

paying fairly well this year, but alike in districts given over to the task of supplying the cities with milk and in those in which cheesemaking is followed the scarcity of labor is having a bad effect. Various expedients are suggested for overcoming this, but Rider Haggard appears to have hit upon the right one. The scarcity of labor in rural districts may be charged against various causes, but chiefly its source is economic. Agricultural labor is scarce because industrial labor is better paid. No doubt dearth of cottage accommodation is in some localities a cause, but as a rule labor is as scarce in the vicinity of decaying villages, alike in England and in Scotland, as it is in other localities where cottages are rare. If the dearth of farm laborers be due to economic causes, it can only be remedied by an advance in the wages of such; but how this is possible in face of decreasing profits caused by excessive foreign competition is a question not easily answered.

Foreign competition itself has occupied the attention of many writers, but not much real light is thrown upon the problem by all that has been said. We are told that a period must sooner or later be put to competition from the United States and Canada—in the wheat market—and no doubt the day will come when, your great territories being filled up, and Chicagos and Winnipegs innumerable dotting what now is prairie, you will have plenty to do to feed your own people, but that day is so far distant that it hardly need be reckoned with in considering the future of British agriculture. Others cheer us with the thought that there will be less strenuous competition by and bye in the cattle and sheep markets; but even if that were so the problem is not near solution. What is before us in this country most of all is the potent fact that in any case we can never feed our own population unaided. If there were not free trade here food would be at famine prices. Even if every inch of arable land in this country were cultivated in the most intensive way, we would still need to import, and so long as such conditions exist here, considerations based on shortage in foreign supplies bear very little on the future of British agriculture. If we produce the best, we can get the best price for all kinds of produce, and proximity to the best market in the world must always give the home producer a big start of his foreign competitor. At present the British farmer, speaking generally, is a much more prosperous individual than his neighbor abroad. He has more capital, more ready money, lives better, has greater social amenities, and altogether in the main can afford to wish no ill to his neighbor, without in any special degree laying claim to unwonted Christian generosity. All classes of farmers in this country are this year fairly well off, except those who had store sheep to sell, and those whose profits depend on the success or failure of the turnip crop. Dairy produce is in good demand, and making high prices; all kinds of stock are selling well, and the latest returns show that fat cattle are making in some cases 40s. per live cwt. of 112 lbs.

These facts suggest pretty clearly the lines upon which agriculture in the future is likely to continue profitable. No doubt the British farmer might make more than he has done in the past of the little things about the farm. Poultry is a more profitable item than was supposed, and in the vicinity of large towns the growing of vegetables has been made a great success. Many jeered when a great statesman suggested that there was "money in jam." There is money in jam, and some of the wealthiest men amongst us, at present handling high-class stock, have made their money in the jam trade. At the same time this kind of farming cannot be prosecuted everywhere. Like dairying, it requires a great supply of female labor, and this can only be secured in the vicinity of villages and large towns. It is easier to get labor for the fruit trade than for dairying, and chiefly because the fruit trade does not demand the same constant attention as the other. What causes repugnance to dairy work is the constant drudgery, year in and year out, the daily grind seven days a week, and it is impossible not to sympathize with that feeling. Doubtless a change will take place by and bye, but meantime such are the facts. The lesson of it all is that the success of British agriculture in the future, as in the past, will be in the adoption of sound commercial principles by farmers, in growing and producing what can be grown and produced profitably, and in adopting ways and methods to the exigencies of the times.

