

FARM ECONOMICS

A large percentage of The Independent's subscribers are farmers, chiefly farm-owners, but The Independent has never pretended to run a farm paper—that is, the sort of paper which teaches the best methods of growing this crop and that. Such is the field of the agricultural paper, and it is well filled by excellent journals. The fear of losing subscribers, however, causes all but a few agricultural papers to be very careful about expressing a decided opinion upon any political question, especially if it savors of partisan politics in the least.

The Independent's mission is to teach political economy. It is a partisan, not so much of the people's party as of the principles enunciated in the platforms of that party—because every man concerned in making the paper believes that the enactment of those principles into law would be beneficial to the many and would tend to bring economic conditions in harmony with the people's party motto—"Equal rights for all, special privileges for none."

This department, "Farm Economics," will be run from time to time as occasion demands—perhaps not every week, unless there is live matter to fill it. The aim will be to learn more about the farmer's real place in the economy of the nation and to investigate, learn and apply the facts.

Our socialist friends, as well as our friends the single taxers, argue from the standpoint of the dwellers in cities. The former assume that the farmer belongs to a dying middle class, and that, like the dodo, he will be extinct in the course of no very long time. The latter assume that under the single tax the farmer would be happy and free from care—almost free from taxation. The Independent believes both are wrong.

Due acknowledgement for the idea of running this department must be given to an eastern friend—a socialist of the Fabian variety, who takes but little stock in the "inevitability" theory, but who accepts the Marxist idea of "surplus value." In a recent letter to the editor he says:

"As for 'surplus' value, the doctrine can apply only where men are employed by others. The petty industries and petty agriculture form a class apart from the working of this law. The socialists are coming to see this more plainly, and in Germany the tendency among social democrats is now to protect the petty farmer in his holdings. If you can get hold of a recent copy of John Rae's 'Contemporary Socialism' (edition of 1900 or 1901) you will see how, in the attempt to promote a modus vivendi for urban workmen and rural peasants in a common socialist movement, a radical change in attitude has been brought about. It is coming to be recognized that a considerable part of industry will be left out of collective control under the most thorough socialism. This will be unavoidable. The more rigid formulas have been given over in Germany, and the fellows here who harp away on them are but keeping the movement back."

"The real economics of agriculture in this country are a blank. They are not understood by anybody—not even by the farmers. I can conceive of nothing which would help more to bring about the beginnings of an understanding on this intricate problem than by the opening in such a paper as yours, of a discussion of the important facts regarding farm economics. It could be carried on for a couple of years with profit; for it would assemble a body of facts and inferences therefrom which would be of the utmost value to economists and reformers."

"What, for instance, is the meaning of the growth of tenantry? Of emigration to Canada; of increased mortgages in some places, of decreased mortgages in others? Why is it that in spite of the demand for farm labor, wages should remain so nearly at the point of subsistence? Why, in some places, will an owner rent his farm to tenants, and in other places pay rent on increased holdings and work them with hired labor? There are a dozen questions of this kind which could be propounded, and a general discussion of which would bring to light the most valuable information."

Whether the occupation in which is engaged more than one-third of all those engaged in "gainful occupations," can be classed as "petty," is a question. From the standpoint of value of products, however, it might. Comparing agriculture with manufac-

turing, the census of 1900 shows this:

AGRICULTURE.
Persons over 10 years engaged 10,381,765
Value of farm property, \$20,439,901,164
Value farm prod. ('99). 3,742,129,357

MANUFACTURING.
Persons over 10 years engaged 7,085,992
Capital employed \$ 9,858,205,501
Value of products..... 13,058,562,917

Of course, compared to the United States Steel corporation or the Standard Oil trust, a Nebraska farm is "petty," but "many a mickle makes a muckle" and there are a muckle of farms and a muckle of farmers.

Suppose we take the first question—what is the meaning of the growth of tenantry? The total number of farms as returned by the census is as follows:

	Number.	Increase in Decade.
1900	5,737,372	1,172,731
1890	4,564,641	555,734
1880	4,008,907

The number of owners and increase is as follows:

1900	3,712,408	442,680
1890	3,269,728	285,422
1880	2,984,306

The number of tenants and increase is as follows:

1900	2,024,964	730,051
1890	1,294,913	270,312
1880	1,024,601

In the decade from 1880 to 1890 (if we assume no change to have taken place in the farms opened prior to 1880), the tenure of the increase in number of farms was as follows:

Tenants	270,312
Owners	285,422

Total increase 555,734
For the decade from 1890 to 1900, this increase shows:

Tenants	720,051
Owners	442,680

Total increase 1,172,731

Perhaps this can best be shown by percentages. Farms were operated as follows:

	Owners.	Tenants.
1900	64.7	35.3
1890	71.6	28.4
1880	74.5	25.5

The census of 1880 and that of 1890 did not report farms of less than three acres, which reported the sale of less than \$500 worth of products the census year, but that of 1900 did. In this connection, it may be well to give the total farm acreage and average for each farm:

	Total acres.	Average farm.
1900	838,591,774	146.2
1890	623,218,619	136.5
1880	536,081,855	133.7

Now, it will be seen that in the twenty years from 1880 to 1900 more than 300 million acres of new land was opened up, divided into 1,700 thousand farms, which became occupied by 700 thousand new owners and a million tenants. This, of course, is simply as the figures show results. The real question is to find out the meaning of this growth of tenantry. As the 300 million acres of new lands were opened up, it would be reasonable to expect an actual and relative decrease of tenants and an actual and relative increase of owners; but the reverse is true as to the tenants, and although the owners have increased absolutely, they have decreased relatively.

