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The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine.

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EDITORIAL.

Back to the Soil.

There existed a time, even within the memory of many of us, when the denizens of city and town almost invariably looked upon those of the country with a sort of compassion. Farmers, forsooth! Poor souls, doomed by fate or incapacity for business to spend their days in grubbing a living from the soil! Hump-backed were they from hard work, and behind the times, their livery rusty, ill-fitting clothes, dirty teeth and finger nails, and a provincial "brogue," in which the omission of the final "g" of "ing" was the leading feature. So, the farmers were looked down upon as a class, and their occupation belittled, because of the carelessness of the few, and the dry-goods clerks and bank-boys smiled and shrugged their shoulders, and thanked their stars that they were not as one of these. But the sturdy old "hayseed" or "mossback," driving in on his load of hay, recked not at all, but kept his rugged country heart staunch within him, and felt glad and peaceful when he got back home at night to his cows and horses, the dog watching at the gate, and the neighbor ready to drop in to have a talk over the prices after tea. And so the ebb of misconception was reached, and it became time for the tide to turn.

Turn it did. Little by little, it came to be recognized that the "mossback" was making money; that up-to-date machinery was making his work easier for him; that he was beginning to build attractive houses and barns worth seeing; that, in short, he wasn't having such a bad time of it at all, and that the farmhouse, with its gallons of Jersey cream, and its eggs fresh from the straw, wasn't a half-bad place to spend a summer holiday in. By-and-bye, too, it began to filter into the minds of these benighted ones among the townfolk, that there must be something in farming, else why this fuss over agricultural education, agricultural colleges, etc.? Why this ceaseless probing into farmers' affairs by the Government? Why this turning to farming of men who might live wholly in another world, literary lights, such as Haggard and Buchanan, in England, and others; merchant princes and industrial magnates all over America? It was noted, too, that the farmers' sons and daughters were coming into the towns to the high schools and colleges, and were carrying off not a mean percentage of the honors. More wonderful than all, was it observed that many of these educated farmers were returning, of their own free will, "to the land," where they were managing to become people of "affairs." Surely, then, there must be some use for brains in the country.

So the faint call became clearer, and the country became the fashion. Over desk and counter began to creep visions of the free, independent, open-air life; nature-books appeared, not as heralds of the new ways of thinking, but as signs of the times, and the bookstores became flooded with them. Finally, a few venturesome souls from the shops and desks began to creep back to the land. The movement has not yet been fully established, but it is in progress, more noticeably as yet, perhaps, in the United States than here. It is even stated that, in some parts of the former, a fair percentage of the students in the agricultural schools are from the city. This change may go on with profit, both to town and country, for the town has many to spare, and in the country are yet millions of acres waiting for the touch that shall turn the prairie grass and the

deep, wild woods to fields of gold. For the present, however, to the country lad, it is sufficient to know that the stigma has passed forever from the name of the farm; that he may be proud of his heritage, and of the good old name of "farmer"; and that it will be wholly his own fault if the term "hayseed" or "mossback" is ever applied to him more.

Preparing for Seeding.

