

The Farmer as a Man of Business Affairs

Hon. W. L. Ames of Wisconsin.

There is indeed a no small amount to be considered on this subject. A man, to succeed in any business, must be more or less, a man of business affairs. Among other important characteristics, he must, as the term goes, "Be a good mixer." There is nothing that better prepares a man of to-day for successful business than to mingle freely with his fellow-men, take free action with them, study their ways, appropriate their good and pleasing ways, abstain from their obnoxious ways and habits, think out and cultivate good, wholesome and progressive ideas, struggle and aim to be just a little in advance of the average mind if possible, and in all things that he undertakes, or that is for the common good, be sure that he keeps his end of the even up.

The Half-Bushel Farmer.

We ever have with us in abundance the half-bushel farmer, who with his two or three cows, a couple of pigs and a few chickens is so absorbed in his own business that he has no time to think of anything else, or give an hour's attention to anything outside of his own little home realms of business. This class large as it is, and good and inoffensive as are the individuals composing it, need never be expected to move matters of general interest and affairs very much. To move matters in which a public as well as the individual is interested, calls for a mind of broader vision and capable of grasping a situation and acting upon it just at a time when it is ripe for action. Opportunities come to all for favorable action. Utilized, they broaden the individual and rubably benefit the public. Unused and lost, the mind soon ceases to be able to perceive them when they do come, and ultimately concludes that opportunities do not come to him.

Old and Newer Ways.

But to return more directly to my subject and to follow briefly the cue intimated by Mr. Moore. "Abandoning old slipshod ways." Yes, slipshod ways in particular, as slipshod ways are seldom leaders to success. But I am hardly prepared to champion the abandoning of all old ways until we are practically certain that we have surer and better new ways to success. The good old ways are the ways that have built the hundreds of substantial and creditable farm houses with which this country abounds. Good or bad ways proven by bookkeeping. Bookkeeping will seldom prove beyond doubt, ways, good or bad. One of the greatest disappointments that I have found in farming, and I am not alone in this discovery is, that we pursue a certain course in farming for several years and succeed and then we say, "There is one thing that we know how to do," and the very next time we try it we fail, and then we don't know as much as we thought we did. In fact, there are few things that we do know. But there is no backing up. We must proceed on a line of general principles and with faith that if we do our best, reasonable reward will be ours, and the world will be fed, for such is our high mission.

The Farm-Bred and the College-Bred Farmer.

In the term "farmer" as used in this subject, reference is made specifically to the actual and practical operator of a farm. Presumably a farm-bred farmer. I would not know how to handle, nor what to say of a

city or college-bred farmer. I assume that the great majority of you young men, and perhaps all, are farm-bred farmers. If so, you know as well as I the real and practical value of the assuming farmer who is but a college-bred farmer. Knowing but very little of the real business of farming. For farming is a real business and if ever a business teemed with surprises and disappointments, farming does. Which leads us to the subject of

Delusions.

Young men, I'm going to say just a word to you personally, whether strictly relevant to my subject or not, and its along this line of delusions. Its a slightly sensitive object and perhaps not one of you will agree with me, but that never causes me to hesitate to say what I think. Its about weddings. Perhaps you have all experienced your first wedding. If so, you doubtless remember how beautiful that girl looked, that, to you, eventful day. And unless you had made her close kitchen and work-a-day acquaintance you doubtless thought to yourself: "Is it possible that I to yourself: "Is it possible that I am to spend the remainder of my days with so beautiful a creature as that?"

