

### Farmers as Grain Shippers.

Of late years many of the farmer's organizations have done just as many of their predecessors have done—decided to do away with the middlemen. The blow is aimed principally at the grain and stock buyers and the retail merchants at country points.

Although farmers have successfully operated grain elevators and stores on the co-operative plan at a few points, they have never succeeded in doing away with the middlemen. The man they place in charge of their elevator or their stores is the middleman. It takes just so many to carry on the trade of this country, and inexperienced farmers cannot carry it one with any less number than men who have devoted their life to one branch of trade, are now doing.

Grain dealers who have been buying, handling and shipping grain for years, and have their capital at stake, will surely give more thought and care to the economical handling of grain than will a salaried employe of the farmers. Competition compels every dealer to operate as cheaply as he can, and do it right. He will surely not employ any more help than is absolutely necessary to carry on the business, so that the farmers will be unable to do away with the middlemen. Few of the co-operative ventures of the farmers prove successful, and one would naturally conclude that they would stop risking their capital and interests in the hands of a cheap and usually inexperienced employe.

In these days of great competitions and small profits the honest middleman deserves every cent he makes, and more too. The howling demagogues and farmer agitators would have the grain producers believe that all middlemen are dishonest. Salaried employes will never manage a grain elevator, a mill or a store, as economically, as carefully, as thoughtfully, as conscientiously, or as honestly as a man who has his capital at stake, and who must rely entirely on profits secured against the sharpest competition for his remuneration. —Chicago *American Elevator and Grain Trade.*

### Shoes and Leather.

Contrary to many predictions made a month ago, leather is still firm, with the outlook for November very encouraging. The shoe manufacturers can gain nothing by endeavoring to depress the leather market. Dealers have secured the money for the large quantities of material which they have sold the last four or five months, and with their present amount of stock, which is smaller than it has been for years, they feel that they can afford to wait and let manufacturers come to their terms. The manufacturers are in a different position. They have not delivered a case on their spring orders or secured a dollar for their stock. They have now large quantities of boots and shoes on hand which they must sell before they can buy any more supplies. Buyers have learned by experience to watch the leather market closely, and if they see any marked decline in quotations they will demand more concessions on goods not yet delivered, or else they will cancel their orders.

With leather at its present quotations the manufacturers feel that they cannot afford to make shoes without a still further advance. They have not secured yet an advance sufficient to cover the increased cost of materials. A rise of 15c per pair would hardly be sufficient.

They have given their buyers the benefit of the stock they had on hand before the rise began, and from 5 to 10c extra is all that has been asked. Their supplies have now run very low, and they must soon replenish. They have tried to put off doing this by buying only materials which they had to have or stop work, and even of these they have secured only enough to last them from week to week. It is safe to say that a further advance in boots and shoes will occur, but it will not be as high as many have supposed.

It will be remembered that just before the advance last spring a leading English manufacturer bought heavily at what was then considered a high price. He has again been in the market and secured large quantities of buff and glove grain and 150 tons of splits. This is considered by dealers as a favorable omen. They believe that foreign manufacturers, who are known to be very low in stocks, will accept the advance, and that the exports, which have been slowly falling off since the middle of June, will regain their old figures. Coming at this quiet time, it is readily seen how valuable these foreign connections are to maintain a firm market here. Through the summer and during September dealers have had to rely upon home consumption to keep stocks from accumulating. The absence of speculation has given the market a healthy tone, and, with a good foreign demand from now on, dealers feel confident of maintaining this condition.

The strikes at Lynn have had very little influence upon the market, because they have occurred between seasons. If they are continued a month longer the limited supplies of Dongola leather would be seriously felt. The stock of goatskins now in dealers' hands is very small, and the prices are firm, with an upward movement expected. Dongola leather has advanced but 10 per cent. from the lowest point, and is lower comparatively than either buff or grain. The demand for hemlock sole is just keeping pace with the supply, and no accumulation is noted. Prices are holding their own, and a change is not looked for. Buff and grain are greatly reduced. The concessions which dealers have made in these grades of leather have been confined exclusively to large sales. Had they been in less of a hurry to sell they could have obtained the quoted prices. Hides have remained very firm for over a week, and the decline which was noted the first of the month has been checked.

There is greater activity in rough leather, and it has probably now, at 2c off from the highest advanced price, reached a point which will enable carriers to produce upper leather at a small profit. Carriers are buying more freely but their trade partakes rather of a hand-to-mouth nature, and so is very unsteady. They show a preference for inferior leather, as it can be worked up to a greater profit.

There is a better assortment of all kinds of leather in the market, but the quantities have not run so low for ten years. If parties had been holding back stock in order to intensify the boom, it would surely have appeared before this. The effect of small margins of profit upon the tanners is well illustrated in the actual supply of materials which the rise in the market this year has disclosed. The tanners could realize nothing so they have ceased to produce. It will take a long time to put leather in the position it was in a year ago.

Some are willing to predict that it will never again reach so low a point. —*Bradstreet's.*

### Grain Elevators for Russia.

The grain elevator has played such an important part in the development of the wheat and corn trade in the United States, says the *London Pall Mall Gazette*, the Russian landholder has arrived at the conclusion that its introduction into Russia is all that is needed "to get rid of the evils of which he has been the victim." But the British consul-general, writing from Odessa, points out that the conditions of the trade in the two countries "are widely dissimilar, and though it is hoped that by the instrumentality of elevators, a better system may gradually be introduced, the day is yet far distant when anything like the regularity and expedition with which grain operations are conducted in the States can be realized in Russia." While in the former country great care is taken in the selection of seed wheat which can be graded, the farmer being thus enabled to deliver his wheat at the nearest elevator, and to receive in exchange a certificate specifying grade, which is a negotiable instrument, "in Russia the qualities of wheat present such diversities of character as to be quite insusceptible of grading." No scientific selection of seed is attempted, "each farmer sowing what he has by him, so that the varieties of wheat may be reckoned at fifty or sixty, if their cardinal differences and the modifications induced by the nature of the soil in which they are raised, are both taken into account." The railway company is building an elevator at Odessa, capable of holding over 100,000 quarters of grain. Nine other elevators on a smaller scale are also to be built at as many grain centers along the lines of the country. A credit of £65,000 has also been opened by the government in favor of the Kharkoff-Nicolaieff railway company for building an elevator at the port of Nicolaieff, and some smaller ones along the line of railway. "The managers of these establishments will be authorized to receive grain from the farmers at the market price of the day, themselves carting their own produce, and receiving advances on it. A beginning has thus been made to put within the reach of the producer the means of disposing of his crops at first hand; but a small minority only will at first be in a position to avail themselves of the new system. As for the rest they will still have to depend upon the Hebrew middleman."

### Railroad Accidents in the United States.

Railroad accidents in the United States during 1889 have occurred as follows, according to compilation of Inter-State Commerce Commission, viz.:

Kind of Accident.	Killed.	Injured.
Coupling and uncoupling cars	309	3,757
Falling from trains and engines	493	2,011
Overhead obstructions	65	270
Collisions	311	1,313
Derailments	182	1,113
Other train accidents	737	1,773
At highway crossings	437	695
At stations	424	1,466
Other causes	2,874	10,880
Total	5,823	26,300

Of the killed, 310 were passengers, 1,972 were employes, and 3,541 were "other persons," including wre presumes, trespassers and persons killed at grade crossings. The figures for 1888 were 5,282 killed and 25,868 injured.