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EDITORIAL.

Peanut butter and synthetic milk we have, but the cow is still on the job.

The best method of analyzing an old soil is by means of a well-conducted fertilizer experiment.

Music, indeed, to the corn grower's ear was the roaring rattle of the cutting box, as it whacked up the heavily eared stalks, depositing them in a rat-proof, weather-proof storage where both stalk and kernel would be preserved in ideal condition for winter's or next summer's use.

For all the difficulty in getting silos filled this fall, the corn grower with a silo is much more fortunate than his neighbor without. And come down to comparison of crops, there has been less risk and difficulty in ensiling corn than in harvesting oats. It is, therefore, no year to dampen the ardor for corn and ensilage. Rather the reverse.

All growth comes from food, be it in the animal or plant kingdoms. We must remember this point in the care of our animals, and also in the growing of our farm crops. Feed the animal that it may produce food for the plants, which in turn go to feed more animals to produce more plants or larger crops.

In filling the silo at Weldwood this year we noticed two facts: (1) The crop on a tilled hollow across the near end of the field was at least twice as heavy as on similar undrained soil at the other end; (2) The full loads drew as easily over the drained portion as the first shock or so did through the mud and water at the far end of the field, where we commenced to load.

Scientists, like the rest of us, learn through experience. They have found, for instance, that mere laboratory analysis of collected soil samples is inadequate as a means of determining the needs of the fields in respect to fertilization and other treatment. As a recent American bulletin puts it: "Nature's great laboratory is in the field, and a study of her methods can not fail to offer many valuable suggestions, and in some cases, is the only means of solving her problems. It is through a combination of field and laboratory investigations that an understanding of this extremely complex body—the soil—can be reached."

For a generation or more the railroads of the United States have been making efforts to increase the number of farmers in certain regions, thus trying to increase revenues derived from hauling farm products. Within the past decade these efforts have been extended to include instruction and demonstration. Other companies also assist in promoting agriculture, but the railroads are the most prominent. More than three-fourths of the railroad mileage of the country is operated by companies which engage in special efforts to promote agriculture. It is a business proposition. More traffic means more dividends. Their efforts bear eloquent recognition of the fundamental importance of agriculture in the scheme of commerce and industry. Yet in all fiscal adjustments the farmer's interests are the last to receive attention. Even the railroads would rather "educate" him than to assist by lowering freight rates.

The Progress of School Reform.

In this issue we are favored with a further communication from Prof. S. B. McCready, Director of Elementary Agricultural Education for Ontario, which it is hoped will tend, by promoting discussion, to hasten greatly needed reforms in the public-school education of the country. It is a gain that the official spokesman of the Provincial Department of Education assures us that the authorities are "not satisfied" and are trying to make things better. It would be remarkable if the Public School Inspectors, than whom we know of no more zealous officers, and upon whom devolves the duty of overseeing the schools in accordance with the existing system and text books, did not report their schools as "making advances," which assuredly they are in such directions as buildings, teachers' salaries, equipment, and, we may believe, in pedagogic methods, though we need not forget that there have been not a few teacherless schools and others poorly attended and unimproved.

It is hardly likely that the observations of so travelled and well-informed an observer as J. O. Duke were of purely local application, otherwise there would have been some dissent other than that of a departmental official.

The condition of the schools, Government reports and Departmental regulations are not a secret, and the results show how the process of educating the youth away from the interests and occupations of the land has inexorably gone on laying the foundation of tendencies toward which other causes which promote the growth of town population and industry at the expense of the country, contribute, until now the farms and their homes are almost hopelessly under-manned and distraught.

Furthermore, Prof. McCready will recall that earlier in the present year he made use of about a page in one issue of The Farmer's Advocate to describe what is being done in Ontario for "elementary agricultural education," by what might be called extra-departmental effort. A great deal of supplementary or optional work even to the extent of bonusing may be undertaken, and yet little real progress be made in affecting the warp and woof of the system, normal- and model-school training, its text books, inspectorial oversight, and regular public-school curricula. This is aptly illustrated by Prof. McCready in a recent letter to the Christian Guardian, which, like other disinterested observers, deplores existing conditions. He claims that since 1904 (eight years ago), the public schools have been "gradually working" into the nature-study extension courses directed from the Ontario Agricultural College, but this year he tells us that but "110 schools are carrying out work under this head," while there are some 5,000 or more rural public schools in the Province of Ontario! Just when the other 4,900 will be overtaken by the nature-study courses, will depend upon the longevity of the officary. This is too "gradual."

It would be pertinent also if Prof. McCready would point out by what training the Department of Education is better equipping the public-school inspectors to so direct school work that it will be more sympathetically and helpfully related to rural life and interests, or wherein, apart from the time that some of the teachers spend at the O. A. C., the teacher training in the atmosphere of cities and city schools can be expected to promote those objects.

Had the Ontario Education Department been actuated by an earnest purpose to improve the relation of the public-school system to agriculture and farm life, it would have gladly embraced the opportunity to take an important step in that direction when the text books were revised a few years ago, or would have increased instead of diminishing the attention to such phases of work in a new normal-school syllabus promulgated a couple of years since. To point out these unfortunate conditions and the need for thoroughgoing reform, is not pessimism or "knocking," but doing a public service and befriending the Department of Education. Prof. McCready very well knows that if the schools are to be made efficient in the directions for which The Farmer's Advocate is contending, the work must be begun deeper down and in the quarters which we have indicated.

The Winter's Store.

Notwithstanding all that is said by city-folk about the money the farmer must be making these days—it is always easy to imagine the other fellow must be getting rich—the fact remains that he isn't deriving much income beyond wages and interest on investment. Many are not even making that. The farmer will never get rich very fast. There will always be too many parasitic or secondary classes living on his labor to permit of that. At least we anticipate such will be the case for a good while to come, and what surplus earnings these classes fail to levy will be inevitably capitalized in the form of increased farm values, to bear interest or rental charge thereafter. Him, therefore, who esteems wealth-getting highly, farm life will probably never attract.

But there are some other things which do appeal mightily. For one thing the home life. The farm home is the ideal home. Labor there is to be sure—labor, privation and hardships at times—touches of loneliness now and then, perhaps, and demands upon patience and fortitude. All these go to develop character. Withal there is a flavor of private domesticity about it which city life is denied. The farm home and the farm business are so intimately interwoven that they possess a common interest. All the family have to do with the enterprise, and the farm and fields are as much a part of the home as is the household. There is something fine about that, which only a city resident with office or factory employment can appreciate. Particularly in autumn and winter does this seem to appeal. With barns, granaries and silos filled with fodder, and cellars with vegetables and fruits, with fuel in wood shed or cellar, the husbandman sees before him concrete results of his summer's work, and feels some such sense of satisfaction as must be experienced by the thrifty squirrel with a store of creature comforts about him.

Provided thus against hunger, cold and storm, and with a stock of animal life to furnish employment and interest during the winter months, the farmer is in a position to envy no man on earth, and needs only a well-stocked reading table, and reasonable amount of social intercourse, to complete the conditions for an ideal occupation and ideal home life.

The paramount agricultural lesson of 1912 has been the need of drainage. Duty-free ditching machines would help to supply the lack.