Juggling With Figures.

Edward Atkinson is the statistical champion of the money power, and if a premium were offered for making figures seemingly lie, by illogical and unwarranted deductions, he would easily win it. Apart from his reputation as a manipulator of statistics, he has won some notoriety by tracing the increase of destitution among the laboring classes to a waste in cooking.

In an article on "Farm Mortgage Statistics," in the Forum for May, Mr. Atkinson exercises his peculiar ability in making the best possible showing for debtor farmers, by an unusual sacrifice of candor, and then takes the extraordinary position that the more farmers owe, the better they are off. The comparative increase of farm mortgage debt within a given time is the true measure of agricultural prosperity. The farm indebtedness, which increased 156 per cent. during the last census decade, while population increased less than 25 per cent., indicates thrift and was a "progressive" increase. As Mr. Atkinson says: "This view of the matter is the very reverse of the construction which is usually given to these facts." He might have added that his view is the reverse of the construction that will continue to be given them by all persons who use figures to illustrate the truth and not merely to bolster special pleas in behalf of class interests.

According to Mr. Atkinson, the most striking evidence of national prosperity is that between 1880 and 1889, inclusive, 9,517,747 mortgages were executed upon farms and lots, to the amount of $12,094,877,393, while at the close of the decade $6,019,679,985 of the amount remained unpaid. By drawing further upon the last census, his position could be greatly strengthened, assuming that he is right in estimating a man's prosperity by the amount he owes and the interest he has to pay. Our total private indebtedness at the close of 1889 was 19½ billion dollars—a progressive increase of 13 billion dollars in ten years. This omits the proof of prosperity to be squeezed out of our national, state, county, town and municipal indebtedness. So that the 6 billion dollars and more on farms and lots—largely the mortgaged homes of working people—represented at that time considerably less than one-third of the portion of private indebtedness that was acknowledged to the census takers.

In supporting his theory, that the general prosperity may be truly gauged by the amount of interest which is paid to money lenders—the greater the aggregate amount of interest the better for the debtor class—Mr. Atkinson has to notice and make some sort of accounting for the aggravated distress of the past year. This was incidental and chargeable to congressional and legislative interference with the railroad corporations to tampering with the gold standard of value and threatening to restore depreciated silver to the coinage.

In making out his case that the farmers of the United States are under a delusion in supposing that they are not enjoying normal prosperity, Mr. Atkinson omits pertinent facts of which two especially essential ones will be noted here.

While he does not fail to credit the mortgagor with the amount of mortgaged debt liquidated during the last official decade, he makes no mention or estimate of the proportion which was settled by foreclosure and the transfer of title from the owner to the creditor, or someone else, because of the debtor's inability to pay. Yet the records will prove that this proportion has been distressingly large and investigation will prove that it may be at least proximately measured by the proportion of farms that are occupied by renters and which is fast duplicating the tenant system of Europe. The farms of the United States may be classified, in a general sense, with results that are close to the truth, into three equal divisions, one of which is occupied by the owners and unencumbered, one mortgaged but still in possession of the owners, the remaining third being lost to the owners and occupied by tenants.

The other omission of Mr. Atkinson referred to was in failing to note the depreciation of farm lands in value within the period of which he treats. That depreciation has not been less than 50 per cent. within fifteen years, taking the average of the whole country. Does the loss of many billions of dollars from this source bear no such relation to the financial condition of farmers as would justify a professional statistician in taking it into his calculations?

The impression Mr. Atkinson tries to give of the status of agriculture fits badly with the facts and figures in the case, even taking the mortgage record as quoted by himself. Still, crushing as is the agricultural debt, which is covered by real estate security, the real distress among producers is far more truly typified by debts secured by chattel mortgage. Nebraska is among the few states which require registrars of deeds to keep tabulated records of these transactiions. For the year ending May 1, 1892, before the late panic, chattel mortgages were filed in Nebraska to the amount of $25,138,016, or more than two-thirds of the amount represented by real estate mortgages for the same time. During that year there were 2,100 real estate mortgages satisfied by foreclosure in the productive state of Nebraska.

The forced inferences of Mr. Atkinson but mock the debt-stifled industries of the nation. He is but the apologist of conditions under which about all the earnings of industry not required to keep producers fed and sheltered are passing into the hands of money lenders. The rate at which the producing forces of the United States have been compelled to pile up debt has brought ruin to hundreds of thousands and must end in collapse. The wealth of the world is being absorbed by professional money owners through the law of interest. Already 250,000 persons own 80 per cent. of the wealth of the United States and have confiscating claims on a large portion of the remaining 20 per cent.

There can be no peaceful solution of the vital problem now demanding attention except in a popular uprising and an independent appeal to the ballot. The parties and politicians by whom the government has been surrendered to greed and special privilege must be cast adrift. If farmers and wageworkers would save anything and secure the right to rational existence they must unite their forces at the polls. They have been plundered and are inexorably doomed as the result of infamous legislation dictated and paid for by conspiring wealth. They possess overwhelming numerical power and its intelligent exercise in a constitutional way is alone necessary to compel the substitution of laws shaped in the common interest for legislation that has been enacted to enable money sharks to prey on industry and to place labor at the feet of capital.—Rocky Mountain News, May 17.