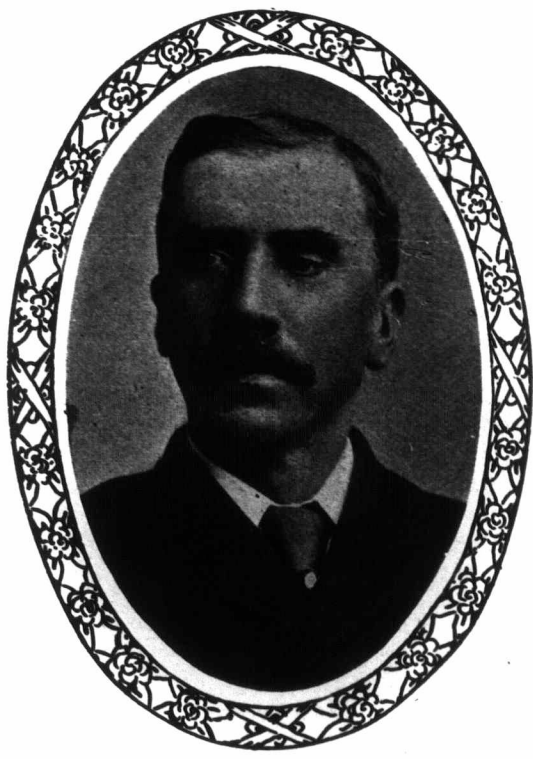
Whatever else may fail, Great Britain, as far as can be judged at present, has an immense reserve of agricultural wealth in her pure-bred stock. Even in this department there have been ebbs and flows, and at the present time the tide is flowing, but at its worst the pure-bred stock raiser was the man who had ground for keeping cheerful. He had always some profit for his labor if he went about his work in a reasonable way, and when the inevitable revival has come such an one finds that the Old Country is reaping the benefit of her 150 years' close attention to stock breeding, for all the world comes to Great Britain for breeding stock. Bulls, stallions, rams, boars—it is the same story. Australia, New Zealand, North and South America, Russia, Germany, France, Sweden, one and all have to come to this old land to buy. They will need to do so in the future, for either they are too poor to purchase the females, without which no breed can be established in a new land, or the climates and soils of these countries do not grow the breeds as they grow in their native haunts. After a bit they degenerate,

and recourse must again be had to the fountain-head. For 50 years all lands have come to Great Britain for pure-bred stock, and, so far, no land has been able to supply us with anything better than we have at home. Good pedigree stock has been imported into Great Britain, the descendants of that which was taken away, but nothing of any breed has as yet been imported which excels the stock raised in the old land. Therefore, I conclude that one stronghold of British agriculture in the future, as in the past, will be her herds, flocks, and studs. The reserves in these departments are numerous and strong, and defeat is far from us. The other difficulties, to which reference has been made, are not insurmountable, and although there will be periods of transition, and these always involve pain and suffering, the crossings will be made, and, for better or for worse, seed time and harvest will continue with us so long as the present economy of things endures.

A Bright Chapter for Stockmen.

BY C. F. CURTISS, DIRECTOR OF THE IOWA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION.

The closing years of the nineteenth century mark a new era in the live-stock industry of America and of the world. Primitive conditions and pioneer stock have given way to advanced methods and improved herds and flocks. The live-stock industry is of necessity the mainstay of any system of agriculture that is to be permanently successful. Superior breeds of live stock do not come by chance or haphazard methods. They are the result of a high degree of skill, intelligence and ability. Along with the stock of the highest excellence and most nearly perfect scale of points will be found the clearest thinking, the soundest



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judgment, the keenest perception; in short, the best brains and intellect. There is an inspiration in the calling of the husbandman devoted to the fascinating study of live-stock improvement that is worthy of the best talent of a master mind. During the present year it has been my privilege to sit at the feet, so to speak, and study the work of a number of the best breeders on both sides of the Atlantic. Some of these noble men have now passed to their reward in the world beyond, but their work lives on.

As I trod the luxuriant pastures and feasted my eyes on the green and sunny slopes that marked the once active labors of some of these masters of the profession, I instinctively felt that I was standing on sacred ground. The value of such labors can never be counted in dollars and cents, great as these results were measured by this standard. These men gave more than their energies, ambitions and intellect to their work—they put into it their integrity, their honor, their souls. Without this no man ever fully succeeds as a breeder of improved stock. The work exacts the best of the God-given qualities and attributes of man.

