

THE DESERTED FARMS OF NEW ENGLAND.

MOURN over it as we may, it is nevertheless true that there are many deserted farms to-day in New England, and many more that are likely to be abandoned in the near future. It is equally true that farms remote from large towns or cities have been steadily decreasing in value for several years past. There may be a difference of opinion as to the causes which have tended to produce this unfortunate state of things, as well as the best way, if there be one, to counteract the evil. No one who goes about through the country towns remote from large centres can fail to observe that many farms—especially on the hills—which in former times were considered valuable and on which several generations have lived and prospered, are now left to grow up again to forest. In many others all the young men and young women have left for the cities, and it is only a question of time when the old folks, now well advanced in life, will be gathered to their fathers, and then in a few years the old farm is no longer to be cultivated. We are writing this from the interior of New Hampshire, where may be found many illustrations of what we are saying, though such things are by no means peculiar to New Hampshire. Farms that are called the very best in town, with good and extensive buildings, are offered for less than the buildings cost, with hundreds of acres of tillable land, as well as pasture and woodland thrown in free of cost. Intervale farms, and especially those near railroads, have depreciated less than those on the hills.

What are some of the causes of all this? Among them is the desire on the part of the young men to get rich quickly. They are attracted by the stories they hear of men becoming

rich in a few years, and making a show in the world, and they think that what another has done they may do. Farm life is too slow for the young of both sexes. The profits of farming will not admit of expensive dress, equipage and other luxuries. The rich have all these things, and they will seek to be rich that they may have them too. Farm life has come to be regarded as a life of drudgery, and they would avoid such a life. There is not great opportunity for social life on the farm, and the young are not content nowadays without it. There is a tendency, the world over, at the present time, to gather in cities and leave the country, with all the attractions God gave it when he created it for the dwelling-place of man.

Another, and perhaps one of the chief, reasons why New England farms have been neglected has been the insane cry "Go West, young man!" and it has been "Go West, young woman," too; for where one sex goes the other goes. Many have turned their backs upon the dear old homestead in New England, with all its associations and memories, and have gone West to find a home on some treeless, shelterless prairie, so far north, possibly, that they could only raise wheat, oats, or barley; have been content to live in a sod or log house, exposed to cyclones in summer and fearful cold in winter, getting only a bare subsistence—not anything like as good as they could have enjoyed on the old home farm. Many that have gone to the cities less remote have done little, if any, better, and it is very difficult to see what they have gained by the exchange. We could enlarge upon this point, but it must be obvious to all who have looked into the matter that there are many who made a mistake when they