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EDITORIAL.

SHALL I ATTEND THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE?

"Will it pay me to take a course at the agricultural college?" (Guelph, Truro, Ste Anne, or Winnipeg, as the case may be) is a question which hundreds of Canadian farm boys are now resolving in their minds, and which the letters published last week and this from successful students and ex-students of the Ontario and Nova Scotia Colleges should help to answer wisely. "Will it pay? Will I be better off financially at the end of twenty years if I spend two or four winters at the College (costing one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars a winter) than if I stay at home, work, and save my money?" Other boys are wondering whether it would be better to take a course at the agricultural college than a couple more years at the High School.

The answer in each case must depend largely upon the boy, but for the average bright, level-headed Canadian farmer's son, equipped with a fair public-school education—all the better if he has spent a year or two in High School as well—we believe both questions may be answered without hesitation in the affirmative. However, no worthy ex-student would think of gauging the benefit merely by the extra money his college education enables him to make. The courses are and should be practical, for only a practical curriculum can sufficiently attract and effectually uplift the farm boys of the country. The worth and dignity of practical knowledge is very properly exalted, but the greatest benefit from a useful education is not the dollars and cents there may be in it, but the mental and manual discipline developed in the student, the intelligent interest aroused in his life-work, and the opening of his eyes to the vast field of knowledge about him—a field which his course, so far from exhausting, merely qualifies him to enter and explore in after life. It gives him a key to unlock the mysteries of agricultural science, which rivals astronomy in its fascinating interest, and is fraught with far more real, substantial benefits to mankind. We once heard a farm boy say that if he were going to be a farmer, he would want to take a course in astronomy or theology, so that he might have an interesting hobby to enliven his life-work. If that lad would take a course in an agricultural college, he would change his mind on that score. He would make a hobby of his occupation. His problem would be how to master the intricacies of soil chemistry, manures, fertilizers, the life-histories and means of combating weeds, insects and fungous pests, plant-breeding, selecting seed, farm forestry, and a thousand and one other lines of practical research, now so generally neglected. It would tend to keep him out of ruts of practice, make him a progressive, thinking farmer, and stimulate a joy and interest in his work. Work would become a pleasure; and when work is a pleasure, life is a pleasure.

"What all will I learn that is so useful?" we hear the young man ask. For answer, consult the various college calendars, free upon application, and read the description of the Guelph and Truro courses in the 1906 Christmas number of "The Farmer's Advocate." Briefly, we may inform him that, in addition to a deal of practice in live-stock judging, as well as many useful arts, such as grafting and the like, he will obtain a surprising amount of the latest and best theory concerning farm practice, crops, soils, breeds of domestic animals, breeding, feeds, feeding and care of stock; gardening, orcharding, and home adornment; veterinary science and practice; poultry,

beekeeping, running engines, farm carpentering and blacksmithing. Besides, he will receive systematic instruction in the chemistry of soils, fertilizers, insecticides, feeds, and the like; a course in physics, covering such vital questions as ventilation and drainage; the botany of weeds and weed seeds, with practice in their identification; a course in entomology, or the study of insects; and something of bacteriology, or the study of germs. Besides all this, he will receive a valuable training in the use of the mother tongue, not only in writing, but in public-speaking as well. Many other excellent features are included which cannot be even enumerated here.

But after all is said, the chief recommendation of the agricultural college in each neighborhood must be the records of its ex-students, and, while many of these are acquitting themselves with genuine credit in public as well as private capacities, it must be confessed that in past years not a few ex-students have, by their foolish enterprises and lack of judgment in applying what they learned, soured whole neighborhoods against the idea of agricultural education. This has been the more unfortunate because the failures were advertised far and wide, whereas the successes usually escaped much comment. But until some satisfactory explanation is advanced to explain the disappointing results that have from time to time transpired, many parents are bound to hesitate about sending their sons to such a place.

To our way of thinking, the explanation is not difficult. In the early days agricultural education was a new thing, and many mistakes were sure to be made. Good instructors, capable of imparting sound agricultural advice, were rare. Then, as to the students, while some of these were of the very highest class, it was inevitable that quite a few should be attracted at first who had more enterprise than judgment, and no college can make good farmers of that sort of boys. Not a few city lads were included in the classes, and worst of all were the Old Country remittance chaps.

