

The Farmer, Has He Any Rights?

Number 3—His Foe-Friends.

Foe-Friends is a compound of my own coinage. Nothing else seemed to quite express what I want to say. Far be it from me to say the farmer "has no friends" in any particular; he has many loyal friends, who know nothing of his real condition or his hardships, who are always willing to pay him a reasonable price for fresh food, and really appreciate being so supplied, week by week. But the idea I am trying to express is that many who can or would do him the most good by experience or by influence are a hindrance. Being a hindrance he becomes a foe-friend. Menus well but what he says and does is harmful to the present day farmer. A private letter from a friend a few weeks ago tells this part so much better than I could tell it, and expresses something the average man has never thought of. I am quoting from that letter as follows:

"It is a big fight we 'ground diggers' have before us, and strange to say most formidable foe are those in position to throw the true light on our situation. I cannot think they are wilful foes, but rather their reasoning is based too much on their imagination. It has long been my contention that the greatest obstacle to agricultural progress, nowadays, is the fellow who 'got his start on the farm,' but who 'got feathers on his legs,' and quit the game some fifteen or twenty or more years ago, when conditions and methods were as different from those of today as day is from night, and who now holds some public office, and a paper or runs a bank. You can always depend upon one of these three to 'tell the world' just why the farmer would prosper."

The above is a statement of things few people ever thought about, and it brings to light a truth. These men succeed under conditions of better land, cheap labor, plentiful, easily controlled, better seasons, so to speak, and much less demands upon their incomes for all purposes. What they see now, is as it was then, not as it is now. Discussing this question with a long time friend, lately, who is between forty and fifty years off the farm, he said with zest, that all farmers ought to keep a bunch of cows, whether he ever sold anything from them or not; that his father's people kept them, drank all the milk from them they needed, poured the balance to the pigs, gave it away; that farmers ought to keep a bunch of cows to carry

the land, whether they pay for their keep or not. He was perfectly honest and meant as well as if he were helping a couple out of the way of an moving train, but a "one gallon" farmer would tell him he was not less than forty years behind.

Such is the kind of advice the "dirt-farmer" gets from the "town-farmer," and many of this kind would like to buy at the same prices he got some forty years ago. Less than forty years ago \$100 a year and food and shelter, was the standard price for a strong man laborer; and as a 12 year old boy I have plowed furrow for furrow, beside one of these year round. That same contented man does not now exist. When he went, then all such conditions as our foe-friends love to dream of went away, and went "a glimmering." In the place of these is the laborer, "too sorry to kill," but who has to live thirty to forty dollars a month and lots of getting to get him to stay at all.

Thus these good friends, that should be, because his foe, and I call them foe-friends. Fifty years ago everything was cheap, compared with now. What the farmer grew brought little, and little to make. Then the grain of the west did not entirely set the price of what was grown here. There was some sentiment in price of what he sold and what he bought. Now if the farmer sells a pig to a butcher for ten cents per pound, and asks for more of that same pig to carry home he pays from 25 to forty cents per pound for it, and that is the ratio in most things.

Changed conditions call for changed rules of marketing, buying and selling, costs and profits; and you can not possibly measure present conditions by what they were when the men left the farm; some because they were tired of the struggle; some because they could make more elsewhere; some because they had a competency and wanted to take life easy; all of which they had a right to do; but they have no right to compare the conditions and standards then with standards of this day and conditions. I do not mean to convey the idea that all diggers of dirt do all they can do, not at all, but I do know that many of the critics of the man of this day would do less were they to swap places. But we must then for the present, for they will be treated again under another head.

Changes conditions call for changed

methods, and it is the man who has steadily held on to the farm that knows what are his setbacks. The weather, bureau will perhaps show that an average rainfall drops down every year, and a good crop on good land can be grown on half our average rainfall, if properly distributed. And rainfall of more than the average improperly distributed will make less crop than too little. When these good foe-friends of the farmer were on the farm there was much good bottom lands, but today the erosion of the soil, set in motion by these men and their forefathers, has filled the streams until many of the beds or which are higher than the lands adjacent, and worthless except for pasture and an uncertain crop of hay. While spoiling the bottoms the best of much of the fields have flown down to the ruin of the fields. All farms are not this way, but the very system under which tenantry works pushes more and more of the fields into the branches and crooks. Men need ever to keep the following displayed before them:

"Lord, God of hosts be with us yet, lest we forget, lest we forget!"

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2 teaspoon Salt 1 cup Graham Flour
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Mix together all dry ingredients. Add raisins, Karo, molasses, and milk. Mix thoroughly and fill one pound cans one-half full. Steam three hours. Makes four loaves.

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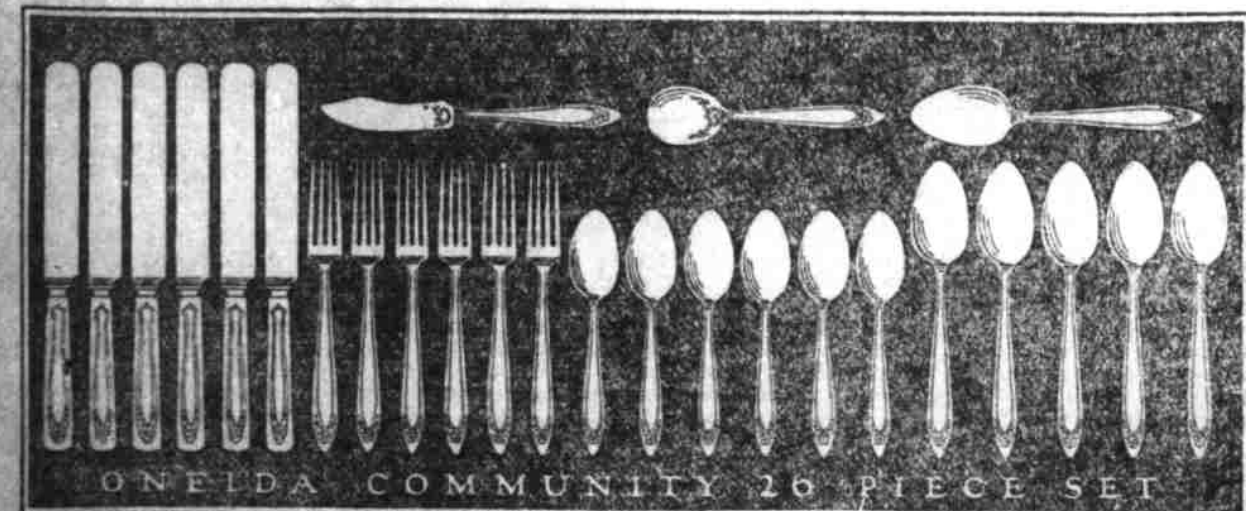
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