

Let's make a Deal

The turmoil of economic instability causes peculiar and disastrous mannerisms. We, the people, suffer terrible pangs of stupidity simply because our dollar has shrunk into near oblivion. There is an obsession to seek the sale, the bargain, so that we may have some microscopic tangible to account for our vanishing money.

We are never old enough, or wise enough, to realize that bargains are rare or that sales are often figments of commercial creativity. We never really comprehend or evaluate the truth found in the phrase, "You never get something for nothing."

There are so many people ready and able to take advantage of our compulsion to make a deal. They offer us terrific savings on malfunctioning equipment and we buy with gusto. They thrust before us inferior goods that are savagely grabbed up because the price has been slashed ten percent. They advertise openly, even honestly, because they are so sure of our gullibility. There is even a small curio shop in Washington that has a large sign that says...JUNK BOUGHT-ANTIQUES SOLD. And people flock to that curio shop to buy a revolutionary war rifle that was made in 1976-1987

This past week I drove up to

Country Philosopher

Amos Arthur Holmes



Charlotte Hall to take in the Farmer's Market. And I went for bargains.

It was a bright, sunny day and I walked around basking in an atmosphere of Amish farmers and home-baked bread. I breathed the aroma of spicy red apples and the pungent smell of dirt-crustured turnips. I saw rusty nails of dubious value and dolls that went back to actiquity.

And I found three colossal bargains.

An electric toaster that an old senile individual sold to me for three dollars. A fifty pound bag of potatoes that a young lady let me have for one dollar. And a mystery book that (after much haggling) I got for ten cents.

As I drove home I was immeasurably pleased with myself. Who said you couldn't get something for nothing? Ha! I had

taken advantage of some very sly people. I had confronted dealers who made a living from naive customers and I had outsmarted them all.

I took my bag of treasures into the house and my wife said, "What have you got there?"

I disregarded the sneer on my

wife's face and plugged in the toaster. I put in two slices of bread and waited until the toast popped up. Regretfully, the toast wasn't the only thing that popped up. Filaments and wires and little nuts and bolts popped up and the toaster caught on fire.

I opened the bag of potatoes and the first ten pounds were the nicest potatoes I have ever seen and the bottom forty pounds were in a state of frantic decay.

I went out on the porch and started reading my mystery book. I love mystery books and this one was terribly exciting. I sat up reading until two o'clock in the morning and I finally got to the last page. It was here that I would find out who the murderer was.

And the last page was missing.