

afterwards incorporated in the "Misanthrope;" the opera of "Psyche," written in collaboration with Corneille; the "Pastorale Comique," of which only fragments remain; and "Les Amants Magnifiques" and "Melicerte," which are without great interest.

M. Fabre proudly claims that no theater in the world would be capable of staging such a repertory, and he quotes the fact, mortifying to an Englishman, that no single play of Shakespeare or Sheridan can be seen in London to-day, if you do not count the praiseworthy but modest efforts of the "Old Vic," in the Waterloo Road.

The repertory, as I have said, is nearly complete. Among the recent additions have been "Le Sicilien" and "Sganarelle, ou le Cocu Imaginaire," and the latest, produced the other day, was "Les Fâcheux." "Les Fâcheux"—the sense of the word being "importunate, annoying, boring," rather than "angry"—is a collection of comic sketches rather than a play. It is said to have been

written in a fortnight, and one scene—that of the sportsman and his interminable story—Molière himself, in his Introduction to the play, acknowledged, with a good courtier's deference, as due to a suggestion from the King, although we can imagine the difference between Louis's version of the story and Molière's. It was first produced at a fête at which the magnificent Fouquet entertained his royal master; and the company was never paid, no doubt because Fouquet was himself arrested and put into the Bastille only a few days later. It was afterwards given in Paris, with very great success. It was played for forty-four consecutive performances, which was a record at the time, and no doubt contributed largely to making its year the most financially prosperous which the company ever had. Its success perhaps influenced Molière in a domestic matter, for it was in the middle of its "run," in February, 1662, that he married Armande Béjard. The scenery for the original production was

painted by Lebrun, who only a month before had been appointed *premier peintre* to the King. He became director of and purchaser for the royal collection, and his decorative paintings are still to be seen in the ceiling of the Grande Galerie and elsewhere in the Louvre. He also persuaded Louis XIV to found the French art school at Rome, which the winners of the Prix de Rome attend to this day.

The great success of "Les Fâcheux" at the time of its production has never been repeated since. The types which Molière chose for his ridicule were peculiar to the Paris of the moment, and perhaps the play was too quickly written to allow him to make his figures universal, although he has achieved immortality for other work as rapidly composed. At the same time, it forms an integral part of his life-work, and it fitly adds the last stone but one to the monumental tribute which the Comédie-Française are erecting in his honor.

Paris, France.

## BUTTERNUT ETHICS

BY MARGARET RAYMOND

OUR town went butternut-mad last fall. (We are too far north for chestnuts, and hickories are too small and hard to shake off to be a popular harvest; so nutting with us usually means butternutting.) The reason for our excitement was partly the bumper crop of this year. Every tree—trig little roadside sapling and scraggly, towering giant of the hillside—was loaded with nuts. The first frost literally covered the ground beneath them with the big sticky green lumps of lusciousness.

Harvesting the crop, in these days of universal motoring, was only too easy. Young Dr. Stark went off one afternoon and got seven bushels. The Baptist minister boasted of having picked up nearly four—I think he mentioned manna in his account of the exploit. Then somebody announced that butternuts were going to sell at two dollars a bushel, in spite of their being so plentiful. This profiteering figure gave a fillip to an always pleasurable adventure, and sent us all briskly afield with bags and baskets. I, to whom butternutting had long been an annual delight, was amused to find my hitherto disregarded sport suddenly become fashionable.

Now our town lies in the midst of a well-settled bit of New England hill country. Every butternut tree has an owner, and, profiteering aside, butternuts are certainly marketable merchandise. These facts did not deter anybody from collecting manna—unless the farmer came along and put intruders out of his field.

