

The Education of the Farmers' Son.

We may consider this subject from two different standpoints: First, that part of his education which he naturally receives in working upon the farm; and second, that part which he usually receives apart from the farm, dealing more particularly with those subjects, which, though often neglected, are of greater practical importance to him.

The education which a boy naturally receives in working upon a farm is by no means as limited as some would imagine, for farming educates; all things educate, but in different directions; some educate upward, some downward, some are elevating, some degrading. The educational influences of the farm are many. In no other occupation is there exercise for so many of the faculties. Growing various crops, raising domestic animals, using the latest machinery and labor-saving devices, all should tend to quicken the observation, and mature the reasoning powers.

To the farmers' son the round of the year's labor has in it something of continual interest. In growing crops and raising animals, the natural laws and phenomena relating to daily work are more obvious than in ordinary occupations. The season's mean more than merely heat and cold; the weather more than pleasant skies and gloomy days.

In this farm education the boy sees the business of the father go on from day to day and from a very early age he begins to take part in it, and soon becomes a member of the firm. From the time he begins to feed the chickens or drive the cows, he becomes a member of the establishment, and has a sense of responsibility in the management of affairs. His estimate of his own importance is increased with his increased actual usefulness, and never will a boy amount to anything unless he have a sensible, though it may be a large idea of his own importance.

In no other occupation can a boy be so well trained to habits of industry without detriment to his health or intelligence. In no other calling will a boy receive such a sound education in prudence and forethought. Most of the work which he sees going on, or takes part in, is for the future or unseen results, rather than for immediate or obvious uses. Each step is an education in forethought, a making provision for the future. The ground is ploughed and grain sowed for a future crop;

Provisions for man and beast are stored up for use long months ahead; animals are reared, requiring months of care before they are, comparatively speaking, of much value; orchards are set out, which will not bear fruit for years to come, and so on through all the varied work of the farm, scarcely anything is for to-day, nearly all is for the future. The whole work of the farm is an education in habits of industry and thrift, an education in providing for the future, an education in patience in awaiting results.

Success in life depends upon overcoming difficulties, rather than in the avoidance of them, on industry rather than genius, and the education received on the farm is eminently adapted to strengthen along this line. Thus during the boy's early life on the farm, is laid the foundation upon which a noble manhood may be built. But, as with all building, it is important that this foundation be well laid, for upon it depends the value of the whole superstructure.

We have been mentioning merely a few of the educational influences which surround the boy on the farm. These in themselves are good, but a great deal more is needed. In this advanced age of civilization and competition, perhaps no other occupation requires men of broader or more liberal education. The farmers' son of today should be posted in the principles of science governing the various branches of agriculture.

Could a uniform system be laid down, that every farmer could employ with equal success, there would be no need of this extended scientific research now advocated. But it is impossible for the wisest to establish any system of tillage, which shall be applicable to all climates, seasons, soils and situations. But one may ask: "Would you have us all practical geologists, chemists, botanists, entomologists, physiologists, etc., etc.?" Yes, we certainly would, and why not? The successful farmers of the coming day will be scientific farmers. No doubt some will question us here again, and point to the successful farmers of to-day, who in early life had not the advantage of such instruction. We grant you there are many of these, but they have acquired this information by a life of toil, observation and experiment, attended often with failures. And it behooves us to profit by their experience, and study in our youth those scientific principles which have cost them a life of toil and observation to find out.