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THE ATTRACTIVENESS AND REMUNERATION OF FARMING.

The two features that make any calling in life worth living are *attractiveness and remuneration.* The life that is unattractive to the person leading it becomes a burden, and the sooner it is deserted the better for that party. It cannot be denied that there are those who are totally unfitted for country life. In the country they are as much out of their sphere as a fish would be out of water. That which attracts them is houses and people and the noise of busy life. The wide open country, with the great distances between the houses, the lowing of cattle and the soughing of the wind are features which would make life intolerable to them. They would have none of it. The city, and city only will give them satisfaction. Such people are fortunate to have the city to flee unto.

There is another (very large class) of people who are just the reverse. They are fitted for country life. They would be miserable away from the green fields and living creatures on the farm.

It was a wise and merciful Creator who made men so widely different in temperament—fitting one man for this mode of life and another for that; who has moreover so ordered things that each of us can as a rule find that mode of life, which is calculated to suit to his own peculiar temperament. Where a man fails to find his proper place in life, and has taken up that, for which he is unfitted, he is greatly to be pitted.

To the rising generation country life is far from being as attractive it was to the generations preceding. Why is it so? is a question which many have asked over and over again, without being able to get a satisfactory answer. Is it because we have not the conveniences and comforts in the country that are to be found in town? I think not. Compared with those who have gone before us, the home life of the farmer to-day is far more comfortable than was that of the farmer fifty years ago. This is an age of luxury in many respects. Where our fathers had one comfort or convenience, we have many. The country boy then had to rough it and hustle for what he got. His education was obtained through physical exertion and suffering. It was from two to four miles to the log school house, and no matter what the weather or condition of roads, he was usually found in his place. This writer for five years rode seven miles each way to and from Washington College. There were a dozen other boys who did the same thing. The ex-superintendent of public schools was one of them. This journey was performed mostly on horseback. The only riding vehicle on the place (besides the family carriage) was a two-wheeled gig affair. This riding was not considered a hardship then. Where is the boy that would endure it to-day? The boy is not to be found who is skilled as a rider. Every boy now has his own buggy and horse. The riders are to be found only among the few fox hunters. To the next generation it will be a lost art. Many a boy in that day prided himself in his skill in subduing the unruly horse. It was a manly sport and brought much good to the boy.

With all the physical hardships that were entailed upon him, the boy of a generation gone, loved his home and the country life. You will find on many farms in the country to-day the virile old man, who was taught to love his surroundings, because he had to pull up through so many disadvantages. The man who has been trained to hardships is not so strongly disposed to seek an easy life, as the man who has been softly and tenderly raised. There are those who like to overcome difficulties, who are never as so well pleased, as when they are brought face to face with some hard proposition that calls for the exercise of all their skill and energy. For this reason I do not think country life is being deserted because of its hardships.

This is a restless age. There is a lack of fixedness in every department of life. The things we have not, are the things that we seem to crave. Railroads, steamboats, automobiles, good roads, telegraphs and telephones have brought town and county too close together. The countryman sees more of town people and town life than he ever saw before. It has made its impression upon him. Unfortunately he sees mostly the fair side of that life; it looks good to him, and he seeks it, regardless of his fitness for it.

I happened to be at a farmer's house one day when his two boys were having a visit from a cousin who was on a furlough from the army. Both boys were wild about the army. They put on the cousins' soldier clothes and paraded before their father, begging him to allow them to enlist. So it is, not only with boys, but with grown ups as well. The city visitor sets them wild, and causes them to be unmindful of the blessings they have.

It is in the human nature to become dissatisfied with our lot, when we see or think we see, something better opening up. There are few of us who do not think the other man is faring better than we are; so we are strongly disposed to envy him. The most contented people in their home life and surroundings, whom it has been my good fortune to live among, were a people most remote from city attractions. They were not a dead people either. In many respects they were thoroughly alive and progressive. The city bee was not buzzing in their ears and they were not longing after the unattainable.

There is no doubt that country life can be more attractive than it is. It is up to those of us who live in the country, and who would have our children take their places on the farm, to not only utilize the forces we have at hand for that purpose, but to devise and put in action other means.

So much for the attractive side of country life. Now for the remunerative side. The man who tills a farm for a livelihood is not working a gold mine. He has no get-rich-quick scheme before him. His margin for making money is a small one. A few hundred dollars failure sets him back a whole year, if not more. He has to live by faith in a large measure. He stands among the first and greatest of speculators. His time, energy and money are put into a crop, which may be a success or an utter failure. He has to wait for months to reap the results. There is no other business in life where the worker has to exercise such a large degree of patient waiting, nor is there any other business in life where all the forces of nature seem at times to be combined against the operator. The sunshine, rain and wind, which make his crops grow