

THE FARMER.

As He Was and as He Is.

HOW HE IS ROBBED.

Stupendous Decline in Farm Products.

A PERNICIOUS FINANCIAL POLICY.

Evils of Contraction—The Concentration of Wealth—Rise and Fall of Gold—The Effect of the Free Coinage of Silver—What Gold Monometallism Stands For—An Honest Payment of Debts—The Help Offered by the Bull.

By JOHN H. BEADLE.

The accompanying illustrations are from New York newspapers of recent date. They are published to show the popular idea of the personality of the American farmer in the gold stronghold of the country.

I will invite your attention to two pictures.

Twenty-five years ago the American farmer was a king. Poets sang about him. Orators praised him.

Edward Everett held up an ear of gold on corn before his audience and eulogized the grower in such eloquent words that storms of applause shook the hall. We loved to read and quote the old stirring lines telling how "the embattled farmers stood" at Lexington and Concord, and it was universally agreed that they were the saviors of the land. They were the hardy yeomanry, the free and independent workers, and even such foreign visitors as De Toqueville went out of their way to describe the happy condition of the landowning farmer in this country.

Washington gloried in being a farmer. Our greatest statesmen passed their vacations on their own farms, among their horses and cattle. They delighted in rural pleasures, they worked and personally directed their employees, and from a season of this kind of life and close contact with the people they came back to Washington wonderfully refreshed by having lived close to the heart of nature, more American and more democratic and more in love with their own land. Their names were coupled in the popular lore with the names of their estates. It was Washington of Mount Vernon, Jefferson of Monticello, Clay of Ashland, Webster of Marshfield and Jackson of The Hermitage.

Where is that farmer now? He is the gibe and the sneer of every clown who can get on his city stage in spotted breeches. He is the butt of the vile jokes in the city saloons. He shares with the mule and the mother-in-law, the plantation dandy, the rusty stovepipe and the tramp as the stock material for cheap paragraphs. He is brought on the stage of every low theater as the stock victim of all the stale old practical jokes. "Hayseed" and "Wayback" and "Jay" are his regular titles, even among cultivated people, and in the slums "farmer" is one of the vile epithets which provoke a fight. He figures in the illustrated comics as a half savage. Look at the pictures of the typical farmer in the New York papers and see something

like this: A long, lean, lank monstrosity, with bones showing horribly prominent through his clothes, a face like a pointed Gothic front, a nose that describes an irregular arc from the lowest point between the eyes down over the mouth, and on his chin what is supposed to be a whisker, but looks like a wisp of weather-beaten hay.

This is the farmer of today as the people of the cities are taught to consider him.

And why this change? It is because he has been systematically robbed for 30 years and has submitted to the robbery and voted for more of it. He is despised because he has consented to his own degradation.

His virtues have been made the means of his degradation. The farmer, and especially the poor farmer, has



Puck.

own acres, are our great conservative class. They dread revolution. They love their country with an impassioned ardor born of close contact with the soil—an ardor of patriotism which some writers have thought impossible in men reared in cities. Naturally, therefore, the northern farmers stood by their government in the great civil war. The Republican party was in power and acquired an immense prestige by the successful issue of the contest. Naturally, therefore, the great majority of farmers credited all good things to that party. They could not believe that the party of Lincoln and Sumner and other friends of humanity would do aught of injustice.

The war tariff was prolonged in time of peace despite solemn promises to the contrary. Empires of land and hundreds of millions of money were given to great corporations. Credit Mobilier, the Indian ring, the whiskey ring, the star route ring and scores of others followed in rapid succession, but though the farmers in a moment did not revolt. They overlooked the fact that parties are composed of men and therefore subject to change. They were slow to believe that the grand old party could contain schemers.