I do not claim—now that I have gone to the bottom of the subject—to have been a more moral nutter than my

townsfolk; I was only a bit more afraid than most of them of angry farmers. Therefore I have always sought my plunder in some remote patch of woodland, where I could delude myself into thinking that only the squirrels would gather the nuts if I didn't, and where the farmer was very unlikely to find me engaged in robbing the squirrels. But this year, with my squirrel instinct for winter storage stimulated by war-saving habits and high prices, not to mention the example of the ministry and the contagious excitement of my neighbors, I wanted more nuts than usual, and when I met the rest of the town engaged in robbing roadside trees I joined them, at first cautiously, then with more abandon. But, as it happened, I never was caught until, very late in the butternut season, Mrs. Williston-Smith took me out in her \$12,000 limousine to gather barberries.

Mrs. Williston-Smith is old and fat and very, very rich. Her pudgy fingers sparkle with diamonds. Her car is the most expensive one in town; she bought it as such. A childless widow, she lives alone in a big old-fashioned house on a corner. There is a fence around her yard, and she often says she wishes it were a ten-foot brick wall. The school-children bother her fearfully, tracking across her lawn to cut the corner. They deface her white fence with crayon and pencil scrawlings. Also they steal her plums and her grapes.

With all her money and lazy, luxurious habits, Mrs. Williston-Smith loves as well as I do—and that is saying a good deal—to go foraging for wild crops. I don't believe that parsimony is her motive; I think it's a redeeming streak

of gypsy in her. She takes her cook and her chauffeur berrying, and lets them pick for their own families; but she picks herself as hard as anybody, all day, in the broiling sun. She took me along to get barberries because I knew a good place and she didn't. My place was right across the road from a house, but barberries aren't marketable, and very few farmers' wives ever gather them. The prickly bushes rank as "pesky weeds" in country circles.

Mrs. Williston-Smith entertained me while we picked with tales of her raspberry adventures. She and her party had picked thirty quarts one day, and been put out of the same field twice—a field plainly marked with a "No trespass" sign. And she thought being put out a fine joke! I was ashamed of her, but it didn't seem quite decent to show it.

The chauffeur's wife did not want to make any barberry jelly; she thought it took too much sugar. So James contributed his spoils to his mistress, and we soon had barberries enough to satisfy both of us. Accordingly we arranged ourselves and our baskets in the expensive limousine and started for home. Suddenly Mrs. Williston-Smith started out of her deep-cushioned ease to speak sharply to her man: "James, isn't that a butternut tree down by the brook?"

James said that it was, and drew up by the roadside. "It's probably been stripped before now," observed his mistress, "but we'll have a look. No, no baskets, James, and we sha'n't need you. I'm sure there's no more than a handful of nuts. Want to go prospecting, Mary?"

We scrambled down to the brook. There one tree led us to another, and

there were many handfuls of extra big nuts on the ground. Mrs. Williston-Smith looked wearily at the steep climb back to the road. "We're in old clothes; we can use our petticoats," she decided swiftly, and we staggered triumphantly up the bank, each with a skirtful of nuts to add to her store—Mrs. Williston-Smith confided to me that she had at least six bushels drying.

She summoned James to the boundary fence with baskets just in time to save us the embarrassment of being caught with our skirts up by a little red-faced, ferret-eyed man who was shambling along the road on foot. Slowly he took us in. Having passed the car on his inspection tour, he turned and accosted us ceremoniously.

"Did you ladies have any business down there?" he demanded. "Want anything?"

"Not a thing," said Mrs. Williston-Smith, affably. "We're just leaving."

Ferret Eyes shambled nearer. "Nuts!" he said, accusingly. "That's my land. I live back there." He pointed in the direction of my barberry patch.

"Well, you don't want these few butternuts, do you? You *know* you weren't going to pick them." Mrs. Williston-Smith was as accusative as the farmer.

"We'll gladly leave them for you," I interposed. "We certainly don't want them if you do."

"Oh, that's all right. Take 'em, now you've got 'em," he relented grandly, and started off. In a minute he was back. "I presume you've got a place in town," he resumed. "What 'd you think of me coming in and helping myself? I presume you'd want to have me arrested; wouldn't you, now?"

"No, I wouldn't," asserted Mrs. Williston-Smith, cool and, to judge by tales of her encounters with boyish marauders, quite mendacious. "Not if you behaved yourself."

