

in merely literary accomplishments, to the total exclusion of industrial, manual and technical training, tends to unfit them for industrial work, and in real life most work is industrial.

THE FARMER'S POSITION MUST NOT SINK.

There is but one person whose welfare is as vital to the welfare of the whole country as is that of the wage-worker who does manual labor; and that is the tiller of the soil—the farmer. If there is one lesson taught by history, it is that the permanent greatness of any State must ultimately depend more upon the character of its country population than upon anything else. No growth of cities, no growth of wealth can make up for a loss in either the number or the character of the farming population. When this nation began its independent existence it was as a nation of farmers. The towns were small, and were for the most part mere sea-coast trading and fishing ports. The chief industry of the country was agriculture, and the ordinary citizen was in some way connected with it. In every great crisis of the past a peculiar dependence has had to be placed upon the farming population; and this dependence has hitherto been justified. But it cannot be justified in the future if agriculture is permitted to sink in the scale as compared with other employments. We cannot afford to lose that pre-eminently typical American, the farmer who owns his own farm.

SOME NATIONAL DANGER SIGNALS.

Yet it would be idle to deny that in the last half century there has been in the eastern half of our country a falling off in the relative condition of the tillers of the soil, although signs are multiplying that the nation has waked up to the danger and is preparing to grapple effectively with it. East of the Mississippi, and north of the Ohio and the Potomac, there has been on the whole an actual shrinkage in the number of the farming population since the Civil war. In the States of this section there has been a growth of population—in some an enormous growth—but the growth has taken place in the cities, and especially in the larger cities. This has been due to certain economic factors, such as the extension of railroads, the development of machinery, and the openings for industrial success afforded by the unprecedented growth of cities. The increased facility of communication has resulted in the withdrawal from rural communities of most of the small, widely-distributed manufacturing and commercial operations of former times, and the substitution thereof of the centralized commercial and manufacturing industries of the cities.

SCHOOL SECTIONS AND CHURCH DISTRICTS BROKEN UP.

The chief offset to the various tendencies which have told against the farm has hitherto come in the rise of the physical sciences and their application to agricultural practices, or to the rendering of country conditions more easy and pleasant. But these countervailing forces are as yet in their infancy. As compared with a few decades ago, the social or community life of country people in the east compares less well than it formerly did with that of the dwellers in cities. Many country communities have lost their social coherence, their sense of community interest. In such communities the country church, for instance, has gone backward, both as a social and a religious factor. Now, we cannot too strongly insist upon the fact that it is quite as unfortunate to have any social as any economic falling off. It would be a calamity to have our farms occupied by a lower type of people than the hard-working, self-respecting, independent and essentially manly and womanly men and women who have hitherto constituted the most typically American, and on the whole the most valuable element in our entire nation. Ambitious native-born young men and women who now tend away from the farm must be brought back to it, and therefore they must have social as well as economic opportunities. Everything should be done to encourage the growth in the open farming country of such institutional and social movements as will meet the demand of the best type of farmers. There should be libraries, assembly halls, social organizations of all kinds. The school building and the teacher in the school building should, throughout the country districts, be of the very highest type, able to fit the boys and girls not merely to live in, but thoroughly to enjoy and to make the most of the country. The country church must be revived. All kinds of agencies, from rural free delivery to the bicycle and the telephone, should be utilized to the utmost; good roads should be favored; everything should be done to make it easier for the farmer to lead the most active and effective, intellectual, political and economic life.

THE EXCEPTION MUST BE MADE THE RULE.

There are regions of large extent where all this, or most of this, has already been realized. In these regions the church and the school flourish as never before; there is a more successful and more varied farming industry; the social advantages and opportunities are greater than ever before; life is fuller, happier, more useful; and though the work is more effective than ever, and in a way quite as hard, it is carried on so as to leave more scope for well-used leisure. My plea is that we shall all try to make more nearly universal the conditions that now obtain in the most favored localities.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT NECESSARY ON THE FARM.

Nothing in the way of scientific work can ever take the place of business management on a farm. We ought all of us to teach ourselves as much as possible,

but we can also all of us learn from others; and the farmer can best learn how to manage his farm even better than he now does, by practice, under intelligent supervision, on his own soil in such way as to increase his income. This is the kind of teaching which has been carried on in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas by Dr. Khapp, of the National Department of Agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE.

But much has been accomplished by the growth of what is broadly designated as agricultural science. This has been developed with remarkable rapidity during the last quarter of a century, and the benefit to agriculture has been great. As was inevitable, there was much error and much repetition of work in the early application of money to the needs of agricultural colleges and experiment stations alike by the nation and the several States. Much has been accomplished; but much more can be accomplished in the future. The prime need must always be for real research, resulting in scientific conclusions of proved soundness. Both the farmer and the Legislature must beware of invariably demanding immediate returns from investments in research efforts. It is probably one of our faults as a nation—for we have some faults—that we are too impatient to wait a sufficient length of time to accomplish the best results; and in agriculture effective research often, although not always, involves slow and long-continued effort if the results are to be trustworthy.

While applied science in agriculture as elsewhere must be judged largely from the standpoint of its actual return in dollars, yet the farmers, no more than anyone else, can afford to ignore the large results that can be enjoyed because of broader knowledge. The farmer must prepare for using the knowledge that can be obtained through agricultural colleges by insisting upon a constantly more practical curriculum in the schools in which his children are taught. He must not lose his independence, his initiative, his rugged self-sufficiency; and yet he must learn to work in the heartiest co-operation with his fellows.

