

The whole question of attractive farm homes is the matter of spare time. Most of us like our work in the fields and with the stock, but any work becomes monotonous if not broken by recreation. We may say we haven't time for hobbies, sport, reading, music or beautifying the farm, but more work will be done and better done if we take time. Many of us do not use our spare time efficiently. We put away much valuable time on useless talking or idling, when we should plan our work to have spare time for these outside interests. Such time is not wasted if it keeps us contented, and our minds and bodies fit for the duties of every day.

Huron Co., Ont.

M. J. SLEMMON.

Knowledge Makes Attractive.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

A farm home is certainly more attractive if the buildings are comfortable and situated in pleasant surroundings. Green lawns, shade trees, and a succession of flowering shrubs all tend to make an otherwise bleak house more homelike. Wide verandas outside, as well as cosy rooms inside, give comfort the entire season. But in spite of these the life becomes irksome if we see nothing besides the mere mechanical part of our work. Farm life is always attractive if we have the broad education which finds "Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Although chemistry is recognized as a necessity by the present-day farmer, yet geology is considered entirely beyond his needs. But its study gives us a knowledge of the changes that already have taken place in this world of ours, it gives us the ability to recognize those taking place at the present time and to estimate those of the future. It is much more interesting to plow fields or dig ditches when we know the story of each furrow we turn, or each shovelful of earth that we throw up. Then, even the stones that cause such inconvenience are not half the trial, when we think that this one was deposited at the bottom of the sea, another made by volcanic action, and that one, imbedded in the glacial ice, had come from another part of the country.

Early rising ceases to be a trouble when we pause to listen to the birds as they pour forth their varied songs. These feathered friends change with each season, from the first spring robin until only a stray one is left to gaze solemnly at the cheerful little chickadees hopping gaily over the snow.

Our nature study also makes us familiar with our mosses and lichens, our wild flowers and our trees. It is no small task to know even the common trees in all their varieties, by both leaves and wood; but the interest in their study and the pleasure derived from it is also great.

Then during long winter evenings we sit around an open fire, where the logs of wood from our own lot send out a delightful warmth and cheerful blaze. That is the time to read again the histories which give the clues to present-day affairs; to find the information and encouragement for next year's work in our farm papers, and enjoy our friends in Chaucer, Dickens or Scott.

All these things make a life on the farm that will be a delight and pleasure in spite of distant neighbors, impassable roads, or work that never seems to end.

King's Co., N. S.

E. BURBIDGE EATON.

A New Viewpoint for Parents.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

Among the various things that might be mentioned, in the discussion of making homes more attractive, I would place the matter of a different viewpoint by many parents. This is the twentieth century, and every normal boy and girl feels it, and I believe it to be the duty of parents to adjust their ideas to present-day conditions. There was never an age when child life and child study received more attention than the present. Many books have been written for children, boys' and girls' magazines are published, and every properly qualified leader of young people either does realize or should, the great national asset there is in our boys and girls. And is it not one of the encouraging signs of the times to note the improvement in school architecture and equipment, the stress that is being laid upon teacher training, the large supervised play-grounds and parks of our towns and cities, and the many considerations that are being given for the welfare of the boys and girls of to-day? Thus, with the improved conditions of childhood, and while so many of their faculties are encouraged to develop, it is only natural that the boys and girls will be keenly sensitive to any lack in their home or community, that hampers the development of any of the activities that have been stimulated or fostered.

If the problems of rural life are receiving so much attention in the training of rural leaders, (teachers, ministers and others) there should also be a forward movement among rural parents, for their opposition and indifference can do much to offset the influence of any leader. Thus, while our boys and girls are being encouraged to take an interest in so many matters vitally related to rural life, it is very important that parents should take at least a sympathetic interest in their children's education and ambitions.

