

Notes and Reflections.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Peter McArthur's column, always interesting, was to me especially so in your issue of Sept. 14. It places in a strong and appealing light the case of the "decent, plain people of Canada" versus the "moneyed power."

I believe with Abraham Lincoln that "God must love the common people, He made so many of them," and I believe it a priori, because His first creation—the first man—was a common man, a "tiller of the earth," a worker, not an idle aristocrat, a demagogue, or a useless parasite. The first man might have been given a seat of so-called honor, might have been assigned a palace or a throne, but instead he was assigned a garden, with the injunction not merely to enjoy his heritage, but also to "till and keep it" productive and beautiful. Milton's portraiture of man's first estate and his fall is doubtless more than poetic embellishment or fanciful creation; it has basis and background of reality. Whatever myths may be woven about the narrative, yet through all testimony and from his present condition, there is evidence that man has lapsed, and that he has "sought out many inventions."

I am rather proud of our primal ancestor. I believe him to have been "Godlike, erect, in native honor clad,"—more truly so than some of his descendants. I am proud, too, of the lineage as a common man—as one who earns his bread by honest, productive labor. Without the toiler the state would soon cease to be. He it is who has not only to pay taxes, feed, clothe and shelter his own, but who helps to support the unproductive classes, the extortioners and the magnates. These latter are radically and completely at variance with the plan of creation. "Man over men He made not lord." Neither did He make man a parasite nor a vampire. There is nothing derogatory of true dignity in honest work. "Blessed is the man who has found his work," said Carlyle. Some in our times seem to say: "Blessed is the man who has learned to shirk."

Blessed is the man who does his work. He is in good company. He can claim kindred with such men as Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, Thomas A. Edison, though he may live and die unknown in the senate, at the bar, in the domain of science or of letters.

Edwin Markham's scathing characterization of "The Man With the Hoe," need not be realized. "Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox" he need not be. His work and his world, if rightly pursued and rightly studied, are full of inspiration. He may find in a hill of potatoes a letter in the alphabet of botany or of geology, and may be led by degrees to the study of the structure and growth of plant life, also the nature of soils and the composition of the crust of the earth; and from the sentiment of inquiry aroused in his mind will come a quest for better varieties of the plant and improved methods of cropping. The man with the hoe should find interest and profitable study as well as work in a hill of corn, in the structure of the ear and the stalk. He should be able to judge an ear of corn as to size, form, symmetry and trueness of type, to differentiate a good ear from a poor or indifferent one. A similar remark will apply to all the crops of the farmer. The same general laws are applicable to animals, as to plant life, in regard to quality, type and selection, the whole affording ample scope for the brightest mind and the highest order of intelligence. The man with the hoe, so far from being "stolid and stunned," may, if he will, rise to even higher themes; he may direct his contemplation to "other worlds than ours"—may read poems in the constellations,—may "trace the stars, and search the heavens for power,"—may feel something of the immensities in the midst of which he acts his humble part, and thus realize the nearest affinity with his Maker possible to man.
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