

Where
ignorance is
Bliss

The woman thanked him and departed. A few days later she was in the store again.

"How did you like the butter I gave you the other day?" the storekeeper asked.

"It was just lovely," said the woman, "just lovely. I couldn't have told it from my own."

"Neither could I," said the storekeeper. "You know that what the mind doesn't know the heart doesn't grieve about. That butter *was* your own."

The farmers, or usually their wives, used to drive into town with their butter and eggs, which were known as "produce". They would stop in front of some store, dry goods or grocery, as indeed they sometimes do nowadays, and have the crock of butter or basket of eggs carried in, to be weighed or counted. Then, having agreed to the weight or count and the price, they would proceed to "take it out in trade". Now the trading, both as to price and method, was so different from what it is now that one scarcely can refrain from reviewing it.

A dozen eggs, as we have remarked, would buy a yard of shirting. It was shirting of cotton material, mostly blue on a white ground, in either plaids or stripes, and the usual price was a York shilling a yard. The price for the shirting now is fifty cents a yard, and the eggs fetch more than that a dozen, so that the advantage is still with the farmer.

The trading was not done in those days with the same facility as it is to-day. Half a cent a yard was worth haggling over. And haggle they did, the customer framing a variety of reasons why she should not buy at the price, and going so far as to say, as I heard one woman say, that the shirting did not look like her Henry. The merchant, of course, had his arguments well seasoned, the chief ones being that the goods were the best that could be produced for the money and that while any shirting was bound to fade sooner or later, the kind under consideration would hold its colour almost as long as the shirt would last.

A pound and a half of butter would buy a yard of cottonade at twenty-five cents a yard. The same goods now sell at seventy-five cents a yard, and the butter at sixty. So that we see again the advantage with the farmer. Printed cotton used to be a great thing for summer dresses. A dozen eggs would buy a yard that was guaranteed not to fade. Now the same dozen would buy two yards at thirty-five cents a yard. Again the farmers gets the draw.

The Farmer
gets the
Draw