"Be'aved myself!" he repeated, beligerently. "Be'aved myself! And do you call it be'avin' yerself to go in unbidden where ye don't belong and take what don't belong to ye?" He whirled off suddenly, as if conscious that he had gone very far.

"He's drunk, Mary," Mrs. Williston-Smith murmured, slipping agilely under the fence, "disgustingly drunk. I got a good whiff of his breath just then. Start the car, James. Come on, Mary. Let's get away from here."

The ferret-eyed man was hopping angrily about behind the big limousine. "Comin' around here in that!" he shouted, shaking a dirty fist at its sleek and shining side. "Goin' in where ye've no business, without nobody's leave—"

"Home, James," said Mrs. Williston-Smith, gayly. "My, but he's drunk! I don't believe that's his land. It's a lot nearer that white house on the other road. I expected every minute that somebody would pop out from there and shout at us."

"You wouldn't like him to take your fruit," I suggested.

"Not the same thing at all," said Mrs. Williston-Smith, calmly. "He didn't plant those trees. Butternuts grow wild. Wild things belong to anybody. Besides, I'll *never* believe it was his land. He was drunk and ugly—on bad whisky—smuggled probably."

Butternuts sold finally at seventy-five cents a bushel—when they sold at all. We hadn't, of course, left many, and the farmers, it seemed, were too short of help and too busy picking apples at two and three dollars a bushel to bother much with our leavings.

"Still we did think it was sorter queer," my butter-and-egg woman told me, "that people from town—substantial people of means—should come around in their autos and take them nuts right out from under our noses. There was a lot of talk about it down to the grange meetin'. 'Twa'n't the money we minded; it was the idear."

"Do they bother you berrying?" I asked, secure in the knowledge that I had never foraged in her neighborhood.

She hesitated. "Oh, there's generally enough for all. Of course strawberryin' is bad fer medder grass. And sometimes, when you've located an awful good raspberry patch an' lotted on skimmin' it, an' a party from town git thar first—before you're through with the housework—and flax round in there and tramp down the bushes, why, it's awful aggravatin'. Not the berries so much as the idear."

"The idear" of "goin' in unbidden where you don't belong and takin' what don't belong to you," because it grows wild and God alone made it, though Farmer Jones pays the taxes—the double standard of morality and courtesy, one way for the country and another for the town—strange that in all my farmside wanderings and pillagings I had never thought of it at all before. The ethics of butternutting is simple enough: Ask first and pay as you go. The same rule will do also for berrying. Forbidden fruit (when the shoe is on the right foot) may be sweetest to Mrs. Williston-Smith—with great gusto she tells and retells the story of her routing the drunken little trampler—but my New England conscience pricks me now when I look at my jars of wild-strawberry jam and my hoard of nuts drying in the attic no longer intrigues me. And then nuts and berries are only a small part of my wilderness spoils. There are countless other crops even finer in the eyes of the discriminating, and quite unpurchasable: arbutus blossoms, cowslip and dandelion greens, and watercress in spring, milkweed tips in June, mushrooms all summer; in the fall, frost grapes and barberries, scarlet bittersweet branches, partridge vines bedded in deep-green moss for my bowls, pine cones smeared with pitch for my open fires. Who am I that the farmers should give me all these lovely things?

In summer I picnic by their swift brown brooks. I build my cooking fires out of the dry wood that litters their

ground on the stones by the stream or up among the spruces, where the upland view is finest. I tramp across their acres unasked and unasking, culling flowers from their wild land, and ferns and bright leaves and berries in autumn, when and where I please. And never, till the little ferret-eyed man drunkenly expounded the matter, did I realize the depths of my debt to my farmer neighbors, guardians of the wild, generous enough to object only to the most flagrant and mundane of my many intrusions. But their generosity does not abrogate my debt.

