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Denmark - A Farm Kingdom

I.—Grundtvig, the Danish Prophet of Practical Education

By A. McLeod

Denmark is a commonwealth of farmers. The government is a government of farmers; both legislative chambers, the Folketing and the Landsting, are controlled by the farmers; the point of view of the country is the farmer's point of view; the people are the best farmers on the planet; the government is the most democratic in the world; the social legislation is more advanced than that of any other country; the people are pre-eminent in art, literature, education and culture; commerce and manufacturing are thriving; the banking and credit system is good; economic and social co-operation is general; the people trust one another; they are moral and religious; there is little crime; thrift, peace, prosperity and plenty abound in these parous times. The reasons for the happy condition of the Danish people is an incentive to my fellow farmers to do for Manitoba what the Danish farmers have done for Denmark, for it is the farmers who have made Denmark what it is.

Not Favored by Nature

Denmark is a small kingdom lying between the Baltic and North Seas in the same latitude as that part of Manitoba lying north of The Pas. It has an area of 14,829 square miles or about the same as that part of Manitoba lying south of the main line of the C.P.R. It consists of a peninsula and a number of islands and it is exposed to the cold damp sea winds. The winter is as long as the Manitoba winter and though the thermometer does not range as low, the cold, owing to the humidity, affects man and beast more than it does with us; cattle have to be stabled and fed a greater part of the year than on the prairie. Four months, June, July, August and September, are ordinarily free from frost.

The beech is the chief tree in the forests, though the brock, oak and elm also grow. The climate is too rigorous for evergreens in the forest, windwept as they are, but they are grown in sheltered plantations in great numbers. The soil consists chiefly of boulder, clay, sand and heath and it is in the main so unfertile that very little can be grown on it without manure.

The population in 1911 was 2,757,075 and does not yet reach 3,000,000. The area contained in farms in 1917 was 8,177,169 acres of which 5,000,000 acres were actually under cultivation. Three-fifths of the people live in the rural districts and farming and fishing are the only two basic industries that are indigenous.

Fifty years ago Denmark was one of the poorest countries in Europe. Not only were the people in poverty, but the nation was practically bankrupt. A disastrous war had been waged with Germany and Austria in which Schleswig-Holstein, comprising one-third of the national territory, had been lost. Agriculture was at a low ebb, trade and commerce languished, manufacturers were depressed and the government of the country was in the hands of the interests. The outlook was very dark for the people and the nation.

Grundtvig the Seer of Denmark

For more than 25 years prior to 1864 an inspired seer, Bishop Grundtvig, had been proclaiming the need of real national schools for Denmark. He saw that the common people were not taught to think for themselves, nor were they prepared for life's work. The classical schools of the day taught book-learning and that chiefly the learning of the dead past. This teaching led up to the professions and to government positions, but it gave no training at all for rural life. The result was an ignorant, dependent, decadent peasantry.

Bishop Grundtvig strongly condemned the formalized methods of learning from

Mr. McLeod, who is a member of the Thornhill, Man., G.O.A. is well informed on agricultural and educational matters. For years he conducted a farm near Morden and he is now a member of the Manitoba University Council. He has made a close study of Danish agriculture and of the splendid system of elementary education which furnishes it with its first great essential—an educated rural population. This is the first of a series of five articles which he has written for Guide readers on the subject and in which he has incorporated the results of his extensive studies of Danish educational methods.

textbooks by rote and in place of it he advocated teaching by the living voice of the teacher. His method was inspirational teaching by the teacher of what the teacher knew himself and not simply what was found on the printed page. He advocated the use of patriotic and sacred songs, the culture of the national spirit, the

development of individuality, physical and spiritual training, and generally a system of schools in which the spirit would be regarded, rather than the letter. He was truly a prophet. He saw in his mind's eye with the seer's vision and he proclaimed his vision to the people by word of mouth. For years in every part of Denmark, in season and out of season, he preached a crusade against the formality, the stilted artificiality, the superficiality of the classical schools of the day and in favor of people's schools that would teach all the children of all the people and make them capable of thinking and reasoning and speaking and thinking and working for themselves. He wrote books, pamphlets and articles, he composed hymns and national songs, he preached and declaimed to the masses and by his devotion he inspired the people. He attacked the classical schools of the day vehemently. He called them the "black schools" and the "schools for death." He declared that, at best, they gave children a foreign culture, that they tended to make them detest honest, homely toil; that they trained the children of the common people away from the land. Naturally he met with the fiercest opposition from the interests and the classes. They even put him out of the church, but he persevered and in the end he had the satisfaction of convincing the common people of Denmark of the soundness of his views. Indeed it may be said of him, as of that other great Teacher, the common people heard him gladly.

Prior to the war of 1864, a few of these schools, or Folk Schools as they called them, had been established, but they did not get a real grip of the Danish people till after the war. The patriotism of the people had been derived by the war and the consequent loss of one-third of their territory, and they realized that, having lost materially, they could only compensate them spiritually. In their extremity they turned, as many other peoples have turned, from the material to the spiritual. They took Grundtvig as their prophet. They accepted wholeheartedly his educational ideals and began establishing people's schools as the means of realizing these ideals.

A profit of 1200 per cent was realized by the Dominion Equipment Supply company on electric fittings for the Agricultural College according to the charge of Hugh Phillips, K.C., before the Galt Commission. Fittings costing \$31.48 were sold to the government for \$400. The amount charged for extras on the supply of these fittings was \$7,000 and it is into the prices charged for those extras that the investigation is being made.

Maybe your neighbor could make good use of some farm implement that you have stored away in a shed, or you could use an improved machine of his part of the time. Keep all available machinery at work during daylight hours.

To have things clean and tidy is to help do away with the fly menace this year; looking at the other way round, the fly nuisance is a sign of untidiness and dirt.

It takes 35,000 horses and mules a month to replace those that are lost from all causes after their arrival in France, Italy and Britain.