

breed-anarchy, socialism and false financial theories, and adversity reigns.

You will thus see that the secretary of agriculture is now a very important factor. Who is the man that McKinley has chosen? What kind of a man is he? What is he going to do? I can answer these questions in part in the chat which I had with Secretary James Wilson at the Agricultural Department today. I had a letter of introduction to the new secretary from Senator W. B. Allison, and as soon as my card was sent in I was admitted. A tall, angular plain-looking man of about sixty years of age began to get up as I entered the door. By the time I had reached his desk he was on his feet. His long right arm was stretched out toward mine and his horny hand gave me a cordial old-fashioned shake. It was James Wilson, the new Secretary of Agriculture, the man who is known all over the west as one of the best farmers of the Mississippi valley, and who is noted among agriculturists everywhere as being one of the most practical, up-to-date authorities upon everything connected with farming. He asked me to be seated and for an hour we chatted together about himself, the American farmer and what Uncle Sam might do for him. Mr. Wilson is a good talker. His voice is slightly metallic and his words come out at the rate of about two hundred per minute. He has as many homely expressions as had Abraham Lincoln and his talk is as full of ideas as an egg is full of meat. He is a well-educated man, and once or twice in speaking of his home in Scotland he quoted passages from Burns, giving the broad Scotch as it was used by the poet who composed some of his verses as he followed the plow on his farm, not far from that upon which Secretary Wilson was born. From time to time as we talked the clerks would bring in papers and letters for the Secretary's advice or signature, and I could see how rapidly and how carefully Mr. Wilson handled his business. He was not at all disturbed by the interruptions, and I noticed that he followed each letter line by line with his finger before he put his signature to it. I saw several other instances of his careful business ways. At one period in the conversation a clerk brought in a requisition for a horse. As he laid it down before the Secretary he said that the horse which this new animal was to displace had been in the service of the department twenty-four years and that this warrant authorized one of the clerks to go up to Virginia and buy another.

"Who is the man who is to do the buying?" asked the Secretary.

"He is the assistant veterinary professor of the department," was the reply.

"Well," said the Secretary, "send him in. I want to see what he knows about a horse before I send him out to buy one."

During my chat with Secretary Wilson I asked him how he came to know anything about farming. He replied:

"I was born a farmer, and I was brought up amid the traditions of the farm. My ancestors for generations have made their living by tilling the soil. I was born near Ayr, Scotland. My father wanted to come to America before he was married, but his parents would not let him. The journey to America then was about as much of an undertaking as a trip to the moon would be today. So father settled down upon

the farm in Scotland. There I was born and there I lived until I was sixteen. Then we all came to America. We settled first in Connecticut and farmed near Norwich. About three years later my father got the western fever, and we moved out to Iowa. Iowa was at that time far west. We came there ten years in advance of the railroad. Father entered some land, and I worked with him three years, when I took up some land of my own. Well, I have been farming from that day to this."

"But, Mr. Secretary," said I, "what kind of a farmer are you? Uncle Jerry Rusk, when he was Secretary of Agriculture, told me that part of his life he had been a farmer and part of it an agriculturist. I asked him what he meant by that, and he said that the farmer was the man who made money by farming, and that the agriculturist was the man who spent lots of money on experiments, but usually came out behind."

"Yes," replied the Secretary, with a laugh, "and another definition of the two terms is: 'The farmer farms the farm, but the agriculturist farms the farmer.' Well I don't know what you might call me. I believe in practical scientific farming. I have made money in farming. At least I have made my farm. I had nothing when I started, and I have now a farm of a thousand acres and a good one."

"How much is land worth in Iowa?"

"It depends on the land," was the reply. "Within the past two years I have paid as high as \$62 an acre for land. Plenty of our land is worth \$75 an acre, and almost everywhere in Iowa farm lands are worth as high as \$40 per acre."

"But, Mr. Secretary, can the farmers make money out of land at such prices? Is there any money in farming, and would you advise a young man to go in to it to make money?"

"The most of our farmers in Iowa are making money," replied Mr. Wilson. "If your young man is the right kind of a young man, if he has a liking for farming and has enough business sense to farm rightly, he can do well. In buying a farm, however, he should go out to look at the land with a spade in his hand, and should know that some kinds of land are hardly cheap at any price. He should study the soil and the markets, and become a farming manufacturer instead of a mere raiser of raw materials for other people to make money out of them."

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Secretary?" said I.

"I mean just what I say," replied Mr. Wilson. "It is the farm manufacturers who are making the money today. It is the men who are taking their raw materials and turning them into meat and selling the meat who are making the money. It is the fellows who are selling the grain who are losing. Take my region! I live in the greatest corn belt on the globe. We raise millions upon millions of bushels of Indian corn. There are six states, including Iowa, which produce over a billion bushels of shelled corn every year. The price of this corn if sold is only thirteen cents a bushel. If you turn it into meat it will bring you forty cents a bushel. That is the difference between good and bad farming. It is the difference between thirteen cents and forty cents, the difference between a big profit and a big loss.

The poor farmer sells his grain and keeps poor, the good farmer turns it into meat and dairy products and gets rich. Look at it! The corn is worth thirteen cents a bushel in Iowa. It is shipped east and it is sold for twenty-five cents a bushel to a man there who turns it into meat and makes a profit, or it may even go across the Atlantic and be turned into meat by one of the farmers in England, who will pay seventy-five cents a bushel for it. Think of the chance that the farmer who raises it has to make money over the others."

"I suppose that is the kind of farming you do, Mr. Secretary?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I have been raising corn for more than forty years and I have never sold a bushel. I raise hogs and stock and I feed all the grain that I make."

"Speaking of Europe, Mr. Secretary, what do you think of that country as a market for our corn. Secretary Rusk, you know, sent an agent into Europe to introduce it there. They nicknamed him Corn Meal Murphy. Mr. Murphy estimated that we could easily increase the value of our corn crop at least one hundred million dollars a year by the foreign demand?"

"That is all imagination!" replied Secretary Wilson. "I don't believe a word of it. The European farmers don't want our corn. They know that corn is very poor in nitrogenous matter. It does not make good manure. The percentage of nitrogen in corn is only about 1 to 10, while flax seed and cotton seed meal are almost half nitrogen. The European farmers have to have food that will enrich their lands. So they import the refuse of our oil mills by the thousands of tons. Did you ever realize that we are the great paint users of the globe? We use more paint than any other people, and we import quantities of flax seed from India and other countries to make linseed oil. Much of the refuse of this seed goes to Europe. The farmers there understand its value, and we, who ought to keep it, let it go. We, on the other hand, import nothing from Europe that adds to our material wealth. One of our chief imports, for instance, is sugar. This is largely made up of starch. Now, the starchy elements of plants come from the air. Sugar is not good for manure. You might cover a field two feet deep with sugar and it would not raise a crop. Still we pay other countries more than a hundred million dollars a year for it. It is practically paying a hundred million dollars a year for air. Think of it!"

"Why can't we prevent that, Mr. Secretary, by raising our own sugar?"

"We can," replied Secretary Wilson, "and I have already taken steps to encourage the growth of the sugar beet in this country. We are now sending our beet seed to different parts of the Mississippi valley. There is no doubt but that we can raise the sugar beet, and we ought to make all of our own sugar. We are now paying \$125,000,000 a year to other countries for this product. We get a vast amount of beet sugar from Germany, and a great deal of cane sugar from Cuba. I believe the time will come when we will raise all we need."

"You were speaking of Germany, Mr. Secretary," said I. "Are the Germans to be allowed to discriminate against our meat products without cause as they have in the past?"

"No," was the reply, "we shall stop