

The Farmer's Advocate

and Home Magazine

"Persevere and Succeed."

Established 1866.

Vol. XLII.

LONDON, ONTARIO, JULY 18, 1907.

No. 773.

EDITORIAL.

HOW THE LABORER'S POSITION COMPARES.

Last week, in discussing this problem, we stated that church, school, platform and press had tended, by broadening the individual citizen's outlook and stirring humanitarian impulses, toward an ultimate betterment of the laborer's position, while hand in hand with these agencies had gone invention, which intellectualized labor and stimulated it to organize and obtain increasing remuneration for its toil. Well that such influences have been at work, for, on the other hand, modern Industry and Finance, by centralizing and monopolizing manufacture, and fleecing the gullible public by floating watered stock and by various other forms of organized extortion, aided by protective tariffs and unjust taxation, have unquestionably brought about the concentration of much wealth into a few hands, especially on the American continent. It is these few and the middle classes who set our standards of living, dictate the expensiveness of our fashion, and are responsible for the heavy economic loss which results from the frequent changing of styles in everything, from boots to millinery.

It must be admitted that, to a large extent, the standard of living varies with the age and the neighborhood in which one lives. The father who resists his son's appeal for 30 cents to join a baseball team, by telling him how little money he had to spend when a boy, is using an unfair argument. It is easy to do without things one never has had, particularly if his neighbors haven't them, either. It was no embarrassment to wear fresh-greased, cow-hide top boots to school or church when all the other boys were doing the same, but it would sting the spirit of the least sensitive lad to be the only one wearing such foot-gear in public. The young couple who went West to rough it on a homestead, think lightly of the deprivations, because their neighbors are in much the same straits. Had they remained in the East, they would have found it necessary to spend more for furniture and clothes. So it will not do to compare the workingman's wages today with those he received ten or twenty years ago, and jump to the conclusion that he can have no possible cause for complaint. Rents have increased at a feverish rate, the cost of most staple lines of goods has risen considerably since then, besides which there are many new demands upon his purse. The workingman of to-day aspires—and quite properly and worthily aspires—above the position of a mere clodhopper. His own self-respect and the interests of his family demand that he conform, in so far as his means allow, to the usages and amenities of civilization. The city laborer has his water rates to pay, his rent or taxes and interest, his electric-light or gas bill, his street-car fare, and an occasional railroad trip, to say nothing of the hundreds of other items that bulk so large in the course of a year. He probably feels, also, that his home is incomplete without a musical instrument of some kind. And why shouldn't he be entitled to these things, when his employer is riding around in a five-thousand-dollar automobile, and sending his daughter on a trip to Europe? Fashion dictates the luxuries of the rich, and no one raises a hand of protest, no matter how dishonorably the money that buys the luxuries has been obtained. Yet there are plenty of people who dwell with horror on the "increasing extravagance" of the poor, and if they find a laborer who is profligate or drunk, how ready they are to point their cut-and-dried conclusion that prosperity, beyond a frugal living, is no benefit to the workingman. By these same

critics, the indulgences and misdeeds of the well-to-do are tolerantly condoned, especially if they happen to be liberal supporters of public benefactions. We talk considerably about equality and democratic privileges, but a great many of us who laud these things in the abstract do not think or act accordingly when it comes right down to the point in the form of a concrete instance.

The general conclusion to be drawn from the foregoing paragraphs is that, while the unmistakable tendency of modern times, especially in the New World, has been towards an improvement of the laborer's position, still the real betterment to date is not so great as commonly supposed, for, while the average of intelligence, comfort and culture in the laborer's family is undoubtedly advancing, the relative positions of the average workingman and the average capitalist employer are about as far apart as ever they were, and the laborer who seeks to conform reasonably well to the demands of the present-day civilization must needs calculate about as closely as did his prototype of earlier times. Meanwhile, we leave our readers to ponder the statement of a prominent publisher, who declared to us recently that he could get scores of editors, but had advertised for printers in vain. Why is it so?

AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATION.

"No country can be greater than its rural population," said A. H. U. Colquhoun, Deputy Minister of Education for the Province of Ontario, in a recent speech. A similar thought had been expressed a month before by President Roosevelt at Lansing, in the words, "No growth of cities, no growth of wealth, can make up for a loss in either the number or character of the farming population." How can this standard be maintained and raised? When all other agencies have done their part, a tremendous responsibility rests upon the rural public and high schools.

