

Town and Country.

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It is intended in this address to show that town and country represent not merely places of residence, or numbers of population to the square mile; but that they represent different points of view and different contributions to the national welfare, each in proper proportion necessary to a well-rounded national life.

It is intended also to show that for many years the town has been increasing in influence, and the country has been declining. This increasing dominance of the town, it is asserted, has proceeded so far as to upset the proper and healthy balance. There is danger that the country will soon be unable to make its proper contribution to the economic, social and political life of Canada, and if this is shown, it follows that town and country alike are concerned in restoring the balance of influence.

THE SITUATION.

The nineteenth century is distinguished among the centuries as the era of industrial development. Science and inventive genius in the nineteenth century accomplished more in speeding up the processes of industry than had ever been accomplished in all the centuries preceding, since Cain began to till the soil and Tubalcain worked in brass and iron. At the first half of the nineteenth century the sower went forth to sow just as did the sower of the parable, casting the grain with his dispensing palm aside, and the harvester cut the grain with the sickle, as did the harvester in the fields of Boaz. At the beginning of the twentieth century the seed was sown by clock-work in a huge drill drawn by two, three or four horses, and with the self-binder one man could reap and bind as much grain in a day as ten men could do a half century earlier. Machinery has replaced hand labor in every industry. That is the industrial revolution.

The invention of machinery has been accompanied by an economic discovery of even greater significance, namely, the principle of the division of labor. It was discovered that a man could do more work, could become more expert and "efficient," if he were kept at one single operation requiring the same motions hour after hour. The motions both of his mind and of his body became automatic, when confined to a narrow round. Greater accuracy and greater speed resulted, and consequently greater production and a higher economy in production. Any large factory to-day furnishes endless examples of this division of labor.

It will be quite apparent that the division of labor is impossible in the system of small, separate shops and factories such as existed in Canada a generation ago. Hence began the combination and amalgamation of separate industries in one big factory, and the elimination of the small village shop. The factors resulting in economy of production included transportation, and factories must be placed convenient to lines of railway. The amalgamation of factories made necessary by the division of labor and the locating of factories at railway centres have produced the great modern manufacturing centres.

From the point of view of agriculture and country life, there are two types of population centres—the city and the village. The difference in these types is not one of population, but a difference of occupation and of outlook.

The village belongs to the surrounding country. Its industries use as raw material the product of the farms. They may be flour mills,—what we used to call grist mills—linen mills, or canning factories.

The business of the village is designed to serve the wants of the farmers' families. The village bank cultivates the farmers' patronage. The professional people of the village depend largely upon country practice and a country clientele. The village residents secure their provisions either direct from the farms, or through only one middleman, the village retailer. The leisured class of the village are in large part retired farmers. Village residents frequently help the farmers during the busy harvest. In the village a community hall may be established for the common use of village and country people. The village high school depends in part upon the country for its pupils, and the village church looks to the country for its members.

The city is different from all this. The industries, occupations, professions and interests of the city bear little or no relation to that part of the

country district in which it is situated. The raw material of the city factory may be, and probably is, brought from the ends of the earth, and the finished product can be bought just as advantageously one hundred miles away as in the city of origin. Native industries are those which use native products for raw material, or which use cheap native power—from coal or water. Our village industries are native. Some of our city industries are native too, but many of them are not.

The fostering of exotic, needless and useless industries by city boosters and company promoters has enormously increased the number of men who draw wages for producing articles which cannot be produced there economically, and which the nation can very well do without. Land and housing speculators, brokers, jobbers, middlemen of all kinds as well as trades and occupations that cater to cupidity and self-indulgence, find harborage in cities and increases the cost of living there for the actual workers. Trade and speculation more and more absorb the business energies of the city, and the industries of the city tend to become exotic. The business outlook of the city becomes national and international.

URBAN AND RURAL.

