

The Making of Men.

A SONG OF THE FARM.

(President Harris, of the State University, at Orono, Maine, while delivering an address before the Legislature at Augusta, asked the question, "What are the farms fit for, if not for raising of boys?" His words, being misunderstood, at first provoked dissent, but they were subsequently understood and applauded.)

"The best political economy is the care and culture of men."—Emerson.

A word to a restless people, in a fast and feverish age:
A perfect manhood is better than any wealth or wage.
Some are for gold—some glitter; but tell me—tell me, when
Will we stand for the farm, and the college, that go to the
making of men?

Yes, what is the old farm fit for? The word was wisely said!
There may be stumps in the pasture, and the house may be a
shed;

But what if a Lincoln or Garfield be here in this boy of ten?
And what should the farm be fit for, if not the rearing of men?

'Tis a scanty soil for the seeding, yet here we win our bread;
And a stout heart may grow stronger where plow and harrow
are sped:

Then break up the high, bleak hillside, and trench the swamp
and the fen;
For what should the farm be fit for, if not the rearing of men?

The crop by frost is blighted—a niggard the season seems;
Yet the ready hand finds duties, and the heart of youth has
dreams:

The bar and the senate to-morrow—to-morrow the pulpit or
pen;
For what is the farm best fitted, if not the rearing of men?

Or, what if our lot be humbler, and we on the farm abide?
There is room for noble living, and the realm of thought is wide:
The sword outflash'd in the battle hath honor, we all may ken;
But is there no praise and no glory that goes with the making
of men?

Is our life in gold and silver, in clamor and splendor and pride?
Is the heart's great treasure nothing, and the mind's great
treasure beside?

In the mine of the soul lies our fortune—let us quarry it deep
again;
Let us stand for the farm and the college, that go to the making
of men!

We tread the hills that the Holy, that the Beautiful has trod;
We till the fields of the Infinite, we dress the gardens of God:
The seer, the sage, and the prophet, they choose it, again and
again;

For what is the old farm fit, if not for the rearing of men?
—Pastor Felix, in *Onward*.

The Problem of Farm Labor and How to Solve It.

We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that farm help is harder to get than it was a number of years ago. There are several causes that have led up to this state of affairs—some of these altogether beyond the control of the farmer, others which he could do a great deal to remedy or remove. It might do us good to review a few of the latter.

First: A great many farmers have been in the habit of hiring a man for the summer, varying from six to eight months, and at the close of the season, the hired man is turned out to shift for himself during the cold winter months, when very little work is to be had at which he can make more than his board, and some cannot get a job at all and have to board out and use up nearly all they earned in the summer. Is it any wonder that when a man can get a steady job all the year round in town, that he leaves the farm? To remove this cause, we would suggest that every farmer who has to hire help, even on a 100-acre farm, should hire a man by the year, and give him a fair wage and use him right. This leads to our second cause:

Many hired men on the farm have not been treated kindly, and have left for other occupations. Even the locomotives on the railway are supposed to require rest; how much more the hired man! But too many farmers are like a friend of mine, who used to say to his hired man the moment that he had swallowed the last mouthful of his dinner, "Now, Davie, you might pump water for these cattle while you are resting." It was an old saying that a tailor rested while he ran. This might, on the supposition that change is rest, be quite true, but for a man who has worked all forenoon on the farm to get a rest pumping water would, to say the least of it, appear quite paradoxical. Another party told me that if a farm hand got seven hours sleep he could easily work the other seventeen hours.

If a farmer plans his work aright, he will manage so that he will not require to work such long hours, and by having a man all the year round, he can keep his work well forward, and in the winter he will have time to think out new plans for improving his farm and making it more productive. Farming generally requires much more study than is given to it. But some of the women will say that it makes more work for the housewife to have the man all the year round. I am afraid that there are very many Marthas who are very careful and troubled about many things. They must have so many pies and cakes, etc. Now, I firmly believe that it would be a good thing for the health of the farming community if there never was another pie or sweet cake put on the farmer's table. The prophet of old cried out: "Wherefore do ye spend

