

**The Federation of Rural Forces.—II.****The Character of the Forces Available.****I.—THE HOME.**

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In a former article attention was chiefly directed towards the nature and extent of our needs; it now remains to undertake the far more agreeable task of reviewing the forces at work which consciously or otherwise are relieving them. The first place must be accorded to the home. The earliest and most constant influences are exerted in the homes, and this is particularly true of rural homes, because the town child is subject to the potency of the *street*. The cities have their problems, but we are concerned with none of them just now, except to say that in a larger degree than many urban populations appear to realize, the rural problem is also a city problem. The towns are constantly replenished from the country, and it is to their interest, even on the lowest basis, that a regard for the highest in all respects should be steadily sustained. The country, on the other hand, has a sacred right to expect that the finest fruit of its efforts should be conserved. If *country* wishes to imitate *town*, let it be jealous to emulate only that which merits adoption.

Parents in a God-fearing home on a farm should be able to make more delible impressions, for, they have fewer competitive influences. Individuality should be more marked, but there is need to beware of isolation and ultra-individualism. Wherever this is abnormal, there is a constant tendency towards suspicion, jealousy, and sometimes a harshness which renders co-operation amongst farmers, as a class, well-nigh an impossibility.

Conditions are entirely changed in the history of even one generation. Formerly there was only a local market to be considered, business was done by trading in kind, there were no mail order transportations, and only large merchants found it necessary to study the market columns. The horizon was very limited, needs were simpler, but the effort to cope with them furnished an education which did not get its due merit. Now the too frequent and mistaken idea of aping the superficialities of town life have eliminated many good things by the rural house door which educators would fain introduce re-labelled by the schoolhouse window. "Manual training" and "domestic economy" were never named, were taught, however, *empirically*, and produced resourceful men and women. If

parents could only realize the nature of the forces that were reduced in efficiency, when the log cabins were deserted, they might become more tolerant of those who propose to amend these character-forming deficiencies by making provision for them in the best educational programmes of to-day. The intelligence was trained through the occupations, and no one desires to minimize the value of the products. But how great are the economic and industrial changes! The home is no longer the unit, but the county or province, and the boys who remain on the farm may affect the fortunes of their community or country to a greater degree than some of their fellows who go into offices or stores. If a clerk proves dishonest, he may temporarily affect the business of his employer; but if a young farmer shipped a dishonest barrel of apples (but for the severe scrutiny of the Marks Act inspector) he could damage the reputation of a whole consignment. Let a man ship a carload of turnips that are not worth hauling, and he strikes a blow at the reputation of his county. Hence, the home must increasingly be relied upon for cultivation of integrity, thoroughness, accuracy, promptness and system.

**THE CHURCH.**

The most constant factor is, as we have seen, the home. The church is a powerful agent when uninterruptedly present. But it is precisely in the rural sections that there is a constant fluctuation. There are nearly 600 school districts in New Brunswick having a claim on the poor aid to the extent of almost \$12,000; and when people act thus in the matter of education, which is regarded as a necessity, and where there are legal requirements, it is little wonder that rural congregations are so universally in a dependent condition. This makes pastoral tenure uncertain, necessitates large areas for oversight, invites only student or untrained service, and in too many cases the men who have such spiritual charges lack the buoyancy that would ensure their best. Improved agricultural conditions ought to make the work of the churches more effective and the services more regular; and apart from the highest considerations, which require no mention here, one of the prime agencies for promoting the social instincts, and securing co-operation, is the church. It is not necessary that all attend the same church, perhaps not even desirable, but it is not possible to overstate the desirability of attending some church. It would be well, perhaps, if some rural churches