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FULCRUM is a newsletter for collectors of antique weighing and measuring equipment and enthusiasts of historic metrology. It is published in February, May, August and November. Contributions should be sent to the Editor, John Knights.

The Cup That Doesn't Necessarily Cheer!

In the last edition I mentioned the career of Harvey Wiley as he sought to introduce legal protections for food consumers in the USA. After his career with the US Department of Agriculture he spent some time working for the Good Housekeeping Magazine where he continued to look at the state of food, campaign for accurate description and ensure wholesomeness of content.

Here he encountered Fannie Farmer, a celebrity cook who published recipe books which sought to teach people how to cook nutritious food at a time when the commercial products then available were decidedly suspect. The two collaborated in their campaign to improve the lot of the American consumer.

Fannie Farmer is best known as "*the mother of level measurements.*" in that she eschewed the use of weights in her recipes and pioneered a system of standard volume measures.

In Europe recipes are usually constructed through a mixture of weighed dry ingredients and measured liquids. Minor elements such as herbs and spices are measured in teaspoons or tablespoons. The US system uses a standard cup as its unit and ingredients are dispensed in those cups and subdivision thereof. Fannie Farmer devised this method in the late 19th century when presumably scales and weights were not commonly available in American kitchens. In order to standardise the system sets of measures, based on a standard cup became commercially available for home cooks to use.

As something of a volumist (not a proper word) I have some respect for the US system but it has resulted in a bit of a chasm between the American and European experience when following recipes. Sets of US cups and their sub-divisions are not so readily available of this side of the Atlantic and most recipes are still weight based. In any case,

many British people still moan vociferously when metric units are used instead of the more familiar imperial so cups could be one novelty step too far for the UK.

Liquids and free flowing dry ingredients such as flour, sugar etc are readily measured but the system does sometimes become problematical when dealing with more lumpy stuff such as butter, cheese, chocolate or even cucumber (which should probably be measured by length).

This whole business can be quite contentious and people have rushed into print to vent their ire. A British food writer called Sue Quinn memorably wrote such an article in the

Daily Telegraph which included the heartfelt line *'Dear United States of America. Could you please buy some ruddy kitchen scales?'*



SCOTCH SHORTBREADS

1 cup butter	2 cups bread flour
1/2 cup confectioners' or light brown sugar	1/4 teaspoon baking powder
	1/4 teaspoon salt

Wash butter, add sugar gradually, and flour sifted with baking powder and salt. Roll 1/8 inch thick, cut out in squares or rounds, prick with fork, and decorate, if desired. (See Sugar Cookies, p. 666.) Bake 20 to 25 minutes in moderate oven (350° F.) or until delicately brown. *Makes 24 or more.*

Royal Fans. Cut in 2- to 5-inch rounds, then quarter and mark with back of knife like fan. Brush over with egg yolk diluted with water.

VIENNESE CRESCENTS

1 cup butter	1 cup ground almonds (unblanched)
1/4 cup sugar	1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups flour	

Cream butter, add other ingredients, and mix thoroughly. Shape with fingers in crescents 1 inch thick and about 3 inches long. Arrange on buttered cooky sheet. Bake 35 minutes in slow oven (300° F.). Cool. Roll in confectioners' sugar. *Makes 36.*

Pecan Delights. Increase sugar to 1/2 cup and use 2 cups chopped pecans in place of almonds. Add 3 teaspoons water. Shape like dates.

Interesting Postcards

I have recently encountered a few interesting postcards with a metrological bent.

A rather nice photograph (right) of an Avery lorry of perhaps 1920's vintage (I am no expert)