The "Dogs and the Fleas" is a comical, instructive and intensely interesting book. Of course it is political. See premium list.

When writing to our advertisers always mention the ADVOCATE.

Harvester History.

For the benefit of the younger generation, we reprint below some interesting figures from the Deering Farm Journal showing the dates on which the Marsh Harvester, the Wire Binder and the Twine Binder were first put out by the leading harvester manufacturers. The older generation does not need to be told. It remembers Hussey's Reaper in 1833 and the McCormick some twelve years later. It remembers about reading in 1858 of the success of the Marsh Brothers in their new harvester. It remembers how the Deering people held the field alone with this machine during most of the seventeen years' life of the patent. Then, when the patent did expire, the older generation remembers that William Deering & Co. came out with the Wire Binder. This was in 1874, and the younger generation even, can remember the rapid strides that followed. How after this pioneer in automatic binders had had the field for three years, McCormick and the other manufacturers fell into line; and how in 1878 the Deering people spoiled the whole wire binder business by coming out with the Appleby Twine Binder. Both old and young must smile as they now look back at the frantic attempts made by the late converts to wire binders, to push that machine in the face of the wonderful twine binder, and how they finally were all ultimately compelled to fall into line and manufacture the twine binder under the Appleby patents. The Farm Journal tells the story of the successive steps in manufacture by means of a witty drama entitled "Crow and Quail," which is clinched by the following statement:

The following are the dates on which various manufacturers began building and putting on the market harvesters, wire binders and twine binders. The dates for Deering machines are exact. Those for competing firms are according to our best knowledge.

MARSH HARVESTER.

DEERING	1858
Wood	1874
Osborne	1875
McCormick	1875
Buckeye	1877
Champion	1881
Plano	1882

Automatic binders were first put upon machines and sold as follows:

DEERING	1874
Wood	1874
McCormick	1877
Buckeye	1877
Osborne	1878
Champion	1881
Plano	1882

The Appleby twine binder was applied to the Marsh harvesters as follows:

DEERING	1878
Esterly	1880
Excelsior	1880
McCormick	1881
Buckeye	1882
Champion	1882
Osborne	1882
Wood	1892

Child labor in any industry is not a "resource of the poor," it is a crime of capitalism. Capitalism counts upon reducing the father's wages by employing the child. The civilization that makes it a part of its economic plan is reeking with the blood of innocents. Not to make poverty endurable, but to abolish it, is the mission of social democracy —Twentieth Century, May 10.

"Stubborn Facts in a Nutshell," English, German or Swede; five cents each; $4 per hundred; $30 per thousand. Address People's party headquarters, Topeka.

THE MARKETS.

CHICAGO, May 21, 1894.

WHEAT—Cash, 55¾ cents; July, 57½ cents; Sept. 58⅝ cents.

CORN—Cash, 37 cents; July, 37¾ cents; Sept., 38¾ cents.

OATS—Cash, 28⅝ cents; July, 29⅝ cents.

PORK—Cash $12.20.

LIVE STOCK.

KANSAS CITY, May 21, 1894.

CATTLE—Shipping steers, $3.15@4.75; native cows, $2.00@3.60; stockers and feeders, $3.10@$3.85; bulls, $2.25@3.45.

HOGS—Bulk of sales, $4.60@4.70; lights, yorkers and pigs, $4.40@4.70.

HORSES.

W. S. Tough & Son, managers of the Kansas City Stock Yards horse and mule department, report the market as being decidedly off. Prices are from $7 to $10 lower than during the past week on everything except stylish roadsters and knee actors. This class are still selling fairly well. Leggy, rough coupled draft horses are hard to sell at any price and it is almost impossible to get a bid on a cheap, pluggy horse.

Extra draft, 4 to 7 years	$100 00	@	$125 00
Good draft, " "	60 00	"	90 00
Extra drivers " "	100 00	"	175 00
Good drivers " "	65 00	"	90 00
Saddle good to extra	75 00	"	175 00
Southern mares and geldings	25 00	"	75 00
Western range, unbroken	20 00	"	50 00
Western ponies	12 50	"	20 00

MULES.

Market fairly active. A little more movement in all grades. Prices steady at quotations.

1½, 4 to 7 years, extra	$ 45 00	@	$ 60 00
14¾ " " good	35 00	"	50 00
hands 4 to 7 years, extra	75 00	"	90 00
15 " " " good	70 00	"	80 00
15¼ " " " extra	100 00	"	120 00
15 " " " good	90 00	"	100 00
16 to 16½, good to extra	100 00	"	135 00

WOOL.

Silberman Bros., 212 and 214 Michigan street, Chicago, get out a weekly report of the wool market which they will be glad to send on application.

Prices for Kansas and Nebraska wools are:

Fine (heavy)	9c to 10c
Fine (choice)	10c to 12c
Fine medium	11c to 13c
Medium	13c to 15c
Low medium	13c to 15c
Coarse	12c to 14c
Cotted, etc	8c to 10c
Black	10c to 12c

WOOL

DOES WOOL GROWING PAY?

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