The latest tangible evidence that this fact is adequately realized by those who shape our educational systems, is the introduction of agricultural classes into six Ontario High Schools. For this reason, a very special interest and importance attaches to the new movement, and amply warrants the prominence which it is being given in these columns. The nature and objects of the new work were explained in our issue of June 27th by C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture for the Province, and elsewhere in this issue we present half-tone portraits, with biographical notes, about the young men who have been selected for the important positions as organizers and teachers of the classes of agriculture in the six Agricultural High Schools. All are good sensible farm boys, graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College; five are natives of Ontario, and one of Nova Scotia. Some of them have had pedagogic experience, and, from the way they have gone about the organization of their classes, and the favor met from the municipal councils which they have approached, the prospects for the success of these schools appear to be bright. Much, however, will depend upon the local support received from farmers and their sons. At first the classes may not be large, but they will increase according as the value of the Agricultural High School becomes demonstrated.

The importance of the new movement is great. It marks, let us hope, the inauguration of a new era in education, an era under which the aim will be to make the Public and High School courses as complete as possible in themselves, instead of being framed as part of an educational ladder, the prime purpose of which has been to lead to the university. In order to raise the standard of the rural population, we must do more than has yet

been done to intellectualize the occupation of agriculture, to instil into the schools a pride and enthusiasm therefor, and impart a degree of instruction that will prove practically useful to those who leave the school for the farm. Incidentally, the new course will prove a more important means of culture than the old. All this demands the remodelling of our whole school system. The new movement is a milestone which marks the turning of the way.

DOMINION DAY IN QUEBEC.

We have just passed another milestone in the march of progress of our great commonwealth. Forty years ago, a handful of farseeing men, peering into the future, saw the possibility of Canada becoming a great nation. They saw the disabilities of the scattered and disintegrated Provinces in Eastern Canada, and in these they saw only one hope for a grand future for our Canadian land, which hope was realized in the federating of the various Provinces along the Atlantic seaboard with the inland Province of Ontario. This, coupled with a faint hope that the vast extent of country, made up of lake, prairie and mountain, lying between the Great Lakes and the Pacific Ocean, which seemed a land fit only for the Indian to dwell and roam, for the buffalo to wander, and the miner to search for the hidden wealth, might possibly be of some value to the generations then unborn. But the hopes of the most sanguine have been more than realized. While advancement has been made in the East, yet a more marked progress has been in the West. Here we have seen the old-time methods supplanted by those of modern days. New systems of agriculture have taken the place of the old. We see the evidences of industry, thrift and prosperity on every hand. We see our farmers enjoying the fruits of their labors in more comfortable homes, made convenient and beautiful as advancement was made correspondingly in other things; stables that are models of their kind, finished more fancifully and expensively than were the farm homes of forty years ago. Modern farm implements lighten the toil and enable the farmer to accomplish more work at less expense, thereby cheapening the cost of production. All this spells PROGRESS.

While we dilate on the progress and success we have achieved as a young and growing nation, let us not forget at this time that there is something more for our young Canadians to think about than simply the material progress of our country. Is our country going to continue to make steady progress in the face of the problems that will confront her as she continues to grow? To assimilate and fuse into one nationality those of other blood, ideas and religions, into a people having common sympathies and aims, full of integrity, and at heart a noble purpose, to my mind, is the greatest problem our country has to face. And right here is a grand work awaiting young Canadians: to foster a deeper spirit of loyalty to our country and its institutions, and aim to inculcate into the hearts of those who may come to our shores from other lands the same kindred spirit.

To foster just such a spirit, the farmers of the adjoining county, Chateaugay, commenced twenty years ago to celebrate our national holiday by holding a "farmers' picnic" near Howick. This outing has been held continuously since the commencement, which speaks well for the men and women of that section in perpetuating an institution of its kind, not only making it a holiday and a day of enjoyment, but a day of profit as well. Besides meeting to partake of the edibles prepared for the occasion, to have a social chat with old friends, to participate in the games and races, but also to listen to the addresses of the speakers