School Credit for Work at Home.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

At the outset it should be stated clearly that this has no reference whatever to the usual type of home lessons which are usually a bugbear to both pupils and parents because they are generally misunderstood or badly assigned. Too often the teacher assigns new work to be learnt at home and next day she hears the lessons in school. This is an exact reversal of duties between teacher and parent. In this case the parent too often has to do the teaching and the teacher does the hearing. Frequently the parent neglects the children altogether and so does the teacher. The only possible situation is one where the teacher teaches the work in school, then assigns this old work to be reviewed at home and so make it more perfectly remembered or applied. No new work should on any occasion be set for home study unless it is merely an application of rules or principles already taught in school.

But it is the purpose of this article to explain an entirely new type of home work for which children should get credit. The work referred to is real everyday work of a useful, practical kind, such as all country boys and girls perform at their homes or farms. Most of our farm boys have to do odd jobs or chores regularly before or after school, such as milking the cows, tending the poultry, picking the berries or small fruits, feeding the pigs, or other special tasks. The girls also help their mothers in house work by washing dishes, making beds, or setting the table, and thus lighten mothers' burdens very appreciably.

Now the happy thought occurred to several educationists to give credit in school for all such work done at home, with a view to showing that the school and the home are two closely allied institutions. Credit was given and home work was valued as highly as any school subject. The results were astonishingly successful both at school and at home. Parents were interested, for at last school was visibly doing good; children to whom book work never appealed, were at once encouraged and helped; backward boys became brighter and more active and a new interest developed in their whole attitude to education. When promotions to a higher grade were made partly on the success of children in the activities of their home life, their home work was done with a different spirit.

Two Types of "Home Project" Work.

The aim of this work is, of course, to interest children in agricultural or domestic work and give credit for the satisfactory completion of it. It is beginning to be known as "Home Project Study" and is one of the most promising fields for developing real vocational training among rural children in the best way and in the best place for it, which is at home under school supervision. The difficulties attending its introduction soon manifested themselves and were seen to involve two distinct questions.

First, what kind of home work should receive credit at school?

Secondly, how should the school direct or supervise the home work selected?

This has resulted in two distinct plans which for the sake of convenience may be called:

(1) The Massachusetts Plan and
(2) The Oregon Plan.

(1) The Massachusetts Plan.

Under this plan, which originated in Massachusetts, each pupil, with his teacher's advice, selects some definite work to be done at home, partly under the direction and supervision of the school. The work must be such that the pupil can carry it on from beginning to end. Supplementary reading and extra study bearing on his home project is an additional part of the work. Naturally, the parent must give consent and hearty co-operation, but this is always assured, and when the teacher visits the home occasionally to inspect the work, any necessary suggestions or directions are usually well received by all concerned. This is easily understood when one remembers that the home projects most successfully undertaken include the raising and care of a pen of poultry; planting and cultivating part of the vegetable garden; caring for and picking fruit from part of the orchard; planting and tending berry bushes; preparing the soil, planting, cultivating and harvesting a special crop such as corn, potatoes, or tomatoes; feeding, cleaning and milking one or two cows, and testing the milk; keeping milk records and testing milk of individual cows; feeding and tending a pen of pigs; planning and building a hog or chicken house, porch or sidewalk; canning tomatoes, cherries, or other fruits; the regular performance of some piece of house work, like setting the table, serving the meals, making beds, cleaning and dusting; planning and cutting and sewing garments, and other such duties.

Wherever this plan has had a fair trial it has been very effective. Of course it means extra work for the teacher, who must visit the homes occasionally. But rural teachers and rural clergymen would find this an excellent practice and should make it a regular habit. The work is not such a delicate task as might be supposed, for the tact and enthusiasm which all teachers should possess if they are to be real teachers will carry the work through to success. In Massachusetts about one half of the pupils' free time is occupied in these projects.

(2) The Oregon Plan.

The second plan has developed more fully in Oregon than elsewhere, but is successful in many states. In this case the school does not need to supervise the home work and no extra reading is required. Children are also allowed a free choice of work, and are merely encouraged to help in regular work and do their part well and faithfully. The parents judge the amount and quality of the work, and report to the teacher who gives corresponding credit towards school ranks. Promotion to a higher grade and successful completion of the school course depend partly on proper fulfilment of this home duty. The work is often similar to the tasks mentioned in the first plan, but includes also building the morning fires, providing fuel, sawing logs and chopping wood, feeding the stock, milking the cows, cleaning the horses, caring for poultry, making the bread, sewing and ironing clothes. But any other regular work vouched for by the parent is accepted and counted as the equivalent of one school subject, which is the basis of giving credit.

In this case no attempt is made to make the work educative except in the sense that all work of any description whatever is educative if it is conscientiously and well done. The home work is not necessarily associated with the school work, but the child of course receives instruction from the parent who thus resumes the function of teacher which was his before schools were invented or became common.

There has long been a divorce between the home, the school and the vocation, but none of these can get the best work done without correlation with the others. These two plans afford the most sensible way of combining the work of each and making it most effective and are the most promising field for rural industrial training. They have the supreme merit of costing no money; they do not increase the school taxes; they take little or no school time and can be started in any province and in any school at any time. They can be applied in a city school as easily as in a rural school. The teacher is shown to care for other things than intellect, for more than a mere portion of life, for the habits and tastes and future career of the child, for the whole of his life as well as for part of it. Too often no interest is taken in pupils outside of school except in the case of their games and sports. Even this is not common enough, but when it is genuinely taken, it results in increased affection for the teacher and increased attention to his teaching of school subjects.

Many people are sincerely convinced that school gardens have so many objections that they will never really be the means of teaching horticulture and agriculture successfully, though they form good demonstration plots for showing the preparation of a seed bed, planting seeds and flowers, and cultivation of the soil. They honestly believe that home gardens are a better medium for teaching agriculture as the child can care for his garden during summer when school is closed. Either the Massachusetts or the Oregon plan affords a logical extension of the home-garden idea. Perhaps some day our provincial directors of Elementary Agricultural Education and directors of Industrial Education will see the need of relating agriculture and industry as closely as possible to the real kind of work practised in actual business.

It is not easy to say which plan is the better for Canadian schools. It might be objected, for example, that the Oregon plan seems to be faulty from the fact that there are too many judges and hence too many standards and that a careless, indifferent parent with an ambitious, bright child might not give sufficient credit, and that an ambitious parent might give greater credit than the lazy or careless child might deserve.

Both plans, however, might be very easily improved by having the pupils write about their projects and keep the accounts and records of their work. In this way Composition would become a subject with real life and personal interest in it. Indeed all real literature arises from having something to say and a desire to say it. The war has brought a marvellous crop of energetic literary articles and fascinating simple-minded and great-hearted letters from soldiers. Why? Because they felt and really experienced what they wrote. Then if monetary values were brought into play, the financial statistics would form an excellent basis for practical arithmetic and book-keeping.

I hope to see one of these plans adopted with modifications in Macdonald College Day School and spread to all our rural schools and academies in the Province of Quebec.

SINCLAIR LAIRD.
Macdonald College, P. Q.

A Reply to Mr. Good's Articles on Economy.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

For a number of weeks there has been appearing in "The Farmer's Advocate" a rather remarkable series of articles on political economy written by one who signs himself W. C. Good; remarkable, not indeed for profound economic sagacity or logical conclusiveness, but for a sort of partisan sophistry seasoned with a somewhat trite morality.

Mr. Good has such a dread of a "shallow and callous materialism" that he invariably couples his economic theories with a sermon on morality. Callousness I will not impute to him; shallowness, I need not, for it is apparent to all. The principles of a sound political economy rest not upon morality, but upon justice. And governments putting those principles into practice require at the helm a man not necessarily with a great heart, but certainly with a great head. Mr. Good's heart is doubtless in the right place but his mental vision is not clear enough or comprehensive enough to see through and to grasp the economic problem in its relation to agriculture, as I shall forthwith proceed to show.

Lack of space prevents me from dealing with much that is misleading in Mr. Good's articles, so I shall confine myself almost entirely to studies VIII and IX. In study VIII he has figured out the agricultural deficit for one year at $110,000,000. But as there is a wage bill of $760,000,000 paid largely to the employer he can, by appropriating a part of it, easily overcome the deficit and avoid the clutches of the sheriff. In study IX, however, the writer, in his blind eagerness to arrive at a certain conclusion and yet appear logical, presents figures that upset his former calculations, subvert his previous theories and cast ridicule on all his labored efforts at economic reform. Canadian farmers, he tells us, buy two-thirds of all imports as well as of all goods made in Canada which, according to his figures, would be two-thirds (1,350,000,000 plus 575,000,000) or $1,283,000,000. According to his figures agricultural products amount to $1,000,000,000. But I find that this must include all home-grown produce consumed on the land such as butter, eggs, fruit, etc. Otherwise in allowing the town and country laborer the same wages Mr. Good's acute intellect would have taken this into account. It cannot be less than $67,000,000 and may easily be double that. Assuming the former figure, however, we find that with an expenditure of $1,350,000,000 and an income of $1,000,000,000 agriculture must face an annual deficit of $350,000,000 which no amount of economy can overcome. The farmer having disposed of all his produce is at the end of his resources and so to meet his financial obligations must mortgage his farm. With a capitalization of $5,000,000,000 it would take about 15 years to bring agriculture to bankruptcy. This is the logical outcome of Mr. Good's juggling with figures. But when we turn from the written theory to the rough practice we find no indication of this impending calamity.

The explanation of this glaring discrepancy is that Mr. Good has arranged his figures to fit into his taxation scheme; but by so doing has upset his theory of moral obligations on the part of the manufacturer towards the farmer. The wealthy man, he tells us, can command more labor than he gives. But in these figures he shows that the city man devotes two-thirds of his energies to supplying life's comforts to the rural class. Absurd! The manufacturer is not a fool. He exchanges just as little of his goods as possible for the products of the farm. The rest he uses to provide comforts and luxuries for himself. And although this doctrinal economist may theorize and ponder statistics for a 1,000 years he cannot convert facts into fiction.

Now, I have not followed Mr. Good to his ultimate conclusion and remedy. For his figures are so mixed up and, as I have shown, so utterly worthless and unreliable, that to do so would be unprofitable. His general contention, that agriculture needs stimulating, is, I believe, correct, and I would welcome that stimulant as much as any one could. I hold no brief for manufacturing. I do not advocate protection. But, if agriculture is to receive an impetus that will bring it to its proper place as the foremost industry of our land, that improvement must be founded upon solid and enduring principles, not upon statistics that are misleading or assumptions that are false, nor upon Mr. Good's florid prose interspersed with honied quotations from philosophers and economists, not upon the laws of man or the principles of economics, but upon the laws of human nature.

Huron Co., Ont. JAMES LOVE.

THE DAIRY.

What to Look for When Selecting a Dairy Cow.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

The only satisfactory way of ascertaining the value of a dairy cow is by keeping a record of the value and amount of milk she produces. This method has not yet come into common use, and the dairyman has often to select cows entirely from their outward appearance. It is, therefore, advisable that he be familiar with the type of cow that indicates large milk production.

There are certain features, common to all cows, that are noted producers of milk. They all present a somewhat wedge-shaped appearance, and there is also a marked absence of fleshing, especially during the period of heavy milk production. This absence of fleshing must not be confused with the poverty which is caused by lack of feed or by unthriftiness on the part of the animal; it is due to an increased effort to produce milk. Instead of the hide being dry and rough it is pliable and glossy. The eye is not dull but is bright and vigorous.

Another characteristic of the dairy type is a large capacity for feed. This is very essential. In order that a large amount of milk may be produced a large quantity of feed must be consumed.

Most important of all is the mammary system. Since it is in the udder that the secretion of milk takes place, the proper development of this part of the system is essential. It should be large and free from all fatty or useless tissue. It should have long attachment to the body, both in front and behind. The quarters should be evenly balanced, and have teats of convenient length and evenly placed. The size of the veins which extend forward from the udder and along the abdomen is also a very reliable guide. These carry the blood away from the udder after the milk has been secreted. When there is a large amount of blood circulating through the udder, and back again to the heart, as there always is when a cow is secreting a large amount of milk, these milk veins, as they are called, show marked developments, and in this way the value of the cow for milk production can be fairly well estimated.

Peel Co., Ont. G. KNOWLES.