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THE DIGNITY OF A CALLING IS ITS UTILITY.

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EDITORIAL.

 All the many interesting problems with which the educational authorities of our province have to deal, there is perhaps no other one which has of late been demanding more attention than the question of placing agriculture upon the curriculum of our common schools. It is a subject about which much might be written pro and con. We at once acknowledge that it would be unfair to require children in the ward schools of our cities and towns to devote a portion of their time and attention to the study of a subject, in which the majority of them would not have more than a mere passing interest. Not however but that we think that a knowledge of the fundamental principles of agriculture would be of service to an intelligent citizen of our province, be he merchant or farmer, for it is generally acknowledged that if Ontario is better adapted for one thing more than another, it is for agriculture. In fact it is and has been the basis of her remarkable prosperity.

To those that have children in attendance at our country schools the question should certainly be one of vital importance. Indeed we might almost say that it is merely the old question, "How shall we keep our boys on the farm?" clothed in a new garb and presented to us in another form. The course of study in the rural school is not such as is, at all likely to develop in the "brainless" country boy a love for his father's profession. As he proceeds with his studies the tendency is, under existing circumstances, that he will become more and more engrossed in the prospect of the boundless fields of knowledge in the distance to the almost utter neglect of those old familiar fields around him, which, unknown to him, contain such a marvellous store of Nature's truths and wonders. Such a boy with all the aspirations of youth springing up within him cannot surely be blamed if he seeks to satisfy the craving of his mind for food by reaching out to draw from sources not closely connected with the operations of a farm or the work of the husbandman. This we believe and know to be the reason why many of the best and brightest of our boys forsake the quiet of the country for the larger excitement of the city with its greater possibilities along many lines. The trouble is that they have all their eyes seen nothing but the practical side of agriculture, they have never been shown that there is a larger and to them a more interesting one. What a tale underlies the development of a grain of wheat from seed-time to harvest, or the development of an apple from bud to fruit. That there is a place in our country schools for agriculture with some of the rudiments of the kindred sciences we firmly believe. If some of the elementary principles of botany and zoology for instance were taught the scholars, in what a different light would familiar objects appear to them. There is certainly no place where a slight knowledge of these three sciences would be more interesting than in the rural school, surrounded as it is, by so many things from which an interested and enthusiastic teacher might draw forcible object lessons.

For instance what a new interest would the boy of twelve have in the boulders large and small, which are, but should not be, strewn over the surface of his father's fields, did he know that thousands of years ago they came there by a sea voyage imbedded in ice floes from the regions of the now frozen North. As it now is, the only interest he has in them is to find how he can best plan to go fishing when he hears that the stone-boat is to come out from its winter quarters. And what an interesting story is that of the fertilization of flowers by the busy insects in the summer time. Such instances might be cited by the score and yet many more of such would still remain to be told. Every one must agree that the time has surely come when something should be done in this matter. And just now we are very pleased to notice that a move has been made in the right direction. Some time ago there was compiled by two officers of our own institution an admirable little work on agriculture, designed by the authors for use in public schools, which, while not over-burdened with scientific terms was still fairly comprehensive. The success of this work is already assured, and now there is offered to the public the first of what the author proposes to make a series of science primers for similar use. We refer to the "Agriculture Science Primer on Geology," lately issued by Prof. Panton, our professor of Natural History. In his introduction the author, after outlining a plan for the effective teaching of the principles of the science to children in rural schools, says, "In this way, we shall soon have boys and girls, men and women, upon the farm, capable of seeing in the soil a source of pleasure unknown to those unable to read the great Book of Nature, as it reveals a scientific knowledge of the earth." And we must say that we consider the present little booklet very well adapted for the furtherance of the object which its writer had in view. There is room, even a necessity for just such works along the lines of Botany, Zoology, and Entomology and we feel sure that they will meet with a hearty welcome from those of our school teachers who have been longing for concise and interesting elementary text-books on these subjects.

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Now that our first and second year men have completed their special short dairy course, they again find time to "sleep o' nights," and it is certainly a great consolation not only to themselves but also to others less enthusiastically interested in the noble science of dairying. Dairying is of prime importance in its own time and place but it lost most of its charm for our fellows when it meant six o'clock breakfast. They all realized fully the importance of the instruction given, and they wished to receive it but they still consider that it is too great a strain of work near the end of a term to have to take all their regular lectures as well as the work at the Dairy School. There is one thing certain it makes a very long day for those unfortunates who start to take lectures at 6.30 a. m. and have to remain at the Dairy until 5 p. m. or later. One smart third year man expressed it