

low that any farmer can easily possess himself of it. To illustrate the style we copy one of the essays, entitled

PREPARING TO FARM.

I write mainly for beginners—for young persons, and some not so young, who are looking to farming as the vocation to which their future years are to be given, by which their living is to be gained. In this chapter, I would counsel young men, who, not having been reared in personal contact with the daily and yearly round of a farmer's cares and duties, purpose henceforth to live by farming.

To these I would earnestly say, "No haste!" Our boys are in a great hurry to be men. They want to be bosses before they have qualified themselves to be efficient journeymen. I have personally known several instances of young men fresh from school or from some city vocation, buying or hiring a farm, and undertaking to work it; and I cannot now recall a single instance in which the attempt has succeeded; while speedy failure has been the usual result. The assumption that farming is a rude, simple matter, requiring little intellect and less experience, has buried many a well-meaning youth under debts which the best efforts of many subsequent years will barely enable him to pay off. In my opinion half our farmers now living would say, if questioned, that they might better have waited longer before buying or hiring a farm.

When I was ten years old my father took a job of clearing off the mainly fallen and partially rotten timber—largely White Pine and Black Ash—from fifty acres of level and then swampy land; and he and his two boys gave most of the two ensuing years (1821-22) to the rugged task. When it was finished, I—a boy of twelve years—could have taken just such a tract of half-burned primitive forest as that was when we took hold of it, and cleared it by an expenditure of seventy to eighty per cent. of the labor actually bestowed upon that. I had learned in clearing this, how to economize labor in any future undertaking of the kind; and so every one learns by experience who steadily observes and reflects. He must have been a very good farmer at the start, or a very poor one afterward, who cannot grow a thousand bushels of grain much cheaper at thirty years of age than he could at twenty.

To every young man who has had no farming experience, or very little, yet who means to make farming his vocation, I say, Hire out, for the coming year, to the best farmer who will give you anything like the value of your labor. Buy a very few choice books (if you have not them already), which treat of Geology, Chemistry, Botany, and the application of their truths in Prac-

tical Agriculture; give to these the close and thoughtful attention of your few leisure hours; keep your eyes wide open, and set down in a note-book or pocket-diary each night a minute of whatever has been done on the farm that day, making a note of each storm, shower, frost, hail, etc., and also of the date at which each planted crop requires tillage or is ripe enough to harvest, and ascertaining, so far as possible, what each crop produced on the farm has cost, and which of them all are produced at a profit and which at a loss. At the year's end, hire again to the same or another good farmer and pursue the same course; and so do until you shall be twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, which is young enough to marry, and quite young enough to undertake the management of a farm. By this time if you have carefully saved and wisely invested your earnings, you will have several hundred dollars; and, if you do not choose to migrate to some region where land is very cheap, you will have found some one to sell you a small farm on credit, taking a long mortgage as security. Your money—assuming that you have only what you will have earned—will all be wanted to fix up your buildings, buy a team and cow, with a few implements needed, and supply you with provisions till you can grow some. If you can start thus experienced and full-handed, you may, by diligence, combined with good fortune, begin to make payments on your mortgage at the close of your second year.

I hate debt as profoundly as any one can, but I do not consider this really running into debt. One has more land than he needs, and does not need his pay forthwith; another wants land, but lacks the means of present payment. They two enter into an agreement mutually advantageous, whereby the poorer has the present use and ultimate fee-simple of the farm in question, in consideration of the payment of certain sums as duly stipulated. Technically, the buyer becomes a debtor; practically I do not regard him as such, until payments fall due which he is unable promptly to meet. Let him rigorously avoid all other debt, and he need not shrink from nor be ashamed of this.

I have a high regard for scientific attainments; I wish every young man were thoroughly instructed in the sciences which underlie the art of farming. But all the learning on earth, though it may powerfully help to make a good farmer, would not of itself make one. When a young man has learned all that seminaries and lectures, books and cabinets, can teach him, he still needs practice and experience to make him a good farmer.

"But wouldn't you have a young man study in order that he may become a good farmer?"