Thus the city in the process of growth has lost local interests and sympathies. Its speculative and trading instincts cannot abide the slow processes of agriculture, or the narrow restrictions imposed upon native industries. The city dweller is out of touch with rural processes and rural sights and rural ways of living. The city child knows only that milk is found in a bottle on the doorstep, that bread comes from the bakeshop, and meat from the butcher shop, and woolen stockings from the dry goods store. The city child knows only that money buys these things. The country child or the village child early learns that milk comes from cows, that bread comes from wheat which springs out of the ground, and that wool grows on the backs of sheep. The country child knows also that money does not produce these necessities, but that labor and skill and intelligence go to the making of food and clothing.

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour is the mill,
And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower
And the sun and the Father's will."

There is thus a type of industry, an occupation, an outlook and an experience which may be called urban. There is also a type of industry, an occupation, an outlook and an experience which may be called rural. If the urban experience is broader, national rather than local, it is also shallower than the rural experience. The rural experience keeps men closer to nature and economic facts. And rural occupations taken in total, are more nearly related to production and more essential to the well-being of the nation, than are urban occupations.

The buildings of great cities and the massing of growing families there have created another social problem and caused further loss in national efficiency. The farm is the great opportunity for occasional em-

ployment. The boys and girls on the farm need not be overworked, need not be kept out of school, and they need not grow up without habits of industry and familiarity with labor. The hordes of idle youths of both sexes in the city are idle because there is nothing for them to do. City business does not lend itself to family partnership. In the city the head of the house must earn for the whole family. On the farm the boys and girls serve apprenticeships to useful labor, and society is better off for what they do, since they usually work for nothing. If the production of the farm were charged for at so much an hour for labor expended and charged for at the rate the mechanic in the city must have in order to support his family, the food we eat would be the dearest of our commodities, instead of, as it is now, the cheapest.

RURAL DECLINE.

The point of view here expressed is that, in any country, there is a proper proportion of urban and rural population. If the proportion of rural dwellers falls below what is best, the nation suffers a loss which is felt in material welfare, social character and political stability. In Canada with its enormous potential wealth locked up in the soil, a decline in the number of people engaged in its chief industry—agriculture—may be economical so far as machinery has replaced hand labor. But it is here claimed that the decline has gone beyond the economical limit. It is claimed that the methods adopted for fostering industries other than agriculture have placed the Canadian farmer at a disadvantage on the produce market, on the money market, and on the labor market, with the result that farming has suffered what is best described as discouragement. Added to this effect of our economic policy, is the effect of our social ideals. As a people which ought to remain largely agricultural, we have nevertheless surrendered to a prevailing urban ideal. The town has conquered.

DOMINANCE OF THE TOWN.

