

FARM AND DAIRY



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

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The Farm Labor Problem in the Light of Experience

Progressive Methods Attract and Hold the Best Kind of Hired Help.—By J. E., Bruce Co., Ont.

THE farm labor problem comes up for discussion among farmers almost as frequently as the weather; both hold perennial interest for us because both effect so largely the success or failure of our farming operations. I would not make the claim that we have no labor problem on our farm, but we come very near that happy state. I can truthfully say that it is one of the least of our troubles. At the request of the editor of Farm and Dairy I will try and tell a few of the principles on which I work in handling my men.

To attract good men one must be a good farmer. This is fundamental. Every improvement I make in my methods makes it easier for me to attract and hold the best labor of the locality. A good man I would define as one who takes an interest in his work. First then there must be something in which to take an interest. Last spring I had a man come to me asking for work. Being short at the time I took him on. I soon found that one of my neighbors was very "sore" on me for "robbing" him of his help. I ascertained that he had been paying my new man \$30. a month with board, while he had worked with me for \$25. "Why did you do it?" I asked Jim on the first opportunity.

"I wouldn't work for that man if the difference between here and there was \$15 instead of \$5," was Jim's decided reply. "One month with that man was just 31 days too long to suit me. Every implement around the whole farm was in need of repair. There was no pleasure in driving his wornout, broken down team. The fences and buildings were going to ruin as fast as his neglect could send them there. I want to be where I can take an interest in a going concern."

The Wife's Cooking Responsible

I have found that Jim's sentiments are held by all really good men. I don't know how some farmers could get help at all if it were not that their wives are such excellent cooks. The appeal to the stomach reaches the most of us, and I have often wondered if at least a dozen men between here and there realize that they can thank their wives for all the help they have.

Hired men are not simply "hands." They are

human beings just like ourselves, and I aim to treat them as such. I am never the least bit backward in discussing methods and crops with a few of my men who are interested enough to ask questions or make suggestions. I know that many farmers believe that a hired man's duty begins and ends in doing as he is told. I prefer to have them do things my way because they have good reason to believe that that is the best way. They will then do their work well. In some cases too I have learned valuable lessons from the men, lessons that they had learned

incident is so well told that I will ask Farm and Dairy to re-publish it.

"I have made a practice for years of discussing the various crops and the best means of raising them with the men in my employ," writes Mr. Prescott, "and I have been surprised at the response from even uneducated laborers. I am always ready to answer any reasonable questions from any of the men as to why work is done in a certain way, and what the effect would be if done in a different way, and to some extent we have tried experiments with various methods. This summer one of my best men came to me

and said that he thought we would get a better potato yield by hilling up our vines, instead of practicing level culture as we usually do. I told him that I considered the level culture the best for our conditions, but that he could take three rows through the centre of the field and try hilling, all other conditions to be the same as for the level culture.

A \$3 Lesson

He was much pleased, and took a lot of pride in keeping those three rows hilled nicely all summer, hoping to prove his method was the better. What was the result? At digging time, we found a

difference of a bushel in each 300-foot row, in favor of the level culture, and this year happened to be very favorable to the hilling too. Now, that experiment cost us about two or three dollars in loss of potatoes, but I consider it a very good investment of that amount of money.

"That man was thoroughly interested in that experiment; it kept his mind busy with the scientific methods of potato culture, and I told him my reasons for preferring my system, while at the same time saying that under certain conditions of soil and weather I should practice hilling. Now he has a higher opinion of my methods than ever, and is ready to jump right into anything that comes along, with confidence that we are at least trying to do it right. A spirit of that kind is worth money to any employer. If I had simply told that man that I did not like hilling and demanded level culture, he would have always felt that he knew better than I, and could do better himself."

I have often heard the statement made that



Neat Cottages for Married Men Are an Important Factor in the Solution of the Hired Help Problem.

The wonderful success of J. H. Dent, Oxford Co., Ont., as a dairy farmer on an extensive scale, was told in the Dairy number of Farm and Dairy. The operation of a 250-acre dairy farm calls for considerable hired help; and in securing help Mr. Dent has a minimum of trouble. Perhaps these attractive cottage homes, which face Mr. Dent's own home across the highway, explain in part the preference that good men show for Springbank.

—Photo by an editor of Farm and Dairy.

whn working for progressive farmers in other localities. Here is a case in point:

It had always been our practice at planting to plow in the potatoes, level down the hills with a light drag harrow and then let the potatoes stand until they were advanced sufficiently to see the rows and then run through them with the scuffer. One spring the man who was helping me suggested that we harrow those potatoes frequently to keep down the first sign of weeds and then we would have less trouble later on in the season when the hand hoes usually had to be brought into requisition to fight the weeds. I allowed the man to have his own way and his method was so successful that we have followed it ever since.

The same principle works the other way. In a recent issue of that great United States dairy paper, Hoard's Dairyman, I read an example of how one employer, Mr. Chas. E. Prescott, of New York, had interested his hired man in the proprietor's method of doing a certain task. The