

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE.*

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VOL. XXXIX.

WINNIPEG, MAN., AND LONDON, ONT., JANUARY 20, 1904.

No. 591

Editorial.

Education for the Farmer's Son.

Nearly all parents who live on farms are at some time confronted by such questions as these: "What are we going to do with our boy? Shall we give him just a public-school education, then keep him home on the farm? Shall we send him to a Collegiate Institute or Business College first, and then help him to decide what he is to make of himself? Or shall we send him to an Agricultural College, then see that he is started on his farm?" These are perplexing questions, and yet there are many others.

If I send my boy away to school, he may fall into temptation; he may become dissatisfied with the farm and drift into something that will not be as good for him as it would have been; besides, it will cost me a great deal of money to educate him. . . . On the other hand, if I keep him at home I may be handicapping him for all the days of his life; I may be compelling him to follow an occupation for which he is not fitted; I may be hindering him from undreamed of advancement and prosperity; I may, since the most intelligent farmer is likely to be the most contented and prosperous one nowadays, be binding him down to be just a mediocre agriculturist or stock-raiser, when he might be a progressive and highly successful one. . . . These are pros and cons which may well be considered.

In balancing them, the disposition, ambition and ability of the boy must be taken into account. It is usually patent that the weak, easily-led youth is better at home with his father and mother; at least, until his character has taken direction and firmness. It is also clear that the youth who absolutely detests books, but who shows unusual aptitude in some other direction, may well be spared the tedium of a prolonged school course, in which he would probably waste a great part of his time. But if the boy be anxious to learn, and firm enough in will and morals, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred a course in some good Collegiate, Business or Agricultural College will prove the "open sesame" to possibilities which could never have been even presented to him had he gone immediately from the public school to the farm.

Of these three, the Agricultural College course is the one par excellence for the farmer. From it, our most progressive farmers should come. Nevertheless, if its course can be preceded by a year or two, or even three years, in a good Collegiate Institute, so much the better, and for these reasons: (1) The general college or high school course, by reason of the very "grinding" which it necessitates, gives valuable training in discipline, determination, system, and the habit of work. (2) It gives training in thought, in the marshaling of ideas and the using of them. (3) It gives a taste for intellectual pleasures, and the more intellectual pleasures take the place of mere physical ones the better. (4) The constant exercise in English, both written and spoken, helps the farmer to "speak for himself." That too few farmers do so, is shown by the fact that the great majority of the members of Parliament are professional men and merchants; yet these men are continually dealing with questions which touch the farmer closely, and upon which he, if anyone, should be in a position to speak. (5) A course at a high school may be taken before a boy is old enough to get the most good out of an Agricultural College course. If he passes the en-

trance at thirteen or fourteen, he may very profitably spend two or three years at the High School, then a year or so at home (in order to find out just what he does not know, and what, in the agricultural course, he most needs to find out), and still be quite young enough to enter upon the intensely practical and instructive course of the Agricultural College.

We do not think such a training as this should do anything to deter a boy from returning to farm life contentedly; that is, if the farm life at his home has been of the right sort. Usually when country boys sneer at the farm there is some good reason for it. They have seen only the "driving and drudgery" part of it, or else have been accustomed to hearing the folks at home speak in deprecating terms of the farm. Many parents never seem to recognize their responsibility in this respect. If a bright boy hears his father say of some lout, "Oh, that fellow's only good for the farm!" little wonder it is if he immediately flies to the decision that he will leave this narrowing, lout-suiting life just as soon as ever he can. Children should be early taught the truth about this matter, that real farming requires brains, and that agriculture is, and ever has been, one of the noblest of professions.

If, however, a boy whose home-life has been of the right sort, and who has a most wholesome respect for the farm, decides that he wishes to follow some other walk in life, the chances are that he has some especial bent in that line, and may be better to follow it. . . . A young man, on the other hand, who, because of his "education," becomes too much of a dude to perform the necessary work about a farm has, it may be rightly concluded, missed education entirely. True education never unfits, but fits; never detracts from common sense, but adds to it; never makes small things appear less, but infinitely greater.

If one course must be left out in the training of the young farmer, of course, it should be the High School. The Agricultural College is especially adapted to the farmer and his needs. It is doing a mighty work in this country, not only in elevating the standard of practical agriculture, stock-raising, dairying, horticulture, etc., but also in disseminating a deeper interest in the natural world, and so making life a hundred-fold more interesting.

If a boy can attend no college at all, he should, at least, have the benefit of the very most the public school can give him. It is a great mistake to keep a child of eleven or twelve home to work. This may save a few cents at the time, but is likely to lose in the dollars later on. Worse than that, it sends the boy forth in comparative ignorance for the whole of his life.

It must not be considered, however, that when a young man has graduated even from both High School and Agricultural College, he knows all that is to be known. He has just been given the best start, and equipped with the power to overcome difficulties. He will have to learn a great deal by experience, which is, in every walk of life, a most efficient teacher.

In many cases a Business College course is exceedingly helpful, and it certainly has the advantage of being short. If bent upon a commercial career, a young man will find a course at a good college of that sort the very best of preparation.

In conclusion, a quite uneducated man may succeed in life financially, and as a good neighbor and public man. Such a one deserves especial

credit. Yet, being what he is, what might he not have been with greater advantages? That is the question. On the other hand, a so-called "educated" man may fail. The chances are that he is a weakling anyway. His schooling most certainly is not to blame for his condition. . . . Upon the whole, it would seem that nothing short of extraordinary natural ability will enable the uneducated man to stand side by side in progress and usefulness with the one who has had the advantage of the "start" of a good, real education.

Pointers.

Make your dates to suit—

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Manitoba Grain-growers' annual convention at Brandon, Feb. 2nd and 3rd.

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Neepawa Winter Fair, Feb. 16th and 17th.

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Stock-judging Institute, at Brandon, Feb. 18th, 19th, 20th.

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Live-stock conventions, Winnipeg, Feb. 22nd to 27th.

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Keep your ear to the ground while the Manitoba G.-G. are in session. You will hear something; they mean business.

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It's pretty difficult to see the consistency between allowing wheat to be re-graded east of Ft. William, and compelling fruit and cheese for shipment to Great Britain to bear the producer's name. The latter has been found necessary, and Manitoba wheat should reach Britain as it leaves the West.

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If you are a grain-grower in Manitoba, get out to the convention at Brandon on Feb. 2nd. There are mighty important questions to be settled, and your interest in the work of the association will be appreciated.

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The engineers on the Dominion Exhibition engine are getting steam up pretty fast. Although the time is short between now and July for such an undertaking, it looks as though they would be able to make her go.

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Buy a single-fare ticket and get a certificate from the agent when going to the G.-G. convention at Brandon, and you will get a return free. There will be far more than one hundred there.

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Manitoba stockmen are still feeling sore over having their live-stock sale proposition turned down. It ought to have been given a trial anyhow.

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The C.P.R. has suggested the probability of going into the manufacture of lumber in B. C. Should that occur, would the freight rates on lumber over the mountain be any lower than at present? Who can answer?

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The value of Farmers' Institute meetings to you this winter will depend upon the interest you take in them.

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The secretary of each Farmers' Institute or Agricultural Society should report to the Department of Agriculture the class of subject likely to be most interesting in his district. It is ridiculous to have a speaker talk on dairying where beef production is the chief object of the cattleman, and vice versa.