

VIII.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Seven years' work of the Ontario Agricultural College and Experimental Farm are now finished. The experience gained by the Government and their officers in regard to the value of such an institution must be almost full. If not nearly full, then weakness exists somewhere—where, it should be the duty of the public to enquire. But, as Ontario records already tell, our success in securing home patronage and the world's patronage during this comparatively short period has been quite a feature in school history—for we are essentially a school, and the unusualness of this bids me draw your attention to some points that may ere long tend to mar this comfortable popularity. I am not one whit apprehensive of evil, but rather jealous of the status already attained, and of the value of its being made more permanent.

I must preface by stating that too much is expected of us—entirely too much. I do not refer to those ignorant of the modern idea of scientific and practical farming, because their opinion is not worth anything; but to the expectations of the over-anxious father and of the un-self-reliant student. This is no doubt a weak point in more lines of life than ours, yet it has been more ours of late than older institutions, by reason of our short life. With very many of the young men who have come through our hands during these seven years, the expectation has been that they came to gather, without the necessity of much effort on their part, that they could be made farmers in two years, as against the life experience of the past generation. That this is purely ridiculous we need not delay to inquire, but it must be held up to the country that no possible amount of value of instruction on our part will ever make the farmer unless he is himself in love with it. Let it be clearly understood that the two years with us means only an introduction to such a measure of principles, science, and practice as but whets the appetite for more, and that we are as unable to fledge a young man for this profession as the Toronto University is in turning out a lawyer, a doctor, or a clergyman.

We have it in our experience that no volume of brain activity and practice is able to farm unless accompanied by that measure of madness called enthusiasm. Those thus constituted have always done well here—thankful of the advantages, never complaining of want of appliances—and altogether stand out in strong relief to others whose minds may be above clods and cattle. We have never yet had an example of keenness accompanied with dissatisfaction. And now for a weakness or two:

I should like to see more opportunities in the hands of the Professor of Agriculture, whereby with his classes he should visit such works and objects on the Farm in their monthly and weekly progress as may be required to supplement, verify, and impress lectures, as well as being separately and immediately practical in their aim. Many important things are necessarily missed by a certain number of the students, who, while at study, cannot be with those others who are finishing a certain job on a certain day; and all the explanatory talk by the teacher in the class-room cannot possibly make up for the same thing *on the spot*. In the same way the Professor of Botany and Horticulture should have an open card for the many important references in the kitchen, flower, and fruit gardens, as well as the arboretum. Even the Chemist should go a-field occasionally; and why not the Entomologist? As being more immediately interesting to myself, I beg that the Veterinary Professor be also permitted to take his classes out whenever he deems it desirable. I consider "class-room-out-door" lessons of the highest value.

But the most prominent weakness in my departments is one that I have more than once adverted to in previous Reports—the being unable to give *repeated* lessons to every student in every practical detail of the Farm. The Government has met us very liberally in regard to part of this by allowing an extra team of horses for the use of Second-year Students, and more they cannot be asked to do until some practicable and thorough scheme is matured. Ploughing and management of reapers and mowers come more closely under this list, for in most other things we do a great deal.

Indeed, in place of crying "More—more," we ought to refrain by calling "Less—much less." We cannot blink the fact that education is being pressed too hard here; the

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