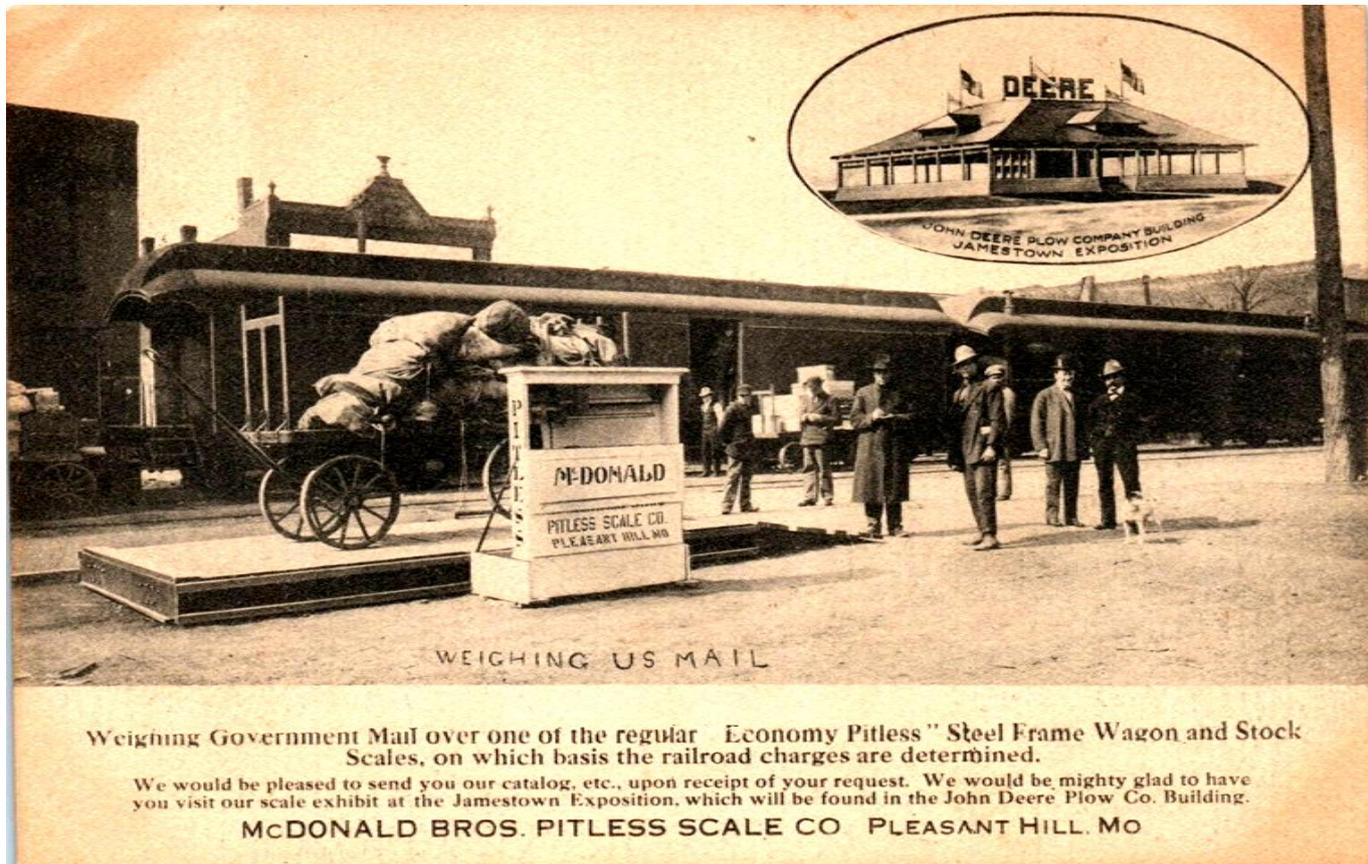




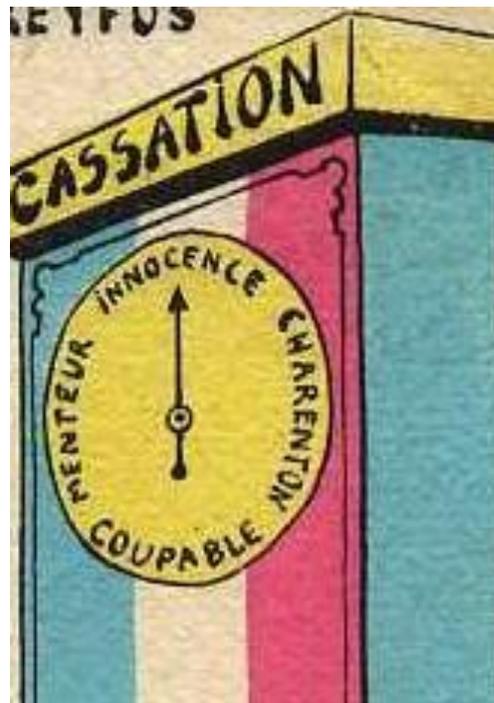
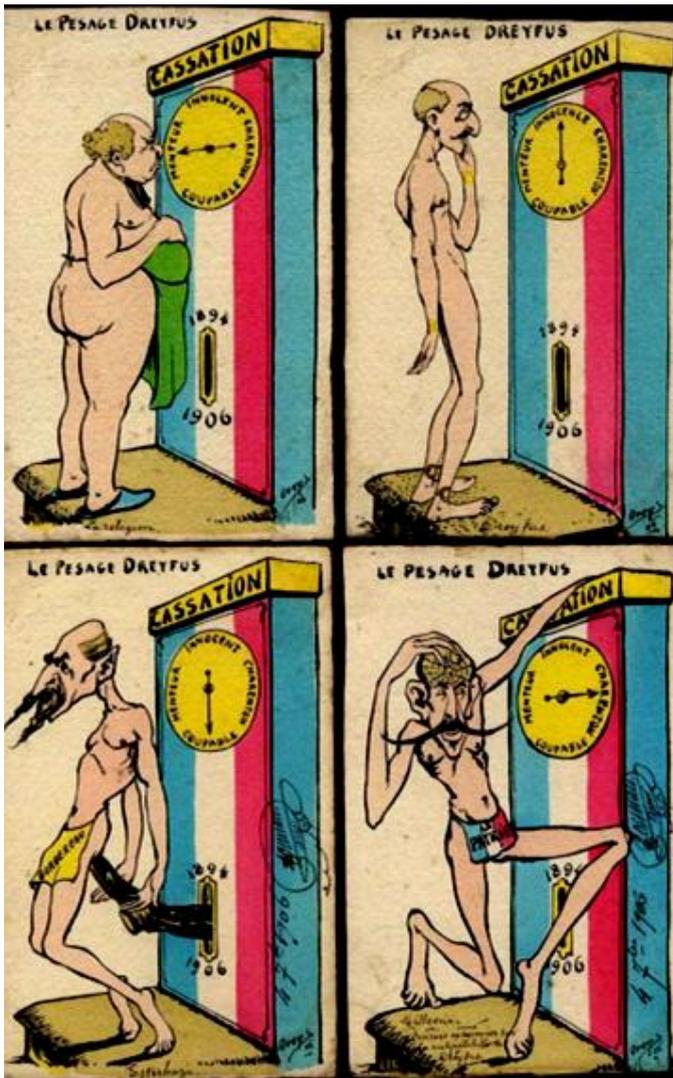
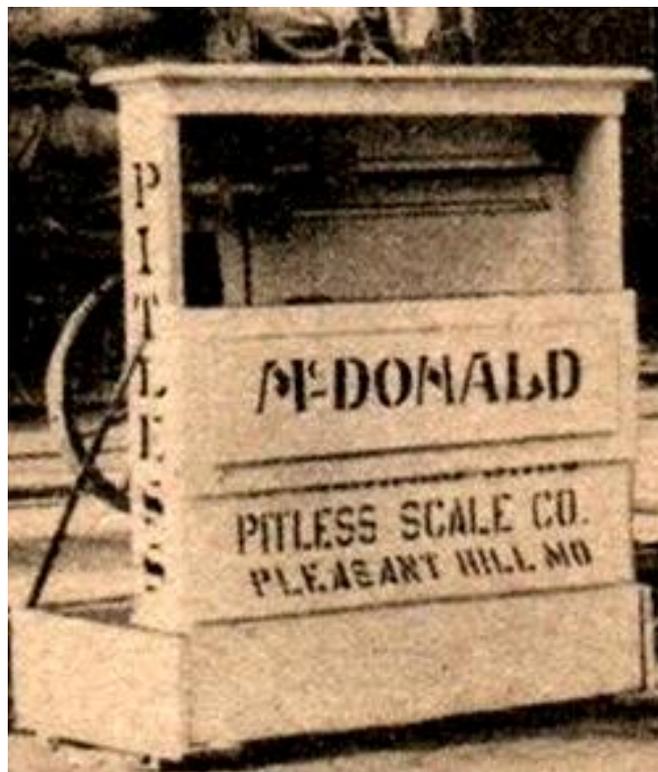
presumably used to transport weights and components to jobs.

This is a singularly bizarre example of a postcard with a picture (left) depicting 'Two Gnomes Weighing a Pig'. It appears to be German and from the late 19th century. The interesting feature for me, is the representation of the bismar being used to conduct the weighing. This historically contentious device is clearly still popular in fairyland.