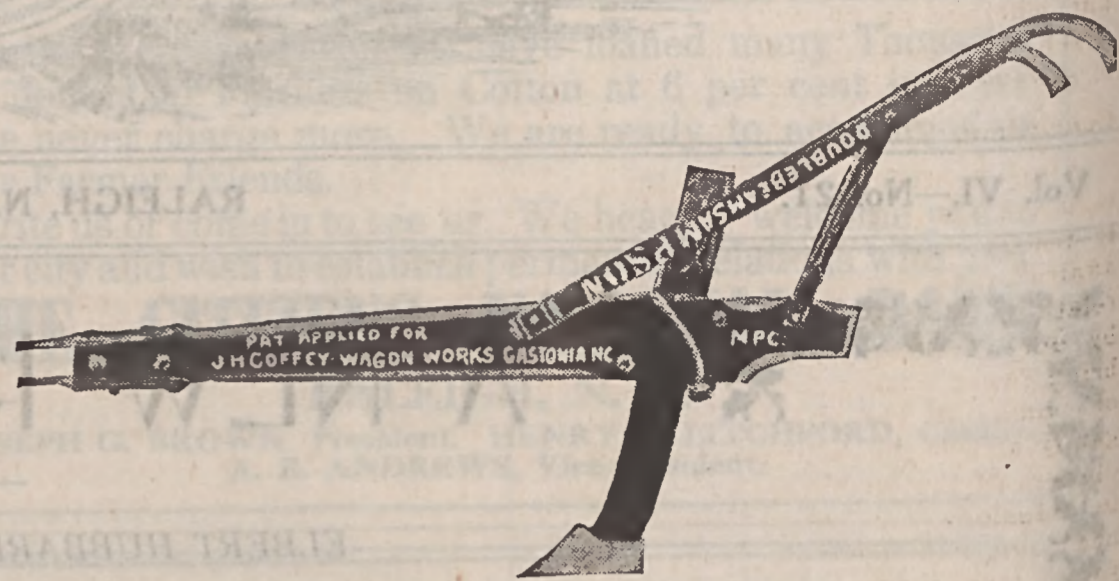
But if you had to work for a living, it was not very long before you had to behold your bride in a plainer attire, when she would not look so exquisitely beautiful and lovely, but you were then wed and destined to live together a lifetime. The delusion was as great to her. She beheld you in your conventional black—doubtless with a white tie, shiny shoes and a derby hat and gloved hands, and a face shaved as smooth that a fly would slip up on it and perhaps a grand moustache, and perhaps on that particular day you had, for exhibition purposes, stuffed your purse with one dollar bills to make it look liberal and resourceful. But oh, my! Again, I say, if you had to work for a living, and get to work soon after she took you "for better or for worse," and she had to behold you in your work clothes and coarse shoes and with a growth of beard stubble on your once feminine cheeks and she had discovered that that wad of money on your wedding day was only one-dollar bills, don't you almost wonder that she did not, at once 'pick up and leave you? My proposed remedy would be: Simply tone down that wedding day delusion. Appear to be more nearly what you really are on that day of days, your wedding day, and the day of all days that has such a marked influence may be only for good.

I am reliably informed that a similar delusion exists in cities relative to farming. That many a city man, workman, perhaps, labors and lives under the impression that a farmer simply walks and struts around most of the time with his hands in his pockets and that there is at all times an abundance of coins there with which to make a very perceptible jingle. That at times of high prices his bins are heaped high with the where-withal to sell. That with butter at prospectively 60 cents a pound, his sleek cows at the end of a 20 degree below January are just more than filling pails with 5 per cent milk. That because they are paying 18 cents to 25 cents for meat over the block, that the farmer must be getting one-half to three-fourths of that price for his live animals. That because there is a 10-cents-a-

pound tax on colored oleomargarine that it must make that commodity that much higher to them, and they pray fervently that that tax be removed, so that manufacturers of oleomargarine can color it to imitate real butter and then charge them 40 cents to 60 cents a pound for it, the same as butter price. Whereas there is but one-fourth cent a pound

tax on uncolored oleomargarine, which sells at 15 cents to 18 cents per pound and the coloring pill thrown in so that the consumer can color it himself. Oh, we sincerely hope that when the consumer succeeds in getting that 10 cents tax removed and he is paying regular butter price for oleomargarine, and the manufacturer of oleomargarine is

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