

## THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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DOMINION.

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over 600 return to the farm, while 1,400 go into professional life. This steady drain of the best life of the Province it is necessary to check. It is injuring the rural districts, and the Department of Education is worried as to a remedy. But such results are the natural consequence of our petrified uniform school system. Mr. Cowley justly blames our school system for it. The course of study, the character of the teaching, the nature of the examination papers—all diligently point the way to the High School and the professions.

Mr. Cowley says emphatically that our educational system has "undeniably given the student a distinct bias toward the professions and the mercantile pursuits." He sees in the fact that farmers' sons have to repair to large urban centers for a higher education, a machine-like and insidious temptation to take the farmers' sons away from their natural environment and occupation, and dazzle them with the false, artificial allurements of city life. The truth of Mr. Cowley's contention is not even debatable. When shall it be possible to place a good liberal education at the farmer's door? This, in point of patriotism, would be better for our country than glittering arms and stately fleets.

Mr. Cowley is quite decisive in his report. He calls for a Secondary School, that shall provide general culture, unbiased toward any occupation or distinction. This is the key to his report, and he pleads for and points out the way to a class of rural school that shall be to the agricultural class what the High Schools have been to the professions. One is justified in saying that the High School does not by any means meet the needs of even all our urban demands. To many of our city boys and girls it is not a profitable course. It is the school, after all, of but the few, and there is no use in blinking the fact. The course in general education is a culture course—necessary and desirable, but not to any great extent appropriated by city boys and girls. There is something other needed. Our High Schools need as great a shaking up as our public schools, else they, too, will soon have outlived their practical usefulness. Their culture power saves them. There is need of new courses adapted to modern human life, otherwise we may develop a class of merely literate proletariat.

The Continuation School is the missing link between the rural school and higher citizenship,

and for this reason this school should be so equipped as to mold the rural youth while in their homes. To do this, the Continuation Schools are made local rural High Schools, which means they will be the farmers' colleges. In this connection, Mr. Cowley has a responsible task in arranging the course of study so as to be complete and adapted to the rural needs. He seeks efficient and highly-trained teachers, and, to some extent, experts in the scientific branches. His teachers will be a powerful personal stimulus to rural communities. The personal supervision possible in these two or three master schools will be at the maximum, and this is where these schools will tell on character and future citizenship. Temptations to leave school will not bear with so heavy pressure on these rural schools until the basis of a good education has been deeply laid, and after that, temptation ought to be futile.

Mr. Cowley's ideal for the present is the production of a well-informed, educated rural population, proud of its own efficiency and talent, both natural and acquired, with efficient means to impart the same continuously to posterity.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Cowley is meeting with success in connecting the rural schools more closely to the Ontario Agricultural College. That he will succeed in convincing the College that it should do the work of a college only, and leave to the Continuation School all academic subjects, is more than a dream. It will enable the College to better concentrate its efforts on the special work for which it was established and exists, much more to the general advantage of Ontario than the teaching of writing and spelling, etc., which has hitherto clogged its progress, and taken boys from home at too early an age.

The Inspector urges a wide course of study—a broad course of literature, art, and in general reading, so as to produce an intelligent, widely-read and reading citizenship. The course of work in the Continuation Schools is strenuous, and he believes it may be relieved by reducing the examination pressure. The "approved school" he does not condemn. It has, so far, no terrors for him. Perhaps it has not for any Inspector who is noted for efficiency, integrity and backbone.

Mr. Cowley enjoys, to a remarkable extent, the confidence of the people and of the Legislature. No higher tribute could be paid to the cause he has initiated than the financial response from the Legislature. The rural members know a good thing when they see it, and they have been on the lookout for inspiration for many years. Even urban centers have been calling for Continuation Schools, and there seems no good reason why they should not have them. It would mean that thousands of our youth would continue their education much longer than they now do, and any change that will conduce to that happy end should be applied. High Schools take the rural boys from home, and, unfortunately, make a break—a decided break—in a boy's education at an age when he would be better of less change and variation. He would be better under fewer teachers, too. No boy under 16 years should be under more than, at most, two or three teachers during the school day, for the sake of the stability of the boy's character. Better discipline and more uniform development of his powers will be evident. He will learn better to obey under one master than under many masters. This is certainly true of boys up to 16 years of age.

