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# OUR HOME CLUB

## The Rural Minister

There are some persons who—like the dyspeptic millionaire—are envied when they really are deserving of sympathy. The pastor of a rural church is of this class. He seems to have a "soft" job with good pay, ample leisure, holidays and so forth. He lazars among his flock of horny-handed tillers of Mother Earth by the exercise of his intellect, which would seem infinitely less laborious than with the plow and facilities to enjoy the wondrous beauties of Nature surrounding him; he is apparently loved and respected by all. And yet the average rural minister has a most thankless job. Usually a man of no small intellectual attainments, he is being thrown away in an obscure settlement, giving the best years of his life and the ripeness of his scholastic achievements for a stipend that would be the essence of a joke among his brothers of the cloth in the large city churches.

Yet by many persons connected with a church the parson is regarded merely as a hired man. He must at all times be under the thumb of the managers. He must not dare to use a free hand in introducing reforms and improvements into church schemes and programmes. Whilst outwardly the recipient of servile respect, he is nevertheless the most scandalized of men. His appearance, his enunciation, his family affairs, his wife, his dresses, and the precocity of his children form the thesis of many a Sabbath after-dinner gossip. Then, again, he stands practically isolated. True, he has the apparent support of a few sanctimonious, long-winded "elders," but as these groups usually usurp the minister's functions on the slightest pretext they are sometimes intolerable.

### HIS HEART'S DESIRE

When on a Sabbath evening as he presides at a Young People's Guild service, sees the rows of vacant pews, and hears a dull, six-foot farm lad read, in a muffled monotone, a dull, stodgy homily clipped from a weekly journal, he must sometimes experience a longing, a desire to see some young red-blooded Torrey or Gipsy Smith spring from the mediocrity before him and there, in burning words and sentences, pour forth anode the spirit of Hope and Love and Life, instilling his own earnestness and enthusiasm into the stolidly minded audience and imbuing them with a desire to help, to go out into the world, even their own little world, and bring in the fallen, the indifferent, and the scoffer.

A great deal has been said of the rural clergyman; how he must enter into the social and industrial life of his flock as well as being the spiritual adviser. This would not necessarily imply his toiling in the fields or conducting a miniature dairy farm on his lot, but rather to cultivate a genuine interest in the noble profession practised around him. The poor farmer is not one who looks down upon the laborer in the field or entertains ill-concealed contempt for farm workers in general. For whatever the faults of a congregation may be, a pastor who assumes an attitude of superiority or aloofness is not deserving of sympathy.

### LEAD A HAND

To him is given the privilege of being the guiding hand of the community, the man at the helm, and with ordinary response from his parishioners he can accomplish much, but when seas are rough and gales threa-

ten to wrench the tiller from his grasp he needs help. Then it is that the young man on whom Sabbath School and home teaching have not been lost—who possesses something of the fire that made famous the names of General Booth, of Moody and Sankey and Alexander—can step up saying "Here am I!"

"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord.

And I'm bound to die in His army." Where, then, are the young men filled with enthusiasm, with love of their fellow-beings, who can put aside personal pleasures and range themselves by the side of the lone man in the pulpit? Duty is strength; strength to open new vistas for work, to infuse new ideas, new life into every man; to change a preoccupied, apathetic congregation not into bigoted, self-righteous "unco guides," but to a live brigade of broad-minded, worthy followers of the Man of Galilee.—Nephew Frank.

### Homesick

The city 's all so different, mother, not a soul I see Has any thought or smile or word, or even cares for me; Their voices are all silent, mother—don't know how to greet a body used to meet! Like all our good old naybours that Their faces are so different, mother, not a smile or grin, An' nary a one to peer at you an' ask a body in; It's nothin' like the country, mother—things are luit so high They shut out every breath of air an' every patch of sky!

It's noisy—O, so noisy—mother, yet There ain't a tree-load singin' nor a cowbell anywhere; There ain't no fields nor meadows, nuther, where a boy can be An' see you 'round the springhouse like I allus used to see, An' hear your voice a-singin', mother, heard sweetly 'erost; I reckon in the city that your singin' would get lost. Or waked on the people, mother, 'cause they live alone, And never know the beauty of a simple, homely song.

There ain't no chimney corner, mother, where a boy can go An' watch the kettle boilin' up an' hear it singin' low. Of all the little fancies, mother, that a boy can see, Of all the things he'd like to do an' all he'd like to be—The fascinatin' pitchers, mother, in the risin' steam, Laid out in all the glory of his boyhood's widest dream; There's nary a one brings comfort, mother, as you brought to me, No arms t' reach around me an' to give me sympathy.

The city 's all so different, mother, yet they say that I Will mebbe get the knack of it an' like it himself; An' that's what I'm afraid of, mother, 'fraid that afterwhile I'll be like folks around me here, who never speak nor smile—Afraid I'll be forgetful, mother, of my boyhood's spell, Of naybours' folks an' places that I used t' love so well; I'm afraid I'll get heedful, mother, when I get the knack, An' come t' think it over, don't you think I'd best come back? —John D. Wells in the Buffalo News.

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