I recently spent a few days on the great cattle ranges of Texas. Instead of the once famous long-horned Texan steer, I saw the champion of the great World's Columbian Exposition and his progeny; and he had for a companion the champion of a greater show, measured by the standard of bovine excellence, the recent Trans-Mississippi Exposition. These, and not the lank-sided ranger, are the wards of the modern cowboy. On this ranch were not less than seventy bulls of comparatively high merit. The same appreciation of good blood prevails elsewhere. On the bleak ranges of Wyoming and Montana may be seen the pick of the best studs at the head of enormous bands of horses; while across the border in British Columbia,

the tops of Ontario's prime herds and flocks are found, and even the cream of British skill is not exempt from the universal pressure for improvement on the range. The farmer whose land is rapidly increasing in value and whose feedstuffs and employed labor are constantly becoming more and more expensive, cannot withstand this competition without resorting to improved stock and improved methods. This solution is inevitable. The stockman's calling never had stronger support or brighter prospects than to-day. The American Hereford Breeders' Association recently sold about 300 head of cattle at an average of \$317, and the Aberdeen Angus Association held a similar sale in November, at which about a hundred head were disposed of at an average of \$323 per head. Correspondingly advanced prices prevail for other breeds of cattle. An American-bred sheep sold at public auction for \$500. And even the horse is returning to his former popularity and prestige. Those who predicted a coming horseless age misjudged the trend of the human mind. Not until the inherent nature and inbred characteristics of the most progressive and enlightened people of earth are changed will the demand for good horses cease. The production of superior bacon, in which Canada has made such rapid strides, is comparatively a new industry. A prime cut of tender, highly-flavored bacon is a modern luxury that commands a higher price than any other staple article of meat on the market. This is not a temporary fad, but the beginning of a transformation in our meats, meaning the necessity of higher skill and intelligence in pork production. It means pork production for a specific purpose and the necessity of creating a hog having the highest possible adaptation to that purpose.

The past season has been one of almost unparalleled prosperity in the stock business in Great Britain. The Collynie Shorthorn calves reached the gratifying average of £123 at the annual sale held in October, and £500 is not an uncommon price for good breeding animals, many of the best of which are going to South America. The stockmen of Canada and the States should take note of this. A competition is coming from our neighbors on the south that will make itself felt in the markets of the world. It is already a strong factor in the sheep trade of London and Liverpool. This competition, however, will only stimulate the production of better stock in America as a whole. There is a range of \$2 per hundred on the Chicago market to-day between cattle of prime quality and finish and those of ordinary merit. This means from 25 to 40 per cent. better returns for the feed and labor expended in producing a well-bred and properly-finished animal than can be realized from one lacking the inherent qualities of excellence. Can we afford to bear this loss? Ignorance or failure to act in accordance with nature's laws is the most expensive thing in the world.

The prices quoted do not represent inflated values. There is every indication that they will continue on approximately the same plane for a reasonable period—at any rate until the meat production catches up with the increase of population. Canada and the States have every reason to be encouraged at the outlook. We have attained a degree of excellence in our stock that compares favorably with the best that the world affords. We are continually drawing on the best of foreign lands, and it goes without saying that we are capable of improving practically every product that crosses the water; yet we recognize the excellence and real worth in all that comes from our rivals.

The field for the American stockman is broadening. The day will come when the breeders of foreign countries, particularly South America, will look to the flocks of Canada and the United States as the best source of suitable blood for the improvement of their stock.

These conditions mean a higher calling for the American stockman. Increased opportunities always bring added responsibilities. It should be the purpose of every breeder to honor this high calling. The field is particularly inviting to young men of energy, ability and education. I emphasize education because the time is at hand when agriculture demands the best talent and the best training that can be acquired. There is no calling to-day that offers better openings for young men combining practical and scientific training. The demand for services of this kind is constantly in excess of the supply, and the compensation and advantages are not exceeded in any other calling.

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Our Old Friend the "Mummy Pea."

"At Kames, in the Isle of Bute, Mr. R. A. Stewart, a saddler, has succeeded in growing a fine crop of peas from seed found in a tomb of an ancient Egyptian king. Mr. Stewart got the peas from a Glasgow friend of his who has sons in Egypt, by whom they were forwarded to Glasgow, and the seed is estimated to have been 2,000 or 3,000 years old. The peas were sown in open ground, and the plants have grown up strong and vigorous to a height of about six feet. They possess certain characteristics. The flower of the ancient Egyptian variety has a beautiful red center, surrounded by a white corona, and looks very chaste and handsome. The pods average from two to three inches in length by one-half inch in breadth, and the peas are said to be of excellent flavor."—*Current Literature*.