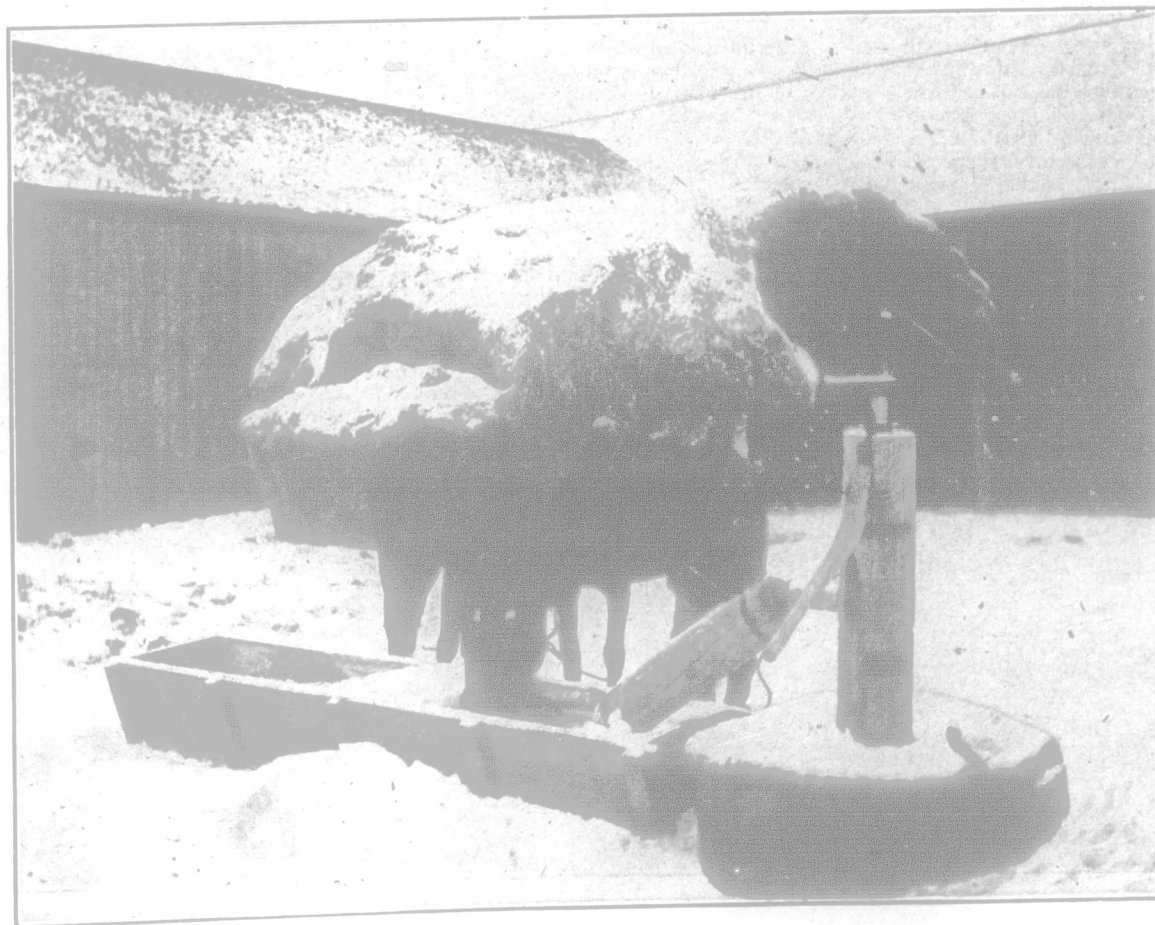
By reason of the dominance of the town the country is fast losing its distinctive appearance and character and individuality. The very trees and standing crops are no longer green in June as of yore, but bear an ignoble load of dust churned up from the road by the wheels of flying motors. The rural mail delivery brings the city newspaper with its city news, its sensations and its inaccuracies and its sporting columns. City fashions in dress and sport and amusement have taken hold of country tastes. Teachers for country schools, and preachers for country churches are trained in city schools and colleges, and carry with them to the country city ideas and ideals and the fond hope that they may before long be called to a city charge. The city mail-order house is filching away the business that used to be done in the country store, and the village smithy no longer stands beneath the spreading chestnut tree, but has long ago fallen into ruin.

The town has conquered. Towns have become cities, entirely given over to the urban ideals of trade, speculation and profits. Villages have become towns, aspiring further to become cities or near-cities. Some towns have not grown in population, and some villages have become decadent. Growth, stagnation, or decadence, has been almost entirely a question of failure or success in establishing industries. Towns that are now stagnant and villages that are now decadent, a generation ago were possessed of industries of high economic value and convenience to the surrounding country. Blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, millers, a generation ago enriched the rural districts with their services and their social talents. Through the industrial revolution these occupations have abandoned the country villages, the shops and mills have been closed and the country robbed of the economic and social contributions of these tradesmen.

All this goes to establish the main contention that the shifting of population from country to town, and the transfer of labor from farm to factory, have gone far beyond the normal and economical limit, and have become a menace to our economic, social and political well being.

It should not be supposed that the upbuilding

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Snow-bound and Ice-clad, but Still There's Water in the Trough.