The importance of sowing only clean, sound seed is being more generally recognized by farmers, and cannot be too strongly emphasized if noxious weeds are to be kept in check and paying crops obtained. Experiments have proven that the largest, plumpest seeds of grain, as a rule, yield much the largest crops. The grain and grass seed sown earliest in the spring, provided the land is in suitable condition, generally makes the strongest and most continuous growth, and yields the largest returns. It is, therefore, important that sufficient good, clean seed be provided and prepared now, before the rush of spring work comes. The prudent farmer will have his plans and calculations for seeding well considered and matured early in this month. He will see to it that his horses, harness and implements are all in good condition before seeding time, in order that the work may be pushed through as quickly as possible, and that the cultivation will be such as will give crops the best chance to start well and to develop satisfactorily, and will not slight the work in the vain ambition to finish before his neighbors. No work on the farm pays better than properly preparing the seed-bed, thoroughly breaking up and pulverizing the surface soil so that germination of the seed may be quickly effected, and that the rootlets of the plants may readily find available nourishment to give them a good start in life. We are not unmindful of the fact that soils and circumstances differ so widely that no cast-iron rules can be laid down that can be safely followed by all, and that each farmer must use his own judgment, and profit by his experience in handling the land he has to do with, but, as a general rule, fall-plowed land in preparation for spring seeding needs only surface tillage with cultivator, disk and smoothing harrows, and, if need be, with the roller, to pulverize lumps or flakes which the other implements fail to break up. As to the depth to which it is necessary or prudent to cultivate there exists a difference of opinion, some claiming that for best results, cultivation should be only to the depth at which the seed is required to be deposited, that the seed, being placed on firm, moist soil at a depth of two or three inches, and covered with as many inches of loose, dry earth, has the benefit of mulch, which prevents evaporation of moisture, allows the air to reach the seed, and gives a warm, dry surface for the sun to warm, hastening the germination of the seed, and insuring exemption from drouth, even though no rain may fall for weeks. Others contend for, and practice, deeper cultivation, claiming that a deep seed-bed is necessary, in order that the roots, in their search for food, may have free access to loose soil in all directions. These differences of opinion may, in part, be accounted for by the differing character of the soil their advocates have been dealing with. One can readily understand that on loam or low-lying land, the shallow cultivation indicated may be sufficient, and best, while on clay knolls deficient of humus, or vegetable matter, and hence liable to dry out and bake, deeper cultivation is desirable and safer, unless such portions are mulched by means of a light

top-dressing of short barn-yard manure to encourage and preserve moisture. The columns of the "Farmer's Advocate" are open for the discussion of these and other methods of cultivation, as well as the question of varieties of grain and grass seeds, their preparation, and the quantity per acre necessary to be sown for best results, the best class of implements of cultivation, the place and potency of the roller, before or after sowing, and the use of the harrow on crops after germination, where the surface soil has become packed by rains and baked or crusted by sun and wind. Farmers, let us hear from you on these points in short letters, giving your opinion and experience along these lines. If you have not had experience in writing for the press, do not allow that to deter you from writing. We will see that your contribution is put in presentable shape, and shall be thankful for your interest and help. We consider the letters from farmers the most interesting feature of our paper, and we have reason to believe most of our readers are of the same opinion.

Canadians for Canada.

Men are indeed blind to the signs of the times who fail to discern the evidences of unprecedented agricultural activity and advancement in Canada. Concurrent with this great movement, country life, its occupations and advantages, have swung into more pronounced and general appreciation, not only on the part of farmers and their families, but of townsmen. Everywhere we find business men of means in cities and towns securing farm properties convenient of access, devoted to live-stock rearing of one kind or another, horticulture, and the like, and upon which they reside in the summer-time, and in many cases permanently. Not being in a position to undertake the actual direction themselves, these men require the services of farm superintendents or managers. There is also an increasing call for herdsmen on large pure-bred stock farms, and for managers on farms where such specialties as fruit-growing, poultry-rearing and dairying are being pursued. Young men of, say, twenty-five years old and upwards who have been brought up on such farms, and have then secured the special technical and business training which the Ontario Agricultural College affords, should be well adapted to assume such responsibilities. In addition to the foregoing qualifications, we have no hesitation in saying that the very FIRST ESSENTIAL looked for will be unimpeachable moral character and integrity, lacking which all else is vain. It is just this class of men that have been attracted to the agricultural college. Now, there must be a considerable percentage of O. A. C. students who have spent two or more years in taking its practical courses, and who, not having farms of their own to return to, or for other reasons, will desire to strike out on their own account. The president of the college and staff are not long in determining the measure of students, and would be in a position to see that none were recommended for such positions, unless they were reasonably well satisfied that they had the requisite capacity for the headwork and manual labor necessary to make whatever proposition they undertook go and pay. From what the "Farmer's Advocate" knows of the Agricultural College students, there has been plenty of just such material there, and we would very much prefer to see them remain in Canada, and aid in building up a splendid nationality here at this critical period in her history, than to go in search of employment to the neighboring republic or other foreign countries. These graduates have been,