To-day it is all quite different. Experience and selection have raised the standard of the faculty, while, among the student body, the city-bred boy and remittance man have all but disappeared. For the most part, now, the agricultural colleges are attracting a select list of the pick of farmers' sons, whose sensible behavior afterwards on their own homesteads is assuring to the neighbor who contemplates sending his son. There are exceptions, but they do not disprove the rule. The agricultural college is recognized as a safe place to send the right kind of a boy, provided he is not sent there too young. No boy should enter an agricultural college before he is eighteen years old, and twenty is better. He needs as much farm experience as possible to mature his judgment and develop a discriminating habit of mind that will prevent him from taking anything for granted, even from the most responsible sources. If the college course simply filled the boy's mind with knowledge and principles, it would be unfortunate, the more so because what is knowledge to-day is often discounted to-morrow. Besides, of all occupations, agriculture is the most variable, and the hardest to run by rule or rote. It requires, in addition to knowledge of principles, shrewd judgment and discrimination. It is extremely important to train the individual's judgment and make him a thinker. He cannot be so trained if he is too young and inexperienced to size up, and, if need be, criticise what he hears. The worst drawback to collegiate training in agriculture is the tendency of inexperienced boys to swallow opinions and general principles unhesitatingly as gospel

truth. This can best be guarded against by fortifying prospective candidates with age and experience.

But why multiply arguments? Surely most of the farm boys of Canada who expect to engage in the noblest and one of the most difficult of all callings have seen enough and heard enough to convince them of the wisdom of taking a two-years' course in a good agricultural college. Two or three hundred dollars will defray the necessary expenses, and seven months for each of two winters is a short time to spend, considering the advantages to be gained. In the American Republic the attendance at these courses is increasing by leaps and bounds. Will Canada lag behind? Where hundreds now attend these institutions, we should have thousands. Sit down, young man, and think it over, and then send in your application early and secure admission. You will never regret it. The college course and college life will enlighten, inform and broaden you out. It will make you a better farmer, a better husband and father, and a better citizen of the neighborhood and of the nation at large. It will lift you out of the neighborhood groove and introduce you to the larger agricultural outlook of the world at large. Will it pay? Ask those who have been there.

GOOD OUTLOOK FOR FRUIT PRICES.

Thus far during the present season growers have been receiving good prices for the bush fruits, and the outlook for the larger classes, including apples, appear to be equally favorable. The demand consequent upon prevailing "good times" is keen in the cities and towns, the consumption of fruit being everywhere upon the increase. While the crop conditions in Britain have improved, the European and American crops are reported much smaller, while in Canada, according to the latest report of the Fruit Division, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, the prospect for apples has declined seriously for the early and fall sorts, the indications being for an average crop of winter fruit. A fair crop of peaches is promised, but in case of pears there has been an almost unusual reduction in prospects, and plums are less encouraging than they were a month ago. Outside of Southern Ontario and British Columbia the grape crop has been reported as likely to ripen imperfectly, and even in the more favored districts weather conditions may yet greatly affect the output. Farmers, as well as those who make fruit-growing a specialty, are therefore well advised in husbanding the crop with very great care and looking for high prices in contracting deliveries ahead.

THE BOY AND HIS FATHER.

"The Farmer's Advocate" has been directing public attention to the unfortunate tendencies of our educational systems in driving the rising farm populations to the cities and towns. Given proper ideals in the home, there is no place in all the world equal to the farm for rearing a good class of boys. It is the right place to be born, and whether the boy remains there or not depends, as we have shown, largely upon the school, and it also depends upon how the father deals with the son. Wallace's Farmer goes straight to the headland, when it says don't give the boy the worst plow, and a balky team when you start him plowing; don't set him at the meanest cow to milk; never hand him the heaviest fork or the dullest hoe to work with or put him in the garden where there are more tough clods to the square rod than there are to the acre in the field. Give him