CORNERSTONES OF PROSPERITY.

The cornerstones of our unexampled prosperity are, on the one hand, the production of raw material, and

earnestly to be desired. How can life on the farm be kept on the highest level, and where it is not already on that level, be so improved, dignified and brightened as to awaken and keep alive the pride and loyalty of the farmer's boys and girls, of the farmer's wife, and of the farmer himself? How can a compelling desire to live on the farm be aroused in the children that are born on the farm? All these questions are of vital importance, not only to the farmer, but to the whole nation; and the Department of Agriculture must do its share in answering them.

The drift toward the city is largely determined by the superior social opportunities to be enjoyed there, by the greater vividness and movement of city life. Considered from the point of view of national efficiency, the problem of the farm is as much a problem of attractiveness as it is a problem of prosperity. It has ceased to be merely a problem of growing wheat and corn and cattle. The problem of production has not ceased to be fundamental, but it is no longer final; just as learning to read and write and cipher are fundamental, but are no longer the final ends of education. We hope ultimately to double the average yield of wheat and corn per acre; it will be a great achievement; but it is even more important to double the desirability, comfort and standing of the farmer's life.

We must consider, then, not merely how to produce, but also how production affects the producer. In the past we have given but scant attention to the social side of farm life. We should study much more closely than has yet been done the social organization of the country, and inquire whether its institutions are now really as useful to the farmer as they should be, or whether they should not be given a new direction and a new impulse, for no farmer's life should lie merely within the boundary of his farm. This study must be of the east and the west, the north and the south; for the needs vary from place to place.

First in importance, of course, comes the effort to secure the mastery of production. Great strides toward this end have already been taken over the larger part of the United States; much remains to be done; and the debt of the nation to the various agencies of agricultural improvement for so great an advance is not to be overstated. But we cannot halt there. The benefits of high social organization include such advantages as ease of communication, better educational facilities, increased comfort of living, and those opportunities for social and intellectual life and intercourse, of special value to the young people and to the women, which are as yet chiefly to be had in centers of population. All this must be brought within the reach of the farmers who live on the farms, of the men whose labor feeds and clothes the towns and cities.

CO-OPERATION AS AN AID TO ADVANCEMENT.

Farmers must learn the vital need of co-operation with this comes co-operation with the Government, and the Government can best give its aid through associations of farmers rather than through the individual farmer; for there is no greater agricultural problem than that of delivering to the farmer the large body of agricultural knowledge which has been accumulated by the National and State Governments, and by the agricultural colleges and schools. It is needless to say that every successful effort to organize the farmer gives a great stimulus to the admirable educational work which is being done in the Southern States, as elsewhere, to prepare young people for an agricultural life. It is greatly to be wished that the communities from which these students are drawn, and to which they either return or should return, could be co-operatively organized; that is, that associations of farmers could be organized, primarily for business purposes, but also with social ends in view. This would mean that the returned students from the institutions of technical learning would find their environment prepared to profit to the utmost by the improvements in technical methods which they had learned.

RIGHT KIND OF COMBINATION.

The people of our farming regions must be able to combine among themselves as the most efficient means of protecting their industry from the highly-organized interests which now surround them on every side. A vast field is open for work by co-operative associations of farmers in dealing with the relation of the farm to transportation and to the distribution and manufacture of raw materials. It is only through such combination that American farmers can develop to the full their economic and social power. Combination of this kind has—in Denmark, for instance—resulted in bringing the people back to the land, and has enabled the Danish peasant to compete in extraordinary fashion, not only at home, but in foreign countries, with all rivals.

Agricultural colleges and farmers' institutes have



Glimpse of the Crowd Listening to President Roosevelt on the Grounds of the Michigan Agricultural College, Lansing.

its manufacture and distribution on the other. These two great groups of subjects are represented in the National Government principally by the Departments of Agriculture and of Commerce and Labor. The production of raw material from the surface of the earth is the sphere in which the Department of Agriculture has hitherto achieved such notable results. Of all the executive departments there is no other, not even the post office, which comes into more direct and beneficent contact with the daily life of the people than the Department of Agriculture, and none whose yield of practical benefits is greater in proportion to the public money expended.

But, great as its services have been in the past, the Department of Agriculture has a still larger field of usefulness ahead. It has been dealing with growing crops. It must hereafter deal also with living men. Hitherto agricultural research, instruction and agitation have been directed almost exclusively toward the production of wealth from the soil. It is time to adopt in addition a new point of view. Hereafter another great task before the National Department of Agriculture and the similar agencies of the various States must be to foster agriculture for its social results; or, in other words, to assist in bringing about the best kind of life on the farm for the sake of producing the best kind of men. The Government must recognize the far-reaching importance of the study and treatment of the problems of farm life alike from the social and the economic standpoints; and the Federal and State Departments of Agriculture should co-operate at every point.

STRIVE TO MAKE FARM LIFE ATTRACTIVE.

The farm grows the raw material for the food and clothing of all our citizens; it supports directly almost half of them; and nearly half the children of the United States are born and brought up on farms. How can the life of the farm family be made less solitary, fuller of opportunity, freer from drudgery, more comfortable, happier, and more attractive? Such a result is most