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EDITORIAL.

Every farmer should be a "business man."

Soil fertility is the pillar supporting profitable agriculture.

The problem for most farmers is not the acquisition of more acres, but rather the increasing of the returns from the land now being worked.

Autumn is a convenient time to arrange the fields for the practice of a regular crop rotation. Only a very small percentage of farmers have tried a regular rotation of crops. Those who follow it have found it very beneficial, and believe it to be one of the underlying principles of successful agriculture. Why not give it a trial?

Granges and farm organizations in California voted so strongly "Yea" in the recent Woman's Suffrage plebiscite as to overcome the adverse voting of the cities and carry the proposition by a substantial majority. One State after another is falling in line to give women the right to exercise the franchise.

The new Canadian Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Martin Burrell, served a portion of his apprenticeship of advancement in life as a contributor to the columns of "The Farmer's Advocate." Such opportunities for self-development are still open. Begin by relating some useful thing you have learned on the farm this season.

A recent report from Washington indicates that the corn crop for this year will be considerably under the record return of 1910, with higher prices. This will tend to increase the cost of production of meat products in Canada. Live-stock feeding is the chief security of Canadian farming, and the country is fortunate in being able to draw freely upon the raw material of the American corn belt.

Very few farms are fitted with accessories which entirely satisfy the owner. Human nature is hard to please. This is a great good to the race, because satiety means the end of progress, and ultimately spells ruin. Enterprise cannot stand still; it must either advance or retrograde. It is the man who is prepared to make the best use of what he has at his disposal that is soon in a position to make his surroundings more agreeable.

Rev. Dr. Chown stated a pungent truth at the meeting of the recent Ecumenical Council of Methodism, Toronto, when "The Church in Social Life," was being discussed. "The problem," said he, "was not giving charity, but securing social justice. The preacher should know the life of the classes and the needs of the masses. One prominent layman doing business according to the Sermon on the Mount would commend the church to the common people more than a whole conference of preachers."

The Belgian Object Lesson.

"Agricultural Extension" is a rather vague expression, meaning the conveying of information by verbal teaching and demonstration, designed to improve the business of farming. It is no new thing, but is having many new applications. "The Farmer's Advocate" has been working at it for about 47 years on a co-operative plan—co-operating with its readers. It embraces farmers' Institutes, demonstration orchards, farms and plots, farming trains, and many government-directed agencies. Concentrating describes the idea better than "extension." There is too much of the latter, and not enough of the former in Canadian systems of farming. Our farms are spread over too many acres, and the work is not half manned. Everybody becomes tired, and the results are slipshod. Little is finished to-day; big arrears pile up for to-morrow.

About the best illustration from abroad we have seen of the actual results of this so-called "Extension Work" appears in a Belgian report, translated for the United States Office of Experiment Stations. Belgium is one of the smallest countries in the world, its area being only 11,373 square miles, or about half that of Nova Scotia, but with a population of over 7,000,000, equal approximately to that of all Canada. It supports over 600 people to the square mile. About twenty-five years ago, Belgium's farming was in a neglected and disheartening condition. People were moving to the towns in alarming numbers; in many cases farms did not yield a bare living, farmers were running in debt and their holdings mortgaged, crop yields were waning and live stock inferior, the homes were poor and living deplorable, large areas of land were uncultivated, dairying and orcharding were neglected, and the youth uneducated.

Something had to be done, and by a happy inspiration the office of "Extension Supervisors" was created in 1895. Their mission was to popularize in a practical manner the knowledge of scientific farming—that is, good farming—brought directly home to the people. They operated very much on the plan of the county agricultural representatives, whose work is being well developed, chiefly under the wise direction of C. C. James, Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Ontario. Belgium has some thirty-five of these practical, well-qualified officers, with numerous assistants. Their business has been to give information and demonstration, to experiment, to encourage the formation of local organizations and clubs, to represent fully to the central authorities, and to direct agricultural courses for adults and school courses. Thousands of demonstrations and courses, including those on domestic science and hygiene, have been given, and meetings held, movable schools established, agricultural papers and other literature widely circulated.

Now, after an experience of about 25 years, a tolerably correct idea of the results can be formed. This has been done by a committee, and published. At first the people were indifferent, and in some instances, until the establishment of demonstration fields, farmers were actually defiant of all ideas of progress. But when they saw with their own eyes, on soils in their own communities, the value of applied science, their attitude changed. In one of the nine Provinces (Namur), there were over 400 such fields in operation. These demonstrations are now regarded as the best professors of agriculture. In Luxemburg, over 200,000

adults have attended courses. The yields of practically all crops have been immensely increased, and the increased value in the Province of West Flanders alone was over \$13,000,000. Almost no commercial fertilizers or concentrated foods were used there in 1885, but now hundreds of thousands of tons of both are utilized, and the live stock has increased in value by nearly \$13,000,000. The increase of farm land values has ranged from \$13 to \$162 per acre, the value of all Belgian arable land now ranging from \$162 to \$405 per acre. In reality, a revolution has been worked. Farming has become remunerative. The sons of farmers remain at home and become proprietors. Emigration to the cities is rare now. Modern implements are used. House-building and home comforts have improved. Food and raiment are better. More live stock is kept, at less cost. Mortgages are reduced or paid off. Vegetable and fruit gardening to supply cities and towns and canning factories has wonderfully increased. Dairying and hog-raising have been revolutionized. In 1907, in one Province, 131,031 dairy cows averaged 242 pounds of butter each. The numbers of fowls in the same Province have doubled. In the primary schools, pupils are taught agricultural knowledge, not so much by text-books as by object-lessons which develop their powers of observation. One of the Provinces has 714 associations of farmers for various purposes, including general agriculture, apiculture, credit, live stock rearing, insurance, and clubs. In Limburg, savings' bank deposits by farmers have trebled in twelve years. In Luxemburg, nearly all the land was unproductive twenty-five years ago. The waste land is now good pasture, and the other lands producing excellent crops. In Namur the crop yields have largely increased, and the cost of production has been lessened. In Hainant, however, there is yet much room for improvement, it being noted that, out of 40,000 farmers, only 8,000 yet take an agricultural paper, and, in order to secure an attendance in some sections at an agricultural course meeting, the Supervisors have to be very careful to avoid days on which there are ball games or cock-fights. With that one exception, the record of farm advancement in Belgium is said to have been marvellous.

The Flower of Country Life.

The "Survey-Idea in Country Life Work" is the title of an address by Dr. L. H. Bailey, before a conference of rural leaders at Cornell University during the past summer. What Dr. Bailey had in mind is a species of stock-taking in rural communities, in order to get at the facts on which fresh lines of action for the betterment of farming and country life may be founded. That is held to be the scientific way of making improvement; in other words, get a thorough grasp of the conditions, and then supply knowledge to suit. Dr. Bailey believes that once the facts are all known, the application will take care of itself. Necessarily, he holds the stock-taking should be very complete, and cover geography, physiography, climate, resources, soils; and then the farming, its industries, markets, business, profit and loss, homes, health, institutions, modes of expression, and outlook. New York State has been delving into this field in its orchard and agricultural surveys, some of the County Representatives of the Department of Agriculture in Ontario are working on this idea, and the Canadian Conservation Com-