

and colleges. In the development of the higher education their standards of admission have been raised, until special training and a long and severe course of study must usually precede the successful entrance examination. Where and in what way the farmer's sons, our most earnest and successful group of scholars, can cope with the newer and severer tests of admission—lads who used to "fit" with country clergyman not now able to pass the examination themselves—is surely a thing worth the serious attention of our university instructors. It and the whole question of education serve to illustrate most vividly the "urban tendency" of the times, which has made hold farm luxuries necessities, and which differentiates so severely against a teibucolic satisfactions.

Constructive criticism of a farm evil so deep set in social changes which are radical and likely to be permanent, is a rather gloomy task. That the New England farmer on the whole is better educated than his ancestors of the soil, that he reads more, has deeper worldly wisdom and bears fewer of the rough points of mind and body, are logical sequels of his closer contact with the modern refinements. But do these, revealing to him his own position in reference to other classes and vocations and proving that his advancement is only absolute, while relatively he has dropped behind in the race, add to his social content? One or two recent writers on the topic have expressed hopes of a farm revival, social as well as industrial, from the summer migration out of the cities to the farm. It is said with perfect truth that the city visitor is more and more turning away from the larger summer resorts of New England seeking the rural quietudes, staying longer in the country and often, as a boarder on the farm, not only introducing the refinements but visibly lifting the

economic burdens of the household. Whether these are not offset by the nearer touch of the farmer with city affections and luxury, and whether the farm "boarding house" is a stimulus or irritant of genuine agriculture of the muscular yeoman type, may be left to the individual judgment.

The industrial and economic branch of the subject has more hopeful suggestions. That the market value of New England farm lands has a but touched bottom, and that henceforth for a time the farmer's condition must slowly rise, we may feel confident. The questions of methods to that end is charged with many queries and sub-queries: Will fruit culture, sheep culture or new kinds of crops revive farm prosperity and for how long? and what will be the farm satisfactions during the interval between the present time and the far future when the reversed current of wealth from the teeming population of the country turns toward New England and makes it a Devonshire? Or, looking onward to remoter ultimates, when that flood of wealth pours on New England, will our posterity find then a race of our present "fancy" farmers¹ or an agricultural system cognate with the tenant farming of the old world? Wherever these remoter forecasts may end, we can at least believe in a kind of transition period when the farm unrest will be diminished along with the industrial rise of farm life, and when we may see a pale reflection of the

¹ The writer recalls the recent and amusing spectacle of the workmen of a millionaire "farmer" from the city laying, at twenty dollars a rod, stone wall around a large swamp lot for which fifteen dollars an acre would have been a high price. It reminds one of the joke attributed to Mr. W. M. Evarts when welcoming guests to his New England farm: "Gentleman, I offer you champagne and milk. They cost me just the same."