Mr. Cowley rather anticipates opposition from the High-school men, but why should educated men oppose the wider diffusion of a higher education among our people. There should be no rivalry. The need exists for Continuation Schools in order to remove two evils, viz., premature leaving age, and lack of aim in our school system. The High Schools do not reach the rural classes as a class, and they cannot. High Schools are largely urban schools, and they fail to make, for all our people, education a training for livelihood as well as for life. There should be the greatest co-operation among these schools, for all are operated for the common good. There is not the slightest doubt that Continuation Schools have come to stay, and High-school men may as well see to it that their own schools are more efficient, else there will rise up so many independent technical schools, Commercial High Schools and Manual Training Schools, and Continuation Schools, to supply urban demands, that the field will not be left under their command. Adaptation means modern growth in the spirit and need of the day. Where it is wanting, there is death. I recommend the Inspector's report to the reading public, for he advocates equal educational opportunity for all the people, and this a sound principle.

Ottawa.

R. STOTHERS.

While the farms of Europe and America call out for labor, vast masses horde in city slums, ignorant, hungry, and destitute. In the greatest cities the poverty and congestion are the worst. It is not confined to the Old World, for New York, Chicago, and even more moderate cities, such as Montreal and Toronto, have their slum districts, festering abscesses in the civic life, producing a prolific crop of immorality and crime.

### OUR MARITIME LETTER.

#### THE MARCH OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS.

The march of agricultural progress in these Maritime Provinces has, all will admit, been steady and satisfying, if sometimes slow in pace and marked by a half-heartedness which is not over-edifying. In late years we have witnessed the almost complete reformation of pastoral processes in so far as they relate to field culture, at least; indeed, the whole range of operation involved in the term has undergone change—change which in some cases amounted to complete replacement. The intensive has displaced in most cases with us the extensive methods, and, hard as the old partizan fought for his system, example and the results he could not shut his eyes to compelled him to accommodate himself to the new state of things. We have few if any men of any consequence in these Provinces now who persist in the fatal system of taking everything from the soil and returning little or nothing to it, as was the case in the old days, when land was cropped to oats as long as it would grow anything, and until its virgin fertility was totally squandered. The stupid cupidity of the rustic who would kill the goose which laid the golden egg was verified in this class of farmer. But they were not altogether to blame. The common practice ran that way, and for one man who thinks, there are a hundred who blindly follow the crowd. Now, the practice being altogether at the other tangent, it is easier to command the general attention in suggesting improvements in any department of farming. And now, too, most farmers think a bit for themselves; they should be the profoundest thinkers in the land. There is enough in successful culture of the field to occupy to its depths the mind of the greatest man ever born into the world. The day is gone when "only a farmer" meant anything like the gross and unlovable creature caricatured by an American poet as "the man with the hoe." Strange as it may sound, even this twentieth century will see the farmer the only gentleman in the land. And he will fill all the requirements of the most exacting definition more completely than any one else.

It is not necessary to go into the narration of what can be seen in this new country to-day in the shape of beautiful steadings, with buildings for their occupants constructed on the most magnificent scale, and fitted with all that money can obtain or a reasonable ambition covet; with shelters for the flocks and herds which would have been considered good enough for men but recently; with enclosures and plantations challenging everyone's admiration; with everything in machinery that human ingenuity can invent; in a word, with all the cherished results from science and riches which but short years apart were thought to be available to princes alone. Prosperity has been general with the farmer in these parts, as elsewhere in this blessed land; and that prosperity he has not turned to naught. But, like everything else in this world worth calling a vocation, there is an infinity of development ahead of agriculture with us. New avenues of enterprise are every day opening up before us, and those who man the towers of outlook must be ready to see them and direct the feet of the advancing host effectively through them to the green fields beyond. Official agriculture, if we may employ the term, is supposed to do something satisfying for its salary. Sometimes it does, sometimes it does not; but it is the vogue with all sorts of administrations to assume an attitude of patronage toward agriculture, assuredly. Most people know that no mistake can be made in prospering this basic interest. Unfortunately, public places become loaded up often with fossils and parasites, and it requires more than an earthquake to bury them out of sight, to put them where they can do no harm to an excellent cause, at least; and, except for the very first-class men who cannot be replaced easily, it is good for the bureau to get a shaking up occasionally.

The new Government of our sister Province is casting about to see what can be done for agriculture as a profession within its borders. New Brunswick has a great area of good farming lands. Its forest need careful watching, lest the exploiter damage irreparably the public domain; but, in maintaining and extending in a sane way the forests, there is much ground for expansion in field culture. It was the opinion of the first explorers of the country that it should grow enough field products to feed a vast population. It has drawn its produce, in most part, from other sources. It were a pity not to develop the farming possibilities of so promising a division thoroughly. The Government recently installed has started out well. It has appointed a commission to inquire into the state of agriculture in the Province, and report to Parliament not only the actualities, but the possibilities, of the case. No doubt something of benefit to New Brunswick agriculture will accrue from this inquiry and proposals, and we will all watch for the report and subsequent action upon it with deep interest. It