"SENTIMENTAL mush!" comments my practical young cousin Caroline, reading so far over my shoulder. "Your butter-and-egg woman wouldn't recognize her 'idear' with all your frills on it. Farmer Jones would laugh at it just as hard as Mrs. Williston-Smith. What Ferret Eyes wanted, of course, was not a few nuts which it wouldn't pay him to take to market, but the price of another drink. If he really wanted to keep people out, he'd put up trespass signs. He'd laugh well if you asked permission to get puff-balls and parasol mushrooms on his hill, or else he'd warn you solemnly against eating poison 'tudstools.' He probably never heard of partridge berries. A farmer is a business man, out for profits, like the rest of the world. The farm things you like, including views, are just trash to him—except possibly nuts."

"Then you do think I'm right about the ethics of butternutting?" I asked, meekly.

"Oh, yes," agreed Caroline, "you probably are. But you can't do anything about it. It's just part of the general wave of crime and lawlessness induced by the motor habit. Automobiles make robbery and murder and all that sort of thing so easy! It's an infection—the newspapers are full of it. You can't expect this neighborhood to escape." At my gasp of horror she set her chin defiantly. "That \$12,000 car took life yesterday," she announced.

"Oh, no, Caroline!" I demurred.

She nodded. "It did—and whizzed off. It killed the ten-pound hen turkey that I'd ordered for our family Thanksgiving dinner. And didn't pay damages. And I can't get another at that place; the motor death rate has been too high this summer. 'Chickens and turkeys don't belong in the road; we haven't time to stop for them to jump the wrong way and cackle and flutter and run to safety.' That's the current motor ethics, and it's an easy step from that to not bothering about dogs and cows and children. Why, all the callousness of Bolshivism and anarchy is inherent in the way nice people do death and destruction to chickens and blithely speed away."

"Caroline," said I, sternly, "you may call me sentimental, but you're sensational—wildly so."

"Well, it's a sensational age," re-



sponded Caroline, calmly. "Motors at the bottom of that too, I should say—and movies. Now you go and rag Mrs. Williston-Smith about berry patches and butternuts and chickens. Rag her hard. I'm frightfully annoyed at having to hunt up another ten-pound hen turkey."

I shall certainly talk butternut ethics to Mrs. Williston-Smith. It is the least I can do—to try to make her appreciate one small point in the case of country *versus* town. But the whole big case,

based on the fact that God's country, and Farmer Jones's, is the free playground of everybody who loves it, and that therefore some of the happiest hours of life and some of its dearest treasures are the gift, real though often involuntary, of Farmer Jones—I can never get that across to Mrs. Williston-Smith. And Caroline persists in confusing the issue by talking of the depredations of *motorists*—not my point at all. I wish I could get some sociologist

interested in the degree of communism practiced by Farmer Jones as one of the hopeful social phenomena of to-day. Perhaps he would help me to plan a similar town communism; some way whereby we villagers may discover some wild—that is, God-given—unregarded assets of our own, which we may dispense for the general happiness with the matter-of-course liberality of Farmer Jones. Or is it all, as Caroline thinks, a perfectly wild "idear"?

## THE CURE FOR RURAL UNREST

A FARM INTERPRETATION OF THE EFFECT UPON FORTY MILLION PEOPLE OF FALLING PRICES, HIGH FREIGHT RATES, GROWTH OF TENANCY, AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE ORGANIZATIONS. WHAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN DO AND WHAT THE FARMERS MUST DO

BY CHARLES W. HOLMAN

**T**HE aftermath of war has had tragic and terrible consequences for American farmers. Unless relieved, the social and political effects will be far-reaching. Farmers are downhearted, unrestful, and resentful. They have become critical and pessimistic and thousands have lost faith in the future of their vocation.

In the South conditions are especially acute. Distress, suffering, and disease in rural districts have impelled President Harding to request both the Public Health Service and the Red Cross to make emergency surveys. Meantime the cotton of Southern farmers, which the world does not want, is stacked in their yards and not worth the mortgages held against it by merchants and bankers. It is a strange and grotesque parody on the economics of the times.

