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IN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION THE GUIDE

Denmark - A Farm Kingdom

III.—Rural Technical Schools Prepare Youth for Life Work

By A. McLeod

The Danish Folk Schools were intended to be and are inspirational schools—their aim is to teach ideas, to make the pupils think and will and feel and judge. The schools have accomplished their avowed purpose; they spiritualize and inspire the rural people.

One of the first tangible results was to inspire the people to new endeavor in all the other schools. There had been a system of public elementary schools in Denmark since 1814 and attendance on these was compulsory. These schools were at the time of the establishment of the Folk Schools, say from 1864 to 1871, considered by the Danes to be effective elementary schools and they were effective judged, for example, by the standard of our elementary public schools in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta today. Attendance was compulsory and almost universal, the teachers were mostly educated married men. Teaching was a profession and the position of the teacher was permanent. These schools were as ours are today, based on the classical idea that education in schooling in bookish knowledge, the pupils learned their lessons by memory, but they used the classical method better than we do today.

Improvement in Elementary Schools

But what was good enough for the Danes before they took Grundtvig to their hearts was not good enough thereafter. The establishment and success of the Folk Schools reacted on the elementary schools and sent a new spirit down through these elementary schools. Great advances were made in rural elementary schools chiefly along the line of making the education given in the elementary school a preparation for rural life. This was effected chiefly by rooting the learning in the soil, by requiring the teacher to teach out of his own mouth and soul and by using the everyday things and experiences of life as the instruments of teaching. In 1899 the progress made in the preceding 35 years was gathered up and put into a new school law, providing improved management, increased training for teachers, larger salaries and a better course of studies besides many other advances. Again in 1904 salaries were increased and the hands of the local authorities strengthened in the control of the elementary schools and their responsibilities increased. The teaching in the rural elementary schools is differentiated from that in the urban schools and from the first day the boy or girl sets foot inside the rural school door, there begins a definite course of education that tends to fit both him and her for open country life and make them love it. This is the key note of the rural elementary school.

The urban schools aim to educate for urban life. Four-sevenths of the elementary teachers are men, three-sevenths are women. The course of teacher training covers three years. Teaching is a recognized profession, the teacher is looked up to and well paid, his tenure of position is permanent and he has a large measure of liberty in teaching. The school house is the place where the teacher lives and the class rooms are simply a part of the school equipment. Elementary education is free, including books, materials and accessories, few text books are used, but there are good libraries. Attendance is compulsory from 7 to 14 years of age for six days a week and the maximum number of pupils in a class is 35.

Study Course Rooted to the Soil

The chief subjects of study, or as they put it the chief instruments of education, are religion, reading, writing, farm accounting, arithmetic, geography, song, drawing, handwork, gymnastics, hygiene, nature study, domestic handicrafts, farm natural science. The schools are not all run on a fixed schedule in our schools and railroads are—in some schools pupils go only half the day or two-thirds of the day, in others they go all day, the local authorities determining this and many other matters according to local conditions and needs. Text books are used to a very limited extent. A writer on the Danish rural schools truly summarizes the work of the rural elementary schools as follows: "The rural elementary schools of Denmark emphasize to a remarkable degree the fundamental school subjects and do the work in them in a most thoroughgoing

fashion; but at the same time they have seen the way clear to root the entire course of study to the soil in such a way that they are able to inculcate in the pupils love of soil tilling as a life calling."

Let me again emphasize the fact that neither the rural elementary schools nor the Folk Schools, which are the two fundamental schools of Denmark, are in any sense technical schools. They do not aim to teaching farming and they don't do it—they aim to develop ideas and they do it. They are pre-eminently spiritual schools. They are not knowledge schools, that is, they do not aim to fill the pupils with facts for examinations. They do aim to give the rural youth that underlying training of the soul which will fit them to receive technical training as farmers or other open country citizens.

The important facts to keep in mind are (1) that the Folk Schools are a unique type of school, with new ideals and distinctive methods. They are not an old type of school improved; there were no schools before them, of the same kind. They are a new species. They relate back to and are based on the teaching of the Great Teacher and his methods; (2) when the Grundtvig spirit and the Folk Schools, which are that spirit incarnate, inspired a change in the rural elementary schools, that change was not a mere improvement, but a change in ideals and methods so great that it may be said to have been right-about-face. The aim of the schools is to accomplish a different thing from what the elementary used to accomplish and to do it in a different way.

Technical Rural Schools

In addition to inspiring the rural elementary school, the Folk Schools inspired the establishment of three technical rural schools: Local agricultural schools; rural schools of household economics; and rural schools for smallholders.

The local agricultural schools are just what their names indicate, they give the farm youth technical training in farming. There are two requisites for admittance, actual experience in farm work and sufficient spiritual education to make an idealistic foundation for a farm citizen, which education is usually got by attendance on a Folk School. The aim is not simply to improve a youth industrially in order that he will know how to plow and sow and reap so well that he may make a competent farm servant. The aim is to educate him materially so that he will be industrially efficient and in addition to educate him spiritually so that he will be an efficient citizen of a free country. The man may have to work as a farm servant, but that makes little difference so long as he has the ideals of a self governing, independent Danish citizen.

These schools, like the Folk Schools, are privately owned and controlled, but 23 of them receive state aid. There is no fixed mechanical course of training that everyone must take, on the contrary there is the greatest diversity in the courses, short courses, long courses, varied courses. The following will give an idea of a six months' course of study for farmers' sons:—

Land—Inheritance, ownership, law for, effect on character, national songs.
Chemistry—In relation to every-day farm life.
Physics—Mechanics, heat, electricity.
Plants—Culture, structure, life, diseases.
Drawing—Mechanical, farm plans.
Surveying—Common field work, field plans.
Danish—Language, composition, public speaking.
Calculation—Farm, business, co-operative.
Accounts—Farm, cash and bank accounts, field, crop, fodder and milk records.
History—Agricultural.
Gymnastics—Open country.
Sells—Kinds, treatment.
Dairying—Milk, butter, cheese, bacon, silage.
Farm Management—Farm organization, rotation, seed laws, co-operation, credit, banking.
Machinery—Implement, tools, power, trials, experiments, use, preservation.
Plant Culture—Soil, fertilizers, seedling, harvesting, seed culture, weeds, plant diseases.
Animals—Anatomy, hygiene, cow, sheep, pig, race, breeds, breeding.
Co-operation—Class coherence, credit organizations, commercial and social co-operative societies, political co-operation, discussion.
Citizenship—Laws, government, franchise, social and business relations, national songs, public speaking.

All sorts of practical farm work are carried on.

The cost of a nine months course is under \$90. This may be followed by

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