money for that which is not bread?" Good bread is the staff of life, but pies and sweet cakes and fried pork are the foods that produce pale, puny boys and girls, and weakly, dyspeptic men. If the farm "gude wife" will have good porridge of oatmeal, ground wheat or corn meal, good milk just as it comes from the cow, and eggs and good bread for breakfast; soup, meat and potatoes and pudding for dinner; bread, and occasionally fish, and apple sauce, or fruit, as it is in season, for supper, and discard pies and cakes of all kinds, she will have stronger, healthier and happier men and children about her, and far less work. But, to return to the hired man, many good men have been driven from the farm by discouragement, in being blamed for everything that went wrong. On one occasion I was delivering wheat at the mill, when a bag became untied. A neighbor, who was looking on, called out, "I would say that it was the hired man that tied that bag." A farmer was delivering a bag of potatoes to the preacher, and, quite unexpectedly, that worthy gentleman went down cellar to show the farmer where to empty the bag. The best had been put in the mouth of the bag, and those in the bottom were of a different grade, and when the farmer had emptied them out, he felt about as small as the potatoes, and looked first at the small potatoes and then at the parson and then at the potatoes again, and finally blurted out, "It was the hired man." I can tell you from personal experience that the hired man is a very sensitive species of the human family, and that a kindly word of encouragement when he is anyways near doing his duty will do him far more good than a continual growl and blame. If you don't believe me, just try it for a season and carefully note the result.

Now, a word to the hired man. Don't expect too much. A short time ago a young man engaged with a farmer, and one of the conditions of the agreement was that he was to be used as one of the family. After a time some young lady visitors came to the house, and the hired man felt quite indignant because the farmer did not give him as flattering an introduction to the young ladies as he expected, and left abruptly and sued the farmer for his wages and for breach of contract. The judge and lawyers made considerable fun of the young man, telling him that he ought to be able to introduce himself to any young lady whose favor he expected to gain. To a young man able and capable and willing to work, I do not know of any better way of getting along in the world than to go and work on a farm with a good, square, upright man who understands his business. Do not hire with a farmer who has all the water for his stock to pump by hand, who pitches his hay and sheaves away up to the top of the mow by hand. Hire with a good progressive man, who uses all the modern labor saving devices, and makes it pay; who has good plain board, and who takes an interest in your welfare and tries to teach you all he can. Do the best you can for him. Save as much as possible of your wages, put it out safely at interest as soon as it is earned, and I am satisfied that, if you have your health and act wisely, at the end of ten years you may have at least \$1,500, which is much more than you would be likely to have if you had gone into the city. But, to return to the causes of the scarcity of farm help:

Rev. Dr. McKay, in his book, "The Zorra Boys Abroad," tells of what the Zorra and Nissouri boys have done in the ranks of the learned professions. But what, I ask you, are the boys doing who remained at home on the old homesteads? It is a grand thing to have a farm in a high state of cultivation and raise fine wheat and potatoes, splendid sheep and pigs, cattle and horses; but the farm that does not raise a crop of fine brawny, brainy boys and girls every generation is falling far short of its greatest possibilities. Did not the All-wise Creator at the beginning say that "it is not good for man to be alone," and then he made the woman and ordered the human family to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." Yet on many farms we find one or two, or perhaps three, old bachelors, sometimes with a sister or other elderly lady keeping house, and in many instances no woman about the place at all. In the last generation these farms raised on an average a crop of about six boys and girls, and there were from forty to sixty scholars attending school. Now there are many sections where you cannot find twenty-five persons of school age. Now, these are facts. Of course, the FARMER'S ADVOCATE cannot remedy this evil, but these bachelors could, and we leave the matter with them.

Another cause of the scarcity of farm help: The smaller farms, whose owners used to have boys and girls to spare to help their neighbors, are being bought up by the larger farmers. We believe the small farm well tilled is a necessity to the prosperity of the country. In many instances there is too much ambition for great things—too much expansion. We read of how Laban managed his help, and I knew a very respected farmer who died a number of years ago, and left a fine farm and a widow and several daughters, but no sons. The widow has conducted the farm nicely with hired help. Two different Jacobs have come along consecutively, and each served his term for his Rachel, and the third Jacob is now finishing his term. But the good lady, so far as I could learn, never tried any of Laban's changeable tactics, but has always been the perfection of honor and fair dealing.