Who make up the great increase of tenants? Are they foreigners largely—strong, abled-bodied men who have come to America to better their condition? Are they former owners of farms who have been dispossessed through mortgage foreclosures? Are they young men, sons of farmers, who prefer renting land to braving the hardships of frontier life?

Who are the landlords? Are they generally millionaires? Are they retired farmers who have gone to the city to educate their children? Is the ownership of farm lands generally in the hands of persons living near by, or has there been an increase in ownership similar to the Scully lands?

These are questions which The Independent submits to its readers for a careful answer. Each can answer best for his immediate locality. No man can sit in one spot and formulate a rule which will apply to the whole United States.

Not Unanimous

It is plain to any one who reads the daily papers that the so-called reorganizers have won W. J. Bryan over to their plans. Cleveland, Hill, Olney, Gorman and Whitney are great

MONEY MAKERS FOR FARMERS

BEETS—Spend \$1.00 for seed. Plant one acre of ground now. Spend a little time pulling weeds. In the fall pull up 40 tons of beets. They are worth \$4.00 per ton for cow feed. We sell the seed 25c per lb. 5 lbs for \$1.00.

RAPE—Spend 35c for seed. Sow one acre of ground. In six weeks turn in your calves, sheep and hogs. This acre will make 35 tons of green feed. Cost 1c per ton. Get the seed from us, 5 lbs food one acre. Price 15 lbs \$1.00, 100 lbs \$5.00.

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WHAT SOME OF OUR CUSTOMERS SAY:

103 1-2 Bushels Per Acre.
Lewis, Cass Co., Ia. Feb. 1, 1903.
J. R. Ratekin & Son, Shenandoah, Ia.
Dear Sirs: We planted fifteen acres to your "Pride of Nishna" and "Iowa Silver Mine" and we have just completed gathering it. On five acres which we measured, the yield was 108% bushels per acre, the remainder of the field was equally as good. With kindest regards, I am,
Sincerely yours,
OLIVER P. MILLS.

100 Bushels Per Acre
Lancaster Co., Neb., Feb. 2, 1903
J. R. Ratekin & Son, Shenandoah, Ia.
Dear Sirs: You doubtless remember my order for 10 bushels of seed corn, sent you last spring. I found the corn all right and as good as advertised, especially your "Pride of Nishna" and "Iowa Silver Mine." Some of my crop from your "Silver Mine" went over 100 bushels per acre.
Yours truly,
C. H. ARMANN.

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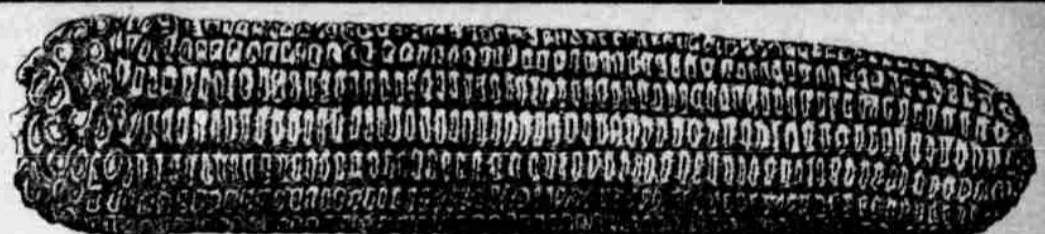
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friends of millionaire Hearst of New York. The plan is for Mr. Bryan to boom Mr. Hearst for the democratic nomination for president, and prate him before the people as the laboring men's friend and line up the populists and other reform factions for this man Hearst, with the understanding that he is a Bryan democrat, when, in fact, he is the machine candidate of Cleveland, Hill, Whitney, Olney and Gorman, and the money power is behind this scheme for the purpose of defeating Mr. Roosevelt for president, if he is nominated, which they hope to prevent, but in failing to do so, they expect to defeat him at the polls like they did James G. Blaine with Cleveland, by buying votes and selling out Roosevelt and elect Hearst, as New York is the state the democrats want and stand some show of getting, while they know that Iowa is safely republican. If Mr. Bryan is not next to this scheme he is not as shrewd a politician as we give him credit with being. The populists we think, are shrewd enough, after buying two or three gold bricks, to steer clear of this skin game hereafter and get into line and help to reorganize the people's party, as it is going to be done, and you should be on the safe side, so as to protect yourselves, and not get caught again on the Grover

Cleveland and Company Hearst hook.—J. R. Norman, in Southern Iowa Educator.

(The Independent does not agree with Bro. Norman that Mr. Bryan will be won over to any reorganizer plans to have him boom Hearst for president. Undoubtedly the Hearst papers have a great influence, but such democrats as Louis F. Post of the Chicago Public, and Flavius J. Van Vorhis of Indiana, and many others, are without doubt unalterably opposed to the nomination of Hearst.—Ed. Ind.)

What is fame? The question has often been asked and no satisfactory answer has ever been made. It seems to be something like this: If the hero was a soldier, they make an image of him in stone and set him astride a stone horse. If he was a statesman who never killed anybody, then they make a stone or bronze image of him and stand him up in some public place, with a scroll in one hand which is supposed to be one of his speeches written out. That is fame. As far as The Independent is concerned, it don't see much that is to be desired in it.

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