On top of all the rest comes a financial system which has added 80 per cent to the value of money and depreciated the price of the farmer's products in like proportion, and at the least signs of a revolt on his part he is denounced as a traitor. It is assumed as a matter of course that Wall street should strive for a rise in stocks, that manufacturers should lobby for a higher tariff, that the Pacific Railway companies should evade payment of their debt. All other men can vote and lobby to raise the price of what they own and be good Christians, but at the bare hint that the farmer is to vote for restoring silver to get a little better price for his crops, the country rings with rage and denunciation. The farmer has submitted too long. He has lost his respect of those who have robbed him, and it is much to be feared that in great part he has lost his own self respect. His poverty has become reproach.

"But there has been so great an increase in production. Now, why should the farmer complain that prices go down as the size of the crop goes up? And how can you prove that elevating the condition of the farmer will elevate that of other laborers?"

It is impossible to raise the agricultural class of any country without raising all the other classes who depend on labor for a living. It is not absolutely impossible to press down the agricultural laborer and yet leave the city laborer unaffected, but it is very unlikely. The farmer, however, does not complain that he gets less per pound or per bushel when the crop is big than when it is small. What he does complain of, and what he has a right to complain of, is that prices have fallen so fast that he gets very much less money for a very big crop than he formerly got for a small one. Thus the bounties of Providence are turned into curses and he is coming to look upon abundance as an affliction. Let me call your attention to some figures. In 1881 the farmers produced 416,481,000 bushels of oats and received therefor \$183,198,970; in 1883 they produced 671,202,400 bushels and received for it \$187,040,364; in 1889 they produced 751,812,000 bushels and received \$171,781,008. So on down, the amount rising as the money

received for it fell, till 1895, when they produced 824,443,537 bushels of oats and received therefor \$103,655,068. And the population has increased 70 per cent. In 1870 we produced 1,094,235,000 bushels of corn, worth \$601,589,080; in 1893 1,919,496,131 bushels, worth \$591,625,627; and in 1895 2,151,188,580 bushels, worth \$567,509,106. Overproduction, you say, but divide the bushels by the population each year, and you will find that per capita the increase was quite small, and in such years as 1890 and 1894, when the crop was very short and the number of bushels per capita very much less than the average of several years ago, the price per bushel was still low.

The Decline in Value. Since 1870 the production of hay in the United States has increased in almost exact parallelism with the increase of population, and yet the average value per ton has declined from \$18.39 to \$8.35. This last is the farm price as reported by the agricultural department for July; nevertheless, on the day I write this hay is selling in New York city at retail at \$18 per ton, which is a beautiful illustration of the loss of the farmer. What is supposed to be an exception because our rivals in other countries are producing so much, and yet the figures are significant. In 1881, for instance, 383,280,000 bushels were valued at \$456,880,427, and in 1895, 467,102,947 bushels at \$287,998,998. And yet the world has not as much wheat as it wants, and not much more than half as much as it would buy if it had the where-with. There is evidently something the matter that cannot be explained by that handy phrase "overproduction."

Has there been any overproduction of fat hogs? Every farmer knows that there is just now a great scarcity, almost a hog famine. And yet fat hogs in the central region of the west are selling at 3 cents a pound or less when but a few years ago they sold at 6. Has there been any overproduction of milk cows? The census will show you they are less numerous in proportion to population than they were, and yet the price is going steadily downward. Is there an overproduction of land? In two-thirds of the country east of Illinois you can today buy thousands of splendid farms at what they were assessed for in 1870, and in some of the finest parts of New York state they will sell you good farms at the assessment of 1860. Farmers do not complain at reduced prices for products of which there has been a very great production, but the figures show a decline, though not so great, in articles of which there is an admitted scarcity and that the general decline is very much greater than can be accounted for by the amount produced.