Where the farm is larger than 100 acres, it may be all right to build a house conveniently near to

the buildings, and get a married man and pay him to board the other help, but it generally costs more that way.

To sum up, do not let farmers be discouraged. Things will take a turn. Let us help to turn them around. There is scarcely ever a real demand for any article without that want being soon supplied. Let us hire the best man we can get, and carry out the golden rule, to do unto him as we would that he should do unto us; do not make a slave either of him or ourselves; do not make a god of money or land or animals; do not be in too much of a hurry to get out of debt. For consolation, just think of the enormous proportions of our national debt, and of how prosperous our great empire is under it. Feed the land and the animals well, get the land in the highest possible state of cultivation, remembering the saying of a great agriculturist that, it is only extravagance, or what many people would call extravagance, in methods of farming that does pay, and some day we will awake to the fact that agriculture is the noblest profession of man, and that the best young men are anxious to hire with us.

Oxford Co. DAVID LAWRENCE.

Wheat Growing in Ontario.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—The question is often asked, should Ontario farmers continue to grow wheat? Or, in other words, now since Manitoba and the Northwest lands are being brought into cultivation, can Ontario compete with any degree of profit in the production of wheat? Had I been asked this question twenty years ago I would have answered no, but after having considerable experience in farming in Manitoba, as well as here in Ontario, I have come to this conclusion, that, everything considered, wheat can be produced with as much profit in most parts of Ontario as it can in Manitoba. We often hear of the richness of the prairie lands, where wheat can be grown continuously year after year with fair success on the same land and with very little cultivation, but I have noticed that the best crops are grown on new breaking or summer-fallow. But I am satisfied that the soil of Ontario is just as productive and will bring forth as good an average yield of wheat as can Manitoba, and this is again borne out by the statistics which show the average yield of wheat per acre for the two Provinces. Ontario's average yield for the last 15 years is, fall wheat, 20.05, and spring, 15.3 bushels, and as there is only a small percentage of spring wheat grown here, the average would be about 19 bushels, and I see Manitoba's average in the same time is 19 bushels; and to obtain this yield in Manitoba, it would be safe to say that one-fourth of the crop is grown on summer-fallow; that is, after deducting what is grown on new breaking. Here in Ontario, very little summer-fallowing is practiced, so by taking into account the difference in the amount of summer-fallow in Manitoba, it would leave Ontario considerably ahead as regards yield per acre. It is true the land is cheaper in Manitoba, but the labor, machinery, binder twine, etc., is very much higher, as well as the extra cost of transportation. Of course, this latter is partly offset by the better quality of the grain for certain purposes. Again, there is the uncertainty. In Ontario we seldom hear of even partial failure. It is true some damage has been done this year by the Hessian fly, but this can be overcome to a great extent by sowing somewhat later in the fall. In Manitoba there is the high winds, which do a great amount of damage by blowing the soil away from the roots of the grain when only a few inches high, and many acres are destroyed in that way. Some seasons the weather sets in dry and hot from seed time, and much of the grain never does any good. I have seen thousands of acres of wheat that was dried up before it was six inches high. Other years it would do very well until nearly matured, then a spell of hot, windy weather would shrivel the crop and leave the grain very poor. The gophers are somewhat destructive, especially in dry seasons. Again, there are the cyclones and hailstorms, which some seasons do a considerable damage; and last, but not least, there are the summer frosts, which some years do a great amount of damage and keep the farmers in that country in perfect terror until the wheat is cut.

With the above facts before us, I have come to the conclusion that for some time at least the Ontario farmer will have a fair chance for success in the production of wheat, even in competition with Manitoba or other countries. SIMPSON RENNIE, York Co., Ont.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—While it is but right and prudent to squarely recognize drawbacks, yet the marvellous results, both as regards the quantity and quality of the wheat produced in Manitoba and the Northwest, and the success of so many farmers in the vast areas peculiarly well adapted for wheat-growing as a specialty, indicate that these adversities are not universal. The main question suggested by Mr. Rennie's letter, viz., the pros and cons of wheat production by the Ontario farmer in comparison with other crops and products, is one presenting much food for serious thought, and we should be glad if others would avail themselves of the opportunity to discuss it in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE.