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EDITORIAL.

The Agricultural College Student.

At leading educational centers throughout the continent the young men of the farm assemble at this season of the year in steadily increasing numbers to study systematically the practice and the principles of agriculture, which embraces a combination of sciences probably not to be found in any one other avocation whereby man can obtain a living upon this old earth. Schools and colleges of agriculture are multiplying in number, and the fact of an increasing student-roll may be taken as showing a better appreciation on the part of the farmers of Canada and the United States of their practical value. Our forefathers did not enjoy such privileges. In some respects the pioneers did not need them, but the conditions now are vastly changed from what they were fifty, seventy-five or a hundred years ago. Then the sturdy farmer with his axe had to contend with the forest timber to make his little "clearing"; to-day he faces persistent growths of new, unexpected and dangerous weeds; then he hurriedly stirred the rich virgin soil, scattered the seed by hand, and a luxuriant crop blossomed as by magic; now repeated croppings have depleted the soil of those elements of fertility, which must be restored either by natural or artificial manures; then the natural products were sold or bartered, and a few animals did his work and supplied his domestic needs; now the products of vast fields must be fed to improved animals of various classes, and concentrated products sold for food and clothing; then a few varieties of grain were used year after year, now degeneracy sets in, and new sorts must be found or originated; then the soil was full of humus and exceedingly friable, now its very mechanical condition has been so changed as to require an entirely different system of tillage; then the forest growth and the accumulated foliage of ages afforded a natural means for the distribution and conservation of moisture, but to-day elaborate systems of tile drains must be established; then the farmer was harassed by predatory wolves and bears, but now his herds, orchards and fields are invaded by insidious and much-more-to-be-dreaded pests in the form of insects and fungous diseases; then his transportation problem was the ox sled or cart over the corduroy with a bag of wheat to be exchanged for the necessaries of life, now he must wrestle with organizations that assess his products to the full extent of what the traffic will bear and throttle him by a vicious system of rebates; then his products were few and simple, now they are varied, and must fight for supremacy in the fierce competition of the world's great markets; then his wants were few and simple, now they are many and complicated; then he was the isolated backwoods husbandman, now he is a citizen of the world and must share in the conduct of its affairs.

From the foregoing brief paragraph the reader can readily infer the vast fields that open up before our schools of agriculture and our experiment stations, and the intensely practical need of the farmer of to-day for technical information and special training. In a recent issue the "Farmer's Advocate" called attention to the danger of these institutes drifting into a form of professionalism that must steadily be guarded against, but while there are varying degrees of excellence among them, and being human, the best are still susceptible of improvement, yet in the main they are keeping well in mind the purposes for which they were designed and striving

to serve the interests of the farm and their students. Fortunate indeed are these practical, level-headed young men who can enjoy the privileges of an agricultural-college course. We counsel them, in going to these seats and grounds of learning, not to forget the practical lessons of the old home farm, but at the same time with open minds to be ready to delve into the rich stores of knowledge concerning all the problems of the farm now at their disposal. The institution is there at your service, to enhance the possibilities of your life and your chances of success. It is not to be lightly esteemed. Think of all it represents in research, in expenditures, and in years of toil. Take your time. Be thorough. Keep open eyes and ears. Think!

You will no doubt find a variety of professors, and in time come to have your preferences, but do not form "snap judgments." The wisest of them will not claim to know it all, and you will be able to learn something from the humblest. When you are tempted to think it is a weariness to the flesh to listen to somebody's lecture, put yourself in his place and imagine, if you will, what a burden it may be day after day to lecture to some who sit or stand before him. Possibly the institution might be run better, but one should always stop to consider that those who in the meantime are charged with that responsibility have behind them the lessons of experience—than which there is no safer teacher—and the student's first duty is to seek from every man and every task to extract the best. You will get what you give. Then contribute of your best as an earnest student. With what measure you mete, it will be measured to you again. The institution has ideals and prestige. Sustain the one, and do your share to enhance the other. To do its full duty to the state it must turn out, not successful agriculturists alone, but men.

The Rut of Routine.

The enthusiasm and energy that the average boy throws into the work of the farm is proof that he has within him the elements which make for success in whatever line of work he may follow. But it is in the boy's interest and for the good of the country that he devote his talents to the interests of agriculture. With most boys, the love of outdoor work seems to be inherent, and until they have learned to master all the many farm operations there appears to be no limit to their zeal. For a time the ideal relation between the boy and work exists, namely, that he loves it for its own sake. Later, when the novelty has worn off, some inducement by way of recompense must be forthcoming to maintain and stimulate his interest in his work, or he will soon begin to cast about for a profession or calling that promises more remuneration or diversion. Nor is this condition alone confined to the farm boy. The youth of the town feels it, but the distractions and variations of town life are an antidote to his restlessness.

There should be no reason why the growing interest of the boy fresh from school should cease with the approach of maturity. His mind is capable of unlimited expansion if but encouraged by congenial work for which he receives commensurate remuneration. At the age of eighteen most every boy has mastered the details of ordinary farm management, and if nothing new in agricultural practice presents itself he begins to contemplate the possibilities of farming as a life's work. At this time, and previously, it is essential that parents should endeavor to place before the boy high ideals. They should not try to

lead him to believe that if he makes as great a success of life as his father has done he need be satisfied. They should rather endeavor to start the boy as near as possible where his father would leave off, and point out to him the limitless possibilities in the pursuit of agricultural enterprises, not simply as a moneymaking occupation, but rather as a calling in which one may live a life of usefulness, always bringing the operation of his farm nearer perfection, thus consequently increasing his own interest in it, and at the same time making it an example to less progressive neighbors.

It is in this phase of farming that the most enthusiastic farmer finds greatest satisfaction. Always venturing upon some new line, finding some advanced method, adding to the attractiveness or usefulness of his farm, and in other ways drawing farther and farther away from the rut of ordinary routine.

Thanksgiving Day Observance.

Some years ago, because of strong representations made to the Canadian Government by certain classes of townspeople, the date of Thanksgiving Day was changed from about the middle of November to some time in October. It was contended, in support of the change asked for, that the weather of October was, as a rule, much more suitable for a holiday than in November, when dull, disagreeable weather and muddy roads might be expected, and that it divided the time between Labor Day and Christmas more evenly. After a trial of the earlier date there was a return to the usual time of celebrating the day, and the matter was allowed to rest. But again we are confronted with an agitation for an October Thanksgiving. One section of the mercantile class would have another change as well—that it be held on Monday instead of Thursday. This last is stoutly opposed by the retailers, who claim that a Monday holiday interferes more with business than one held in midweek, but they offer no objection to having the holiday earlier in the season. In all the discussion of the subject in the daily papers there is a notable absence of any thought that Thanksgiving Day is anything more than a mere holiday—a day when labor may be dropped and an outing taken. The idea that it is a harvest festival, a national day for the giving of thanks that again the labors of man have been blessed and the kindly fruits of the earth have been gathered, and once more there has been stored abundance for man and for beast, seems to be utterly absent. We have, instead, bickerings as to how this or that day will affect business, with the question as to the best kind of weather for a day's shooting, as chief factors in the discussion.

No enquiry has been made, so far as we have seen, as to how the change of date proposed will suit farmers—the farmers who are in the great majority in our country, and who are more ready than any other class to celebrate Thanksgiving as a day of giving thanks, realizing as they do—more than others—their dependence on a power higher than their own. We believe that any time in October would not be suitable for them. For one thing, they are then generally extremely busy. Considerable time has been spent at the fall shows, threshings, silo-filling, etc., and after these are past the order of the day is "get ready for winter." At that season more than almost any other the farmer can ill spare a day off. Moreover, with many, the harvest is not over. Those who grow roots and those who have apples to handle are still in the thick of it, and as the days are then rapidly shortening, every minute