, whatsoever may be the build of these. The sheep that are given access to them will virtually clean up everything and in good form, and the food thus eaten would otherwise be wasted, at least in large measure. Sheep adapt themselves to waste places, and adapt waste places to themselves. They will graze to the very bottom of the deep ditches. They will graze to the very summit of steep hills and crop the succulent tufts of grasses that grow where other animals fear to tread. Thus through the helpful agency of sheep many a stony or hilly farm which otherwise would largely exist as "dead" property is utilized and conducted in profitable channels.

Sheep should be raised to supply meat for the household. Mutton is one of our best meats, and on my farm we have it when desired. Many farmers are prone to confine their meat diet to salt pork, and largely for the reason that in this form meat is most easily kept. Where sheep are kept upon the farm one may have fresh meat and of a delicious character by killing and dressing occasionally a mutton from his flock. With a good place to keep such meat, such as an apartment in an ice house, it can be enjoyed in warm weather. But even in the absence of such a place one may partake of such food during much of the year, that is, during all portions of the year when the weather is cool enough to enable him to keep such meat in good condition. In this way much of the meat may be grown to meet the needs of the farm, from pro-

the beginning, with not much income during the first year. A ewe should be two years old before she drops her first lamb. Thus the only source of income from the ewe lamb is her wool clip, which should pay for her keep. For the man who has had no experience in raising sheep, and who wants to start a flock at small expense, I consider that a better method than buying pure-breds would be to buy the so-called old ewes which have been discarded from the flocks of sheep men. Such ewes can be obtained at the city markets at a very reasonable price.

SELECTING THE EWES.

When a ewe attains the age of five years many people consider her to be undesirable. Such a ewe, if a good breeder, will not appear so nice to the eye of the visitor as the ewe two or three years of age, but if her udder is in a good condition there is no reason why she should not be profitable from a breeding standpoint until she is eight years old. She is the kind of an animal I would want to start

Sheep are steadily increasing in popularity in Eastern Canada, and deservedly so. This illustration shows a type of sheep fold in use by our neighbors across the line and some of the sheep belonging to it.

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with, if I had had no experience in raising sheep and wanted to start a flock. In selecting such ewes, those which show good breeding and have good fleeces should be obtained. Care must be taken to secure animals free from scab, mange and like diseases. Though these diseases may be controlled, it is much better never to introduce them onto the farm, since the buildings, yards and pastures soon become infested, and there must be a continual war waged with parasites. In addition to seeing that they are free from diseases, the beginner should ascertain that the animals have full mouths. More than one beginner has been fooled by buying almost toothless ewes. Obviously such cannot be thrifty.

The tendency on the part of beginners is to buy a good many sheep and are in this condition when they are in This is not good policy. I don't think any one should tsart with more than 15 or 20 ewes. There is a good deal

backed ram straight from where his neck couples onto his shoulders right back to his tail is what should be required, and, in addition, a round barrel or well sprung rib, especially full over the heart girth. The present day stylish ram does not need a neck. If I could get one with his head coupled onto his shoulders I would not mind the neck, he will be able to get head down to graze. A short legged ram is desirable, and if the animal is well ground on a good set of strong legs, it is just as much in his favor. The nearer the ram is to a good mutton carcass the better. He should have and will have, a strong, broad head, broad and wrinkled nose when he is equipped as previously described.

The above described sheep will answer for the ram, be he of the mutton breed or fine wool breed. The covering or wool feature should be just as good as one can get it. It is desirable to get a fleece on the ram with the longest growth of staple or wool fibre possible, and as dense and compact on his skin and of as fine quality as possible. It is hard to get length, density, fineness of fibre, freeness from yellow, gummy, discolored oil, all in the same animal, but this can be approximated by keeping all the desirable features of fleece and carcass in mind when selecting the ram. These qualities are more or less transmissible to the offspring and, therefore should be considered carefully in selecting a ram for breeding purposes.

No grade ram should be selected There can be no real improvement secured from the use of a grade in any kind of a breeding venture that is worth talking about. The pure bred sire is the only kind that should be used. I would never use a ram lamb for breeding. My reason for this is that a lamb makes its best growth in its first year, and if it is used for breeding before it is a year old, its growth and full development is naturally hindered. Lambs sired by a ram lamb are not nearly so large as those sired by an older ram, and they do not always do well and make good growth.

The ram should have the very best of care during the breeding season It is important to keep this animal in good flesh, strong and vigorous. He should be provided with a ration such as a little grain, oats, clover or alfalfa hay, and a consistent variety that will encourage an appetite and yet temperate to avoid founder or overfeeding. A good way of being sure that the ewes are bred as fast as they come in season is to dust the body of the ram with ochre and turn him in with the flock a short time night and morning. He will find the ewes in season, serve them and leave a little ochre on their bodies, by which they can be detected and removed from the rest of the flock as fast as bred. The ram should be turned in with them again after 14 days or so in order that he may catch any that may have come in season again.

The aim should be to have the ewes in good condition at the time for mating. It is an easier matter to lay flesh on a ewe before she is pregnant than subsequently, when a portion of the feed is used in developing the unborn lamb. I do not mean that the ewes should be fat, but in good flesh or breeding condition. They are in good condition when they are good flesh, but lack the fat to make them fit for the shambles. Oats and bran fed night and morning, and the animals allowed to run outside during the day with access to some good clover or alfalfa hay, will produce splendid results. Turnips and other roots are very beneficial to the breeding flock in the fall, and also during the winter, as they help to counteract the binding tendency of grain feeds and provide succulence.

The next fall, after the ewes have dropped their lambs, some culling out should be done. Those ewes which are the oldest and least prolific, should be separated from the rest of the flock and fattened for the market. A number of the best ewe lambs should be selected to replace the old ewes which have been discarded, thus selecting the foundation for the future breeding flock. If this method is followed up, in a few years all the old ewes will be replaced by younger ones of better type and breeding. By getting a new sire every two years an excellent flock can be built up from a small outlay of money. If after a few years of experience with grades one desires to establish a pure bred flock, a few choice pure bred ewes may be added to the original flock. Then by proper care and selection the pure breds may be increased from year to year and the grades discarded.

—The Canadian Countryman.

MARKET REPORTS

TORONTO MARKETS.

FARMERS' MARKET.

Dairy Produce—		
Butter, choice dairy	$0 45	$0 45
Eggs, new-laid, doz.	0 45	0 50
Cheese, lb.	0 30	0 30
Do., fancy, lb.	0 00	0 30
Dressed Poultry—		
Turkeys, lb.	0 28	0 30
Fowl, lb.	0 25	0 35
Spring chickens	0 30	0 35
Ducks, Spring, lb.	0 00	0 35
Fruits—		
Apples, bkt.	0 50	0 60
Do., bbl.	3 00	6 00
Grapes, 6-qt. bkt.	0 50	0 55
Do., 11-qt. bkt.	0 00	0 00
Peaches, Can., bkt.	0 65	1 00
Pears, bkt.	0 50	0 75
Plums, bkt.	1 00	1 25
Cantaloupes, bkt.	0 50	0 [illegible]
Vegetables—		
Beans, small measure	0 00	0 25
Beets, bkt	0 25	0 30
Do., bag	0 00	1 00
Cucumbers, doz.	0 20	0 30
Cauliflower, each	0 15	0 25
Corn, dozen	0 20	0 30
Carrots, peck	0 00	0 20
Do., bag	0 00	0 [illegible]
Celery, per head	0 05	0 [illegible]
Cabbages, each	0 05	0 10
Gherkins, bkt.	1 00	1 50
Egg Plant, bkt.	0 65	0 75
Lettuce, doz. bchs.	0 20	0 30
Do., head, doz.	0 50	0 90
Onions, 75-lb. bag	2 00	2 50
Do., small bkt.	0 00	0 50
Do., pickling, bkt	0 00	0 75
Do., silver skins, bkt.	0 00	1 00
Potatoes, bag	1 00	1 15
Do., peck	0 00	0 30
Pumpkins, each	0 10	0 25
Parsley, bunch	0 00	0 10
Radishes, 3 bunches	0 00	0 10
Peppers, red, doz.	0 00	0 40
Do., green, doz.	0 15	0 40
Sage, bunch	0 05	0 10
Squash, each	0 10	0 25
Savory, bunch	0 05	0 10
Turnips, peck	0 50	0 15
Do., bag	0 00	0 65
Tomatoes, 11-qt. bkt.	0 40	0 50
Vegetables marow, each	0 05	0 [illegible]

MEATS—WHOLESALE.

Beef, forequarters, cwt.	$13 00	$15 00
Do., hinoquarters	17 00	20 00
Carcases, choice	16 00	18 00
Do., common, cwt.	9 50	11 00
Do., medium	12 00	14 50
Do., prime	19 00	22 00
Heavy hogs	18 00	20 00
Shop hogs	23 00	25 00
Abattoir hogs	24 00	25 00
Mutton, heavy	12 00	16 00
Do., light	16 00	19 00
Lambs, Spring, lb.	0 24	0 23
Do., yearlings	20 00	22 00

TORONTO CATTLE MARKETS.

Receipts—Cattle 1,310; calves 106 hogs, 2,400, sheep and lambs.

Ex. Cattle, choice	11 25	12 25
Butcher cattle, choice	10 00	10 50
Butcher cattle, medium	9 25	9 75
Butcher cattle, common	8 75	9 00
Butcher cows, choice	8 25	8 75
Butcher cows, medium	7 00	7 40
Butcher, cows, canners	6 40	6 75
Butcher bulls	6 25	8 75
Feeding steers	8 50	9 25
Stockers, choice	7 25	8 50
Stockers, light	7 00	7 40
Milkers, choice	75 00	125 00
Springers, choice	75 00	125 00
Sheep, ewes	12 00	12 00
Bucks and culls	9 00	10 50
Lambs	16 00	16 50
Hogs, fed and watered	18 25	18 25
Calves	6 50	15 50

OTHER MARKETS.

WINNIPEG GRAIN INSPECTIONS.

Car inspections at Winnipeg yesterday were as follows:

	Open.	High.	Low.	Close.
Oats—				
Oct.	0 65½	0 65¾	0 65⅝	0 65⅝
Nov.	0 65¼	0 65½	0 65	0 65⅝
Dec.	0 63⅝	0 63⅝	0 63⅝	0 63⅝
May	0 66⅝	0 66½	0 66⅛	0 66⅛
Flax—				
Oct.	2 89	2 90½	2 87¾	2 89
Nov.	2 79	2 83½	2 78½	2 83½
Dec.	2 73	2 76	2 72½	2 75¼
May	2 79	2 81½	2 77	2 81½

MINNEAPOLIS GRAIN MARKET.

Minneapolis—Corn, No. 3 yellow, $1 86 to $1.87. Oats, No. 3 white, 57 1-8 to 58 3-8c. Flour unchanged. Bran, $39.00 to $39.50.

BUFFALO LIVE STOCK.

East Buffalo, Despatch—Cattle receipts, 600; slow.

Veals, receipts 300; slow; $7 to $15.50.

Hogs, receipts 1,600; steady to 10c lower. Heavy, $18.10 to $18.25; mixed, $18 to $18.10; yorkers, $17.90 to $18.10; light yorkers, $17 to $17.25; pigs, $16.75 to $17; roughs, $16.75 to $17; stags, 15 to 16.

Sheep and lambs, receipts 3,200; slow and unchanged.

CHICAGO LIVE STOCK.

Chicago, Oct. 17.—cattle receipts 26,000; market slow.

Beavers	7 00	17 40
Western steers	6 20	14 00
Stockers-Feeders	6 20	11 50
CowsHeifers	5 00	12 15
Calves	9 50	16 25
Hog receipts 27,000! market slow.		
Light	16 15	18 00
Mied	16 50	18 15
Heavy	16 45	18 15
Rough	16 40	16 65
Pigs	11 75	15 10
Bulk sales	16 85	17 95
Sheep receipts 24,000; market firm.		
Wethers	9 10	13 00
Lambs, Na.	13 00	18 25

A man may be up one day and down the next, but that doesn't necessarily prove he isn't on the level.

"Do you think your townspeople will give you any banquets?" "Not if I can head em off," replied Senator Sorghum. "I don't want to get with a crowd and sit right down in front of a reminder of the high-cost-of-living problem."—Washington Star.