### CONGRESS ALSO INVESTIGATING

A Congressional Joint Commission of Agricultural Inquiry has been created by Congress. This Commission, consisting of five Senators and five members of the lower house, is conducting a ninety-day, Nation-wide inquiry into conditions.

Its work is divided into hearings which are conducted by the Commission and a comprehensive economic survey in which the statistical gathering branches of every executive department have been co-ordinated to supply data for the Commission to analyze. Professor Clyde S. King, a noted economist of the University of Pennsylvania, is in charge of the survey.

The significance of this inquiry can hardly be overestimated. It is the first time since 1908 that the Government has taken special cognizance in such manner of the needs of farmers.

### TELLING THEIR WOES TO THE COMMISSION

Farm leaders from almost every State have already appeared before the Joint Commission. Some have brought striking data. Others have been able only to give opinions. But at least one important contribution has come from farmer sources. The Commission has obtained

a very clear knowledge of rural psychology, of the desperate state of mind among the rural people.

The unprecedented fall in prices of farm products, beginning in July of last year, resulted in a seven-billion-dollar price loss in the aggregate to American farmers. Wool-growers suddenly found their market absolutely gone. And millions of pounds of raw wool was coming to this country from Australia, South America, and Africa! As soon as the underpinning of the United States Grain Corporation was taken from the wheat price it began to tumble. A bumper crop of corn sent that commodity so low that it was worth more as a substitute for coal than for food. Live-stock feeding has been a losing game for three years. Dairymen found that Denmark could lay butter down in New York City and make a profit because of the higher rate of exchange of the dollar as compared with Danish kroner. Slowly, because producers were better organized for marketing, dairy products followed this trend to lower price levels.

When May of the present year had been reached, the purchasing power of the farmers' dollar had reached its low point. Compared with the buying power of his crops in 1913, the farmers' dollar of 1921 was worth only 65 cents; live-stock dollars will buy only 72 cents; cotton, 60 cents; corn, 65 cents; and wheat, 65 cents. Even though prices held up for a few months in 1920, the average purchasing power of farm commodities for that year was 89 cents as compared with the commodity dollar of 1913. Not since 1890 has there been such a depression.

Prices received by farmers in an average Ohio community on June 15 of this year as compared with the same date last year show that corn had fallen from \$1.83 to 59 cents per bushel; wheat, from \$2.27 to \$1.35 per bushel; oats, from \$1.07 to 36 cents per bushel; barley, from \$1.65 to 60 cents per bushel; and rye, from \$1.83 to \$1.15 per bushel.

A survey of fifty Ohio farms conducted

by the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation showed that average cash receipts in 1920 exceeded expenses by \$1,897. After deducting average inventory values, \$793, the net returns for farmers were \$1,104 for wages and interest on an average investment of \$23,673. Had the average farmer sold his property and invested the proceeds at 6 per cent and lived on his interest, he would have been in better condition.

Against this drop in the purchasing power of the farmers' dollar has come the added handicap of a horizontal rise in freight rates. Freight increases hit the farmer a double blow. Prices of raw products are made at terminal points. Farmers, therefore, must pay the freight to the terminals. Prices of what he must buy are based upon points of shipment plus the freight.

### RAILWAYS GET MORE THAN GROWERS

The disproportion of freight rates to the prices of perishable commodities was shown very conclusively by witnesses before the Commission.

One example from the mass will suffice.

From Jennings, Florida, a grower shipped a car-load of 1,600 melons to Philadelphia. This shipment, handled by the Florida State Marketing Bureau, brought \$475 on the wholesale market. The farmer paid \$249.78 for freight, \$33.25 for commission charges. He received \$197 for his net returns. For each melon the commission man received 2½ cents, the farmer 12½ cents, and the railways 15½ cents.

A mass of documentary evidence was laid before the Commission to prove that freight rates are restricting general consumption. Additional evidence was produced to show that the spread in perishable products between producer and consumer is often as high as three hundred per cent of the producers' price.

### DISTRIBUTIVE SYSTEM ANTIQUATED

It is patent that the present system of distribution is suffering from arterio-