

The Farm.

Hard Times.

How the world can suffer starvation in the midst of plenty, is a question which has been agitating the minds of political economists. The world is glutted with food and clothing, so much so that its inhabitants are starving and perishing. Such expressions may seem paradoxical; but they serve to illustrate very forcible truths. We are taught to regard the period of great activity and high booming as the time of great prosperity, individual and national; but in our giddy impulses of morbid activity we are sowing the seeds of disaster.

Elated by a few successful dealings, people become oversanguine. This is the key to the whole mystery. One department of human affairs acts upon another until the whole becomes a hive of industry. For a time human desires increase more rapidly than the supply. Prices of commodities, especially those of a luxurious character, range high, until they run out of proportions to the intrinsic values. The earnings of the people are spent either in flitting pleasures or in articles of commerce on which they hope to realize bonanza profits. Wild prospects are regarded as substantial wealth, upon which all calculations are accordingly based.

The wheel of fortune is reversed; reaction sets in; hopes are blasted; energies are depressed; trade becomes demoralized; confidence is shattered; suspicion seizes the minds of the people; prices are dejected; complaints are lamentable; consumption abates; and this extreme continues until weary monotony infuses fresh energy into the spirits of the people, or until a new race of enthusiasts, oblivious of former woes, rises to repeat the same page of history. We are told that all these evils arise from over-production. This way of putting it is very misleading. In one condition of the human mind, commodities will find ready markets, and trade stagnates when the feelings are in reversed order. There is nothing in the name; it is all a lottery of the pulse, whether known under good or bad times, wealth or poverty, prosperity or adversity, exultation or despondency. In periods of depression it is supposed that the world is waiting for its surplus productions to be consumed. The low prices indicate its inability or unwillingness to consume, and as the consumptive power cannot increase so long as the people are unable to increase their expenditure, the basis of renewed activity must be traced to the pulse and not the power.

There was a time when these matters did not concern the farmers so much as now. Of late years the tendency has been to cast the blame of the hard times on the shoulders of the farmers. They keep their crops in their granaries and will not sell; they run up big store accounts and demand long credits, and many other dreadful offences are laid to their charge.

Let us examine a few of the ingenious arguments of the stock-raisers: When grains are plentiful and cheap, the remedy lies in the increase of live stock; but when they are scarce and dear, the country is then not adapted to grain raising, and beef and dairy products

must be substituted; when dairying is at a discount, then the quality of the products must be improved; when beef is demoralized, then the farmer has the manure for his profit and pains: in short, live stock is the only cure for all the ills that the farmer, his soil, and the times are heir to. Diseased farming is the only ailment that admits of but one remedy. In the same manner we might run over the whole list of specialties. If fruits are cheap, why can't the stupid people eat more fruit and make good times? When the stomach rebels against the use of excessive sweets, let the apiary men combine to devise means for compelling the people to eat more honey.

That the farmers can afford to hold on to his stuff speaks well for his prosperity; and he has just as much right to do so as the merchant has to keep his goods on his shelf, or the manufacturer to hold his wares or implements in prospect of higher prices, and yet not a word of complaint is uttered in the latter instances. If business men are compelled to slaughter their goods, they impose the penalty upon themselves, or they choose the recompense of being regarded by their fellow men as being engaged in "respectable" employments. Farmers should regard their occupation as a business, and in their transactions let them drive the hardest possible bargains, just as other business men do, whether it be a reduction in the price of their purchases or an extension of credit. But they should be honest and prompt in the fulfilment of their promises. Farmers as a body are not benefited by the credit system; it is a costly luxury, which in the end has to come out of their pockets in some shape, direct or indirect, besides having to pay for the bad debts of the merchants. Farmers are gradually exercising greater influence over the condition of the times; and it is possible they may make it as powerful a weapon in their hands as organization is in the hands of those who wield its power in opposition to the agricultural community.

The Low Price for Farm Produce—Cheese vs. Meat.

Many farmers are becoming alarmed at the continued low prices for their produce. We have our periods of inflation and depression, and it can never be predicted with certainty how long they will last. Each period comes and goes, and there is no reason why the existing state of affairs should be longer and severer than previous depressions.

A leading cheese-maker informs us that the present low price of cheese—four cents lower than at a corresponding period last year—has had the effect of increasing the consumption of cheese amongst his patrons, more having been consumed during the past month than the whole of last season. A prominent fruit-grower also tells us that small fruits will be plentiful and cheap; but he does not regret this state of affairs, as he thinks that the increased consumption will benefit his business in years to come.

Now these may be considered as trivial matters, but they furnish cheap and nutritious food for thought. If the farmer eats more cheese he must eat less of something else, and the question arises, For what food or foods should cheese be substituted, in whole or in part? The amount of intelligence displayed in answering,

or rather acting upon, this question, will be a valuable guide to the continued consumption in future years. It is a question of more practical importance to farmers than many other classes of people. It most directly concerns poor people and manual laborers. Farmers as a rule are not given to luxurious living, and if they can obtain a wholesome and nutritious article of diet at a low cost, they are justified in using it, even if it does not just tickle the palate as sensibly as the more pronounced articles of luxury. No man so richly deserves a first-class certificate of character as a good cheese-maker; he can rightfully request such a certificate from the chemist, from the doctor, and from the cheese consumer, which compliment can be paid to very few articles of diet. The consumer, however, has his duty to perform; he must eat on hygienic principles, if he wishes to obtain the best results.

Cheese is not an exact substitute for any other article of food; but if only one of the ordinary articles of consumption were to be displaced by it, that article should be meat; not because it is near it in chemical composition, but also because it is more animal than vegetable in its character. There is a great difference in the cost, however, meat being the dearest of foods and cheese one of the cheapest. One pound of cheese and one-half pound of bread has somewhat more nutriment than two pounds of meat, and the cost of the former will be: 1 pound cheese, 6½ cents; ½ pound bread (baker's price), 1½ cents; total, 8 cents; while two pounds of meat (butcher's price), will be 24 cents. Meat is much bulkier than cheese, for it is about three-fourths water, while cheese is only about one-third water. However, the substitution of cheese for meat means a radical change in the whole system of dieting. In the present system of cooking foods a large percentage of the mineral matter is lost, necessitating the consumption of meat, which contains large quantities of salts. Cheese is also lacking in salts (mineral matter), and the only available way to make up this deficiency, apart from meat, is by consuming large quantities of fruit, especially small fruits; and as fruits are bulky they make a splendid compliment.

There is a great difference between one make of cheese and another, but the above remarks refer to the best brands. A good cheese must be soft, fatty, and ripe, these being the conditions of digestibility. We fear our farmers are eating too much unripe cheese, which fact will be against the prospects for permanent consumption in future years. We know very little about the digestibility of our different makes of cheese, but the Germans, who take the lead in these and all kindred questions, have tested nineteen brands, and found that the best, viz., the Cheddar, became completely digested in four hours; while the worst, viz., the Schweizer skim, scarcely began to digest in ten hours. Good cheese is therefore equal to meat in digestibility. The fats in the cheese are much superior to those in the meat, and the other constituents are, on an average, not inferior. It may well be said that there is nothing better than a good cheese, and nothing worse than a bad one. But, to do justice to meat, it possesses another important virtue; it requires little or no mastication. Our cooks, millers, etc., now-a-days have undertaken to