Below we see a card featuring a machine described as the 'McDonald Economy Pitless Steel Framed Wagon and Stock Scales'. This is an early example of what is known in the UK as a self-contained surface mounted weighbridge. This type of scale is now standard as it can be prefabricated and simply dropped into place at the customer's site. The modern device of course uses electronic load cells to conduct the weighing and these are easily contained within the confines of the shallow frame.



A traditional mechanical weighbridge was mounted in a pit which gave room for the hangers on which the levers were pivoted. The McDonald machine obviously uses levers connected to a steelyard indicator (right) and it would be interesting to know how the bearings, connecting links etc were crammed into the limited space.



Speaking of bizarre, the gnomes have nothing on the above set of weird cards based on a notorious episode in French history. In 1894, an army officer called Alfred Dreyfus was convicted of treason because he had disclosed military secrets to the Germans. He was disgraced and sentenced to imprisonment on Devil's Island off the coast of French Guyana. It soon became apparent however that his conviction was suspect and was probably not unconnected with the fact that Dreyfus was Jewish. The esteemed writer Emile Zola famously wrote a open letter about the case under the title J'Accuse, which was widely published in the newspapers. The establishment, however closed ranks and even took reprisals against anyone who campaigned on Dreyfus's behalf. It was therefore not until 1906 when he was finally, somewhat begrudgingly, exonerated.

The set of four cards by one Orens (Denizard) feature a person weighing machine, serving as a modernised representation the traditional scales of justice. On each card we see a naked figure weighing himself. Each figure represents one of the characters from the Dreyfus affair and the scale, representing the Cassation (French High Court) is passing judgement. Alfred Dreyfus himself is being judged innocent at the top right and is shown bearing the marks of the leg irons on his ankles, acquired during his 5 years tropical imprisonment. At the bottom left we see one Charles Esterhazy, an army major. He is being judged 'guilty'! His modesty is covered by a piece of cloth labelled 'Bordereau' which is the name given to the incriminating document used initially, to convict Dreyfus. This was a letter found in the waste paper basket at the German Embassy in Paris. It contained military secrets and was initially attributed to Dreyfus. Years later the handwriting was identified as that of Esterhazy but by then, he was long gone having left both the army and the country before he could be held to account. In the illustration he is at least receiving a kick up the backside from the judicial scale. A feature never approved in UK machines.

Another card shows a clergyman, naked except for his identifying collar who is judged to be a liar. He must be someone involved in the matter or maybe it was simply a commentary on the perceived misconduct of the church in the course of the affair. The other card shows Lucien Millevoye (straight outta Hogwarts), editor of 'La Patrie'. This was a nationalistic and somewhat anti-Semitic journal, which stirred up even more hatred towards Dreyfus. He is represented as being mentally ill. The cobweb on his forehead is indicative of feeble-mindedness and the scale pointer indicates 'Charenton', an asylum just outside Paris. This establishment was made famous by its association with the Marquis de Sade who was once a notable inmate. I don't think Millevoye ever actually ended up in the asylum but it was clearly where the artist thought he belonged. The name Dreyfus has become shorthand for judicial miscarriage although the case was (and is) scarcely a unique example. Its notoriety is probably down to the intervention of Emile Zola and his use of that emphatic and dramatic phrase from the French Revolution, 'J'Accuse!'

The Way We Were Again

Courtesy of a local history Face Book group I obtained a grocery list from the 1960s showing the kind of things we were buying and consuming some 60 years ago.

The list from the Grimsby Co-Operative seems to be for a weekly shop delivered to the customer.

At this time I used to deliver boxes of groceries to the customers of a corner shop in Skegness so am well acquainted with this type of list which would be stuffed in the box along with the goods. Shortly after this time grocery delivery went into rapid decline as the self-service supermarket began to replace the corner shops and me on my clanky 'Granville' bicycle.

I think we then thought the days of home delivery were well and truly gone forever so it is quite amusing as we now see little Tesco vans zooming around the place in the 21st century.

At the time of the list we still frequented specialised shops such as butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers and bakers so perhaps everything this particular family required was not on this list. Nowadays the specialist retailer is something of a niche survivor, only to be found in the high streets of more aspirational communities. Most of the items on the Co-Op shopping list are still recognisable today although many are deeply unfashionable and some have had a name change to reflect modern tastes.