What an impetus can be given a boy when he attempts to make his first garden by the gift of a few packages of seeds of easily reared flowers or vegetables, and later by a friendly rivalry in gardening between parent and child! A few pigeons, a brood of chickens, a pair of rabbits, or some young animal to have for his very own, may arouse a new interest in animals and

perhaps lay the foundation for a successful stockman. In short, there are countless ways in which the boys and girls may be encouraged, and their home life brightened, if their parents take a sympathetic interest in their aspirations, and who can tell the influence of a few good books or magazines, well chosen, upon the lives of our young people? These may form a basis for a companionship of parent and child which should never be broken, and I believe it is most frequently the parents' fault when this happens. If the boys and girls accompany their parents to market, the county and larger fairs, and learn to participate in the business, such as the marketing of their own productions and purchasing their own working supplies, many matters will have a new interest for them.

In addition to this, all the public meetings of a community may have some educational value to our young people. Besides the junior societies in the church, they should also accompany their parents to the open meetings of Literary Societies, Women's Institutes, Farmers' Clubs and other organizations, and when a sufficient number of them begin to attend meetings for adults, there will likely be some part arranged for them. Thus, if proper scope is given for their activities and developing talents, I believe young people will find rural life the ideal one.

It is true that there may be other things lacking in rural communities, but I believe if we have proper leadership by our rural schools and churches, and our press, it will not be long before a great many more parents see child life from a rational standpoint and strive to encourage rather than repress; to have the community spirit rather than the individual, and matters of co-operation, social intercourse, attractive surroundings, and conveniences will all receive the attention they respectively merit.

York Co., Ont.

INTERESTED READER.

Every Boy Should Have a Hobby.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

The importance of making the farm attractive to young people cannot be overestimated, for unless the boys and girls remain on the land, products will be lessened, and rural life will be far from what it should be in every respect. Besides this, under normal conditions, and such as will exist after the war, the cities become overcrowded. A certain small percentage of young men leave the farm to enter the professions, but most of the remainder, except those who have abilities along special lines, do not have as great success as they would have had on the farm, and wish to be back there. This is shown by the "back-to-the-land" movement.

A most useful thing in making the farm more interesting to the young man is a hobby. It is of value not only for itself but in eliminating the monotony which might otherwise exist. The most successful farmers are those who, while their work in general farming is also superior, have some hobby, some specialty. If a young man can be led to take an interest in bees, poultry, or the feeding of live stock, or any other department of farm work, and be given entire control of and opportunity of improving it, it is not likely that he will lose interest in the rest of the work so much as to wish to leave it and go to the city.

One of the main reasons for the young man going to the city is the wish for higher wages. This may, of course, be met by better wages in rural districts, and better prices for produce. But in such a commercial age as the present, money will remain the chief object for most young men until they are given a broader education, by which they are shown that the farm offers them advantages of more value than high wages, so that they will not be led away by pecuniary inducements from a calling for which they have each been fitted by a score or more years' experience.

Ninety-five per cent. of the country boys and girls, it is said, begin and end their education in the public school. This should not be, and in itself brings about most unfavorable conditions. The young farmer to-day should not only have a thorough training for his work, but also a wide, general education so that he is fitted to make a success on the farm, and so that his views may be broadened, and he will not be led away solely by material aims.

The love of a good time, which also takes many people from the farm, may be satisfied, in a new way, by the cultivation of the higher things of life. Every farm boy and girl cannot take a full course in music, but all the best selections may be enjoyed by means of the victrola or player piano. Copies of the finest paintings may be obtained for a few cents apiece. Public libraries are to be found in most towns and villages, and the price of books is such that almost anyone may own a library of the best literature. Travel is also beneficial, widening the vision and sharpening the judgment. In short, culture is needed. Matthew Arnold defines culture in effect as the acquaintance with the best that has been done, said and written, from the earliest to the most modern times, and goes on to show that were we to utilize for this purpose the time which we now waste, and all of us waste some, we should have plenty of time for culture.

To be sure, not many young people go to the city expressly to take advantage of these things, but if they were more accessible and more employed in rural homes, they would do much to keep the young people there.

Essex Co., Ont.

J. RAYMOND KNISTER.

Make the Home Life Happy.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

One of the things needed in every home, and one that is of more than ordinary importance, is pleasantness. When the boy or girl does a kind act, or does his or her work well, tell them so. If they err correct them but don't scold. A nice house, not necessarily a large one, with modern conveniences, such as hard and soft water in the house, a dumb waiter, and a bath tub, are a great help. Give the girl an interest in the poultry, a course in music, and teach her to cook. Keep the girl on the farm and it will not be so hard to keep the boy.