Starving Mankind Plenty. But as a matter of fact is there any overproduction? Have mankind more breadstuffs than they can eat and more cotton than they can wear and more pork and beef than they want or more shoes than they need? Why, the largest wheat crop ever raised only amounted to three bushels per capita for the people of the civilized world, and deducting seed and that made into whiskey, little over two bushels per capita was left for bread. It has been repeatedly shown that the world's cotton crop is still 3,000,000 bales short of the world's consumptive demand. Our own agricultural department has shown that the American people are eating considerably less wheat per capita than they did a few years ago, and if you will take the annual reports for 20 years and deduct that used for export and seed from the crop of each year and that fed to stock in later years you will find that 70,000,000 people are eating only about the same amount of wheat flour that 55,000,000 people did. In Europe also it has been shown that nearly 100,000,000 people cannot afford to eat wheat bread. They are using cheap substitutes like rye and potatoes. Are we to suppose that they do that for fun?

Enormous Losses to Agriculturists. If you want to realize what enormous losses American farmers have sustained because of the increased purchasing power of gold, look over the files of the gold papers before this became a political issue, before they had any interest in denying the truth. In the New York Sun of Sept. 10, 1893, for instance, was an editorial of which this is an extract:

For more than 15 years, 1878 to 1893, all the great primary agricultural staples have been declining in price, although there have been periods when the price of some one was high for a limited time. This is more notably true in respect to such products, especially meats and lard, but the trend of the whole scale has been constantly downward, and the general price level at the end of each year was lower than at its beginning. In the meantime there had been no material reduction in the cost of production, the self binder, the gang mowing machine, the hay loader and all other great improvements in agricultural machinery having come into use prior to 1878, and since that time the most important improvements have been in operation rather than of invention. While it is true that there has been a progressive increase in the use of fertilizers, such reduction has not always resulted in lessening the cost of production on the farm, and the cost of full lines of progressive machinery the cost of production has thereby been lessened 10 per cent, but such savings have been more than offset by the whole area under cultivation has been slight and has probably been fully offset by the progressively increasing use of commercial fertilizers which has been found necessary in all the region east of the Mississippi, but to increase the fertility of the land, but simply to prevent further deterioration.

The Yield of an Acre. While the cost of production cannot have been lessened as much as 8 per cent since 1875, prices for the staple products of the farm averaged 82 per cent greater during the five years ending with 1875 than they are now. This is especially true as respects the five staples—corn, wheat, oats, hay and cotton. The following table shows the value of the staple products of the farm in five year averages in the local market since 1890 and an estimate of the N. Y. Herald. The value of the staple products of the farm each staple in 1893 at present prices:

Year	Corn	Wheat	Oats	Hay	Cotton
1870-74	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1875-79	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1880-84	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1885-89	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1890-94	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1895-99	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1900-04	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1905-09	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1910-14	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1915-19	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1920-24	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1925-29	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1930-34	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1935-39	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1940-44	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1945-49	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1950-54	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1955-59	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1960-64	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1965-69	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1970-74	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1975-79	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1980-84	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1985-89	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1990-94	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
1995-99	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2000-04	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2005-09	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2010-14	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2015-19	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2020-24	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2025-29	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2030-34	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2035-39	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2040-44	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2045-49	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2050-54	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2055-59	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2060-64	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2065-69	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2070-74	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2075-79	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2080-84	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2085-89	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2090-94	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2095-99	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2100-04	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2105-09	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2110-14	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2115-19	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2120-24	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2125-29	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2130-34	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2135-39	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2140-44	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2145-49	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2150-54	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2155-59	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2160-64	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2165-69	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2170-74	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2175-79	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2180-84	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2185-89	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2190-94	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2195-99	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2200-04	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2205-09	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2210-14	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2215-19	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2220-24	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2225-29	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2230-34	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2235-39	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2240-44	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2245-49	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2250-54	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2255-59	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2260-64	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2265-69	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2270-74	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2275-79	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2280-84	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2285-89	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2290-94	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2295-99	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2300-04	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2305-09	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2310-14	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2315-19	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
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2450-54	71.5	76.80	51.5	29.50	98
2455-59	71				