

THE MINE AND THE FARM.

Said the head of the Agricultural College, a few weeks ago, 'We may talk of mines and manufactories and fisheries as important industries, but, after all, the solid foundation of industries, on which the permanent prosperity of Nova Scotia, as well as other countries of the world must rest, is agriculture.' I rather take to the man who magnifies his office, his trade, or his profession, but the liking does not preclude one from taking exception to the method of bestowal, or to the measure of the praise. The assertion that agriculture is the base of prosperity, and is the backbone of the province may be accepted without hesitation, perhaps, by a majority of the people as correct, and yet I am one of those who think that it is neither, wholly. I am, notwithstanding all the praise that has been bestowed on farming, still of the opinion that not to her farms, or her forests or her fisheries must Nova Scotia turn if ever she aspires to become a populous and prosperous province of this great Dominion. In making this assertion it is not in my mind to weaken the faith of any in the importance of the farming, fishing and lumbering industries. These are all of great importance, yet, while admitting it, I again venture to assert that if Nova Scotia is to have a grand and a great future, it must be brought about by the development of the vast—aye! incalculable—mineral wealth with which she has been so bountifully endowed. The statement that our province's greatest asset lies in her mines and minerals is met with the counter assertion—as I have stated—that farming is the backbone of the province. In a sense, of course, it is true, but it is not the whole truth, in the sense meant to be conveyed. No matter the consistency of ones backbone, he cannot hope to win out, if he be short of arm or feeble of limb. If by being the 'backbone' of the province it is meant to be conveyed that farming is and must remain its mainstay, I am inclined to demur. I venture the prediction that the time is coming quickly, when, if, in Nova Scotia, farming can claim its thousands, mining and manufactures will claim their tens of thousands. The stars of farming, and forestry and fishing may not wane, most assuredly shall wax the star of mining; and if we are patriotic, if we really desire the welfare of our province, we cannot wish it otherwise. We speak of the civilized Western, and benighted Eastern nations. When did the Western nations leave the darkness behind and emerge into the light? When they awoke to the fact that there were more far reaching purposes in the life than peaceful pastoral pursuits. Why is it that Europe and America are greatly in advance, in civilization, of Asia and Africa? Is it not because the two last named continents rest almost wholly on an agricultural basis? Of the nations of Europe how is it that Spain and Portugal, Denmark and Holland and even Italy play so unimportant a part in international politics? For a similar reason. Why is it that, in spite of emigration, Britain has, in a comparatively short period of time, added twenty millions to her population? Solely on account of industrial activity following on mineral development.

Why has Germany, in recent years, forged so rapidly to the front? Why is it that her emigration has decreased from 200,000 to about 30,000 persons a year? Why is it that in Germany wages have increased, in a short time, 25 per cent., while in some other European

countries they are stationary, almost? Why has Germany become the second most important country as regards textile manufactures; the second as regards shipping, and the third in ship-building? Is it because, of late years, the labors of her husbandmen have been more abundantly blessed? No, but because, in a back bench, because in the matter of mineral, or to be precise, iron production, she has leaped to second place among the nations of the world. Will those, who assert that agriculture is the solid foundation on which the permanent prosperity of Nova Scotia and of the other countries of the world must rest, explain how it happens that notwithstanding the great decline in agriculture during the past half century Germany's prestige, prominence and prosperity has vastly increased? Fifty years ago the agriculturists comprised half the population of Germany; now they number about a fourth of the whole, while the numbers engaged in mining, manufactures and other industries comprise two-fifths of the total.

Is it due to the extent and fertility of her wheat and cotton fields, to the numbers engaged in tilling the soil, that the United States is to-day so great a country? Scarcely. Rather is it due to the fact that her peoples discovered that 'there is a mine for silver and a place for gold where they find it; that iron is taken out of the rock and copper is molten out of stone'. When the U. S. discovered, and profited by the discovery, that nature's gifts, hidden in the ground, were as unlimited as those exposed on the surface, then did she shake herself, as a strong man awakening from sleep, then forged she to the front with amazing bounds.

When Japan awoke to a realization of the significance of the words 'Western civilization' her people became dominated with big desires and ardent longings, which pushed the nation forward, in one generation, beyond all the advances made in thousands of years. Not until Japan had familiarized herself with the white man's ways, and mastered the white man's methods did she really discover that mining and manufactures played the leading part in transforming a semi-barbaric horde into an energetic and civilized community.

In answer to the question "What is Nova Scotia's greatest need?" there have been given as answers 'More confidence in her resources'; 'More capital'; 'More intensive farming' and 'More population'. At the present time I will refer to the last answer—'population'.

A writer in a Halifax paper, declared lately: "Population is the keynote of the situation . . . What Nova Scotia needs most of all is population, and indirectly that will benefit other unsatisfactory conditions. If there were 750,000 to 1,000,000 people in Nova Scotia, there would be better roads, more traffic for the railways, more trade for the business men. . . Contractors, builders, farmers and machinists of all kinds require more population." The statement, I think, is essentially correct, though in some minor aspects, it may be open to discussion. While some of the older countries could at times, especially in such times as the present, dispense, with profit, perhaps, with numbers of their population, there is no gaining, saying the statement that it is essential to the prosperity of a young country to have an ever increasing population. That being conceded the question to be answered.

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