There should be on every farm a good barn, nicely finished off, and with every door properly hung. Have nothing but high-class grade cattle, or better, pure-bred cattle, and keep them in good fit. Keep out the scrubs. No boy or girl likes to look at poor stock. Teach the boy to feed and care for them, but don't give him too much to do. Give him a calf of his own to raise and let him take it to the fall fair, and as he gets older give him a colt, one that will make a good driver, and let him show it at the fall fair. There is nothing on the farm that is admired as much by the boys and girls as a good driver. There would be more boys staying on the farms if they had a driver instead of the old, tired-out work horse to drive. I hear someone say, "get him an automobile," but if the boy is a true admirer of horse flesh he will say, "Billy is good enough for me."

Keep up with the work; don't always be dragging behind. Underdrained land is a great help in getting along with the work, as well as a good crop producer. Let the boy and girl have a day off occasionally. Spend your evenings with them; have a game of cards or have the girl play on the piano and the boy help her sing. Let them hitch up the driver and go to town and get the groceries, etc. Invite company in, say one evening a week. Keep the lawn clean, and have a bed or two of flowers and a few spruce trees nicely trimmed, and they will be glad to help you keep it in order. Keep the gates and fences in good repair, particularly the gate at the cow pasture.

There are too many farmers who work till bed time. They come in tired and cross and go to bed; put their money in the bank at 3 per cent. instead of making their farms more attractive and taking the pleasure out of farming that there is in it, thus driving away the boys and girls.

Elgin Co., Ont.

J. D. G.

Some Plain Talk for Parents.

EDITOR "THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE":

We have read considerable on how to make the farm home more attractive, but it always seems to me that it is the older farmers themselves who are writing the articles, men who, if they ever had a childhood, have long forgotten anything about it, so I was pleased when you asked for the subject to be discussed by the young people themselves.

I am fresh from that trail and have been farming "on my own hook" just three years. The average farm in our country about here has a fair amount of conveniences, and in driving through the country one is forced to remark: "How prosperous the country is." It is doubtful if the lack of good buildings or poorly-kept grounds have a great deal to do with keeping the lad at home. "The Farmer's Advocate" is seldom printed but we read either in the "Editorial" or elsewhere something like this: "Give the boy some stock of his own," and I think that is the corner stone of contentment with the average youth. We are speaking of the average; there are odd ones who, like he who loafs in the city, could be labelled "bum", or, in plain English, "no good"—men who are lazy, who want something without work and the old world won't give it to them. This class of men, if the whole farm were given them, would run through it. But there are not many in this class. We want to speak of him who works hard from morning till night, works more faithfully than any highly paid hired man, some of whom get from \$30 to \$40 a month, and will leave without a week's notice if they can get their money. And yet what wages does the father's son get? Is he not often looked upon as part of the farm machinery? He gets his bed and board and if he is in need of clothing, his mother or father, whoever is the ruling power, takes him to the city and after looking all the cheap goods over, and bartering with the clerks, rigs the boy out in the poorest clothing that is in the store. No wonder the city people take a look and then grin at him, and no wonder the little fellow as he goes home begins to wonder if he isn't on the liability side of the business, when in reality he is the biggest asset the farmer owns.

But returning to the subject: "Let the boy have some live stock", I think this is much better than wages and it fits him for his life-work better. No two boys are alike. We see evidence of this in public school life, and sometimes he goes to school. One lad is always wanting his fellows to play horse, while another one is tearing old things to pieces to see what they are made of and what makes them go. So with the boy who has left school, there are certain things that he likes to do better than other things. Especially do we see this in the barn in the winter. He may be spending two-thirds of his time on the horses, and when he gets to the cattle he throws the feed at them and then runs away. If he likes horses and the father has not had good horses, he should invest in a couple of good colts and let the boy break them and let him have them, or, if the lad likes the cow best, get him what he wants, scales, or milk house or a pure-bred, etc., and just help him all you can to make it a success and give him a