

a single individual. Mr. Alphonse Desjardins was born at Levis, Quebec, in 1854. He graduated from the college of his native town in 1870, and shortly afterward went into journalism. He early became engrossed in the study of economic and social science, and especially was his attention attracted by the co-operative movement which was spreading over Europe. He had studied with the keenest interest the rapid development of co-operation in Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark. This latter country he had seen pick herself up from the very depths of despair after the unfortunate German war of 1864, in which she lost the richest of her territory, and through the adoption of the principles of co-operation and universal education, start on a career of rejuvenated prosperity such as she had never known before her mutilation. He saw clearly the important part which the Schulze-Delitzsch and Raiffeisen banks had played in the industrial advancement of united Germany; and he also knew what a similar system of co-operative credit had accomplished for Italy. Moreover, for the past thirteen years, he has had the advantage of being in communication with most of the European leaders. His personal correspondence with the moving spirits of co-operation in the old world has placed him in possession of a great deal of information on the subject which has up to the present time never been published.

Out of this mass of heterogeneous material Mr. Desjardins arrived at a conviction of the supreme importance of the principle of adaptation. First of all, an association must grow out of local needs. Denmark, for example, the country which has surpassed all others in co-operative organization, has never adopted the credit form of society. Any attempt to engraft on society an institution whose function is already adequately and economically performed by others, would only be a useless expenditure of energy and multiplication of machinery. Mr. Desjardins has perceived that the success of co-operative associations in infusing new hope and energy into the masses who are struggling on the very margin of subsistence, lay largely in their wide range of adaptability. Being himself a reformer and