



Whether Common or Not

By Will M. Mappin.

That Corn Problem

The editor of this department has been flooded with answers to the recent corn problem propounded in these columns. To print all of the letters would more than fill an issue of The Commoner. "A Buckeye of the Corn Belt," who propounded the problem, is F. M. Marquis of Milwaukee, Wis. Three-fourths of the replies were practically correct.

But Carl Fay of Eminence, Kan., sends a clipping from the Eldon, Mo., Advertiser which relates that Mr. J. B. Allen brought to the Advertiser office a perfect ear of red corn containing thirteen straight rows of kernels. The editor of this department is a native born Missourian and he is never surprised at anything big coming from that state. But as to that thirteen-rowed ear of corn—well, he is a Missourian and will have to be shown.

Mr. Marquis submitted drawings of cobs with a different number of sections, but these can not be reproduced. But he gives this reply to the problem he propounded, and addresses it to "The Young Readers of The Commoner."

"Although many of you may not have given a second thought to the question propounded, I wish to assure you that you will be the better prepared to solve the complex problems which are sure to confront you later in life by reason of having probed into this simple problem. The reason why the rows of kernels on a cob are always even is "Because twice one is two." You may say that this is simply a quotation from the multiplication table. True—and the multiplication table is merely a physical demonstration of a mental fact. If you will examine a cob you will discover the structural portion is divided into sections running lengthwise. Two rows of grains germinate and grow on each section. (Why is another problem.) These sections may vary in number from four up to sixteen or twenty. But no matter whether odd or even, the rows of kernels are always even because twice any number is always an even number. Multiply any number by two, and the product is an even number. A simple fact, it is true, but a fact that is a truth, and a truth that must be recognized, accepted and made the basis of the solution of every problem in higher mathematics, and the recognition of this mathematical truth which is manifested and demonstrated in every ear of corn may prove to be the correct starting point in the solution of some of the higher problems of life."

The problem was propounded to the "young people," and by that was meant the boys and girls. But T. P. Huff, a teacher in the public schools of San Antonio, Texas, sends in such a clear answer that it is printed. Mr. Huff says:

"I send a solution to the 'Corn Problem.'

"The general appearance of the corn cob is that of a right cylinder, but by stripping the husks from the outer part of the cob the more solid part is found to be a regular prism. If the upper and lower bases of this

regular prism are hexagons there will be six lateral faces, if heptagons there will be seven lateral faces, if octagons there will be eight lateral faces. Upon each of these lateral faces there is always found two rows of kernels, consequently there is always an even number of rows. This may also be seen by taking a cross or right section of the ear while the kernels are still on it. This right section will also show that the pith in the center of the cob forms a regular prism with the same number of lateral faces as that formed by the more solid part already described.

"Now, I think that I have solved the problem so far as it applies to mathematics, but it seems to me that there might be some natural solution as to why two rows of kernels grow from one lateral face. I read the question when you brought it out in The Commoner, but did not try to solve it until yesterday, after reading your statement that it was a mathematical solution.

"I have shucked and shelled many ears of corn during my boyhood days upon the farm, and have also studied mathematics some, but I never thought of this question until propounded by you in The Commoner.

Le Roy Scott, Clinton, Mo., sends the following answer, and Le Roy has given what the "corn editor" thinks is the very best answer submitted by the "young people." He writes as follows:

"Noticing in your paper of the 2d inst., the question, 'Why an ear of corn has an even number of rows,' and following the advice given therein, I have found the following reason, which I think is worth submitting to you for your decision in regard to its being correct.

"Every grain of corn has a fibre or vein running from it into the cob. In nearing the center this fibre joins with another coming from a grain or kernel in the next row; these continue as one to the pith, where it receives nourishment to develop the grain.

"This is also why a cob, when broken, can be broken into sections—the least section contains two rows of cobs, or room for two rows.

"Although this may not be right, it is the only material reason I can find that the fibre of each grain of corn in one row combines with the fibre of the immediate grain in the next row, to carry nourishment from the pith or heart of the cob, considering that the fibres of all succeeding grains of that row combine with the roots, veins or fibres of immediate grains in the same row as the first."

Schuyler La Tourette, of Covington, Ind., sent in an answer which is entitled to rank with that of Le Roy Scott, although it does not quite go into such detail. But it shows careful study of a corn cob, just the same. The following caught the idea of "twice one is two," and stated that the rows were even because two rows grew on each section of cob:

Adlai Hugo, Reelsville, Ind.; L. C. Powers, Villisca, Ia.; Eugene Boage, Pekin, Ind.; Charles Stengel, Rhine-land, Tex.; Henry Mfner, Harrington, Del.; Samuel Fallon, Fort Dodge, Ia.; Willie Altheuser, Caledonia, Mo.; Ernest K. Spangler, Westminster, Md.; Bessie Quinn, Waltonville, Ill.; John P. Murphy, Mohawk, N. Y.; J. J. Dean, Pleasantville, Ia.; John J. Berry, Pomona, (state not given).

As stated before, some of these answers look like they were written by adults, but the "corn editor" is quite positive that Le Roy Scott and Schuy-

ler LaTourette come within the classification of "young people."

The Difference

Having read that "charity covereth a multitude of sins," the great financier drew his check for ten million dollars, and after having called it to the attention of the newspapers, gave it to a great institution of learning.

"There," said the financier, "I have made good for many of my transgressions."

"Not so," replied Conscience. "That was not charity; it was merely advertising."

Successful

"I remember Johnnie Cutely," said the returned wanderer as he talked with an old acquaintance in the home town of his youth. "He was an awfully bright young fellow, and the village cut-up. I often wondered why Johnnie didn't go on the stage."

"He did."

"What line? And did he make a success?"

"The Bowerville and Hunktown line. And he's the best driver the stage company has got."

To Be Sure

Boasterly—"If there is anything I can't abide it is a fellow who hasn't got the nerve to come right out and say just what he thinks. The meanest man in the world is the sneaking 'backcapper.'"

Thinkerly—"That's just what I think. By the way, here comes Squareman; let's ask him what he thinks about it."

Boasterly—"Excuse me, but I don't want to meet Squareman just now. I don't like him very well and I sent him a comic valentine yesterday. He may have recognized the handwriting."

Mixed

Father—"What do you mean by being saucy to your grandpa?"

Son—"Grandpa is the meanest ol'—"

Father—"Look here, young man; you mustn't talk about my father that way. I want you to understand that my father is enough sight better than your father ever was, and—that is, I mean that I am better than my—look here, young man, you chase right off to bed and don't let me hear anything more from you tonight!"

Brain Leaks

When you want to see real faults, look in.

There is a difference between curiosity and investigation.

We have eaten biscuits that were perfect sonatas, and listened to sonatas that were awfully yellow biscuits.

It is idle to argue with a man who has a facility for inventing his own statistics.

Whenever you hear a machine politician saying he has "retired," just look around and you will see plenty of signs that he was shoved.

Talk about misers who hoard their gold—ever see a housewife that just wouldn't open her preserves?

You never realize what good neighbors you had until strangers move in to the house just vacated.

You can not lift up without reaching down.

God's hand is always extended downward to men, but they have to stand on their tip-toes to reach it.

Perfunctory prayer stops at the ceiling.

Every time we see a woman coddling a pug dog we rejoice that some baby was fortunate enough to escape a disaster.

When an employe becomes convinced that his services can not be dispensed with it is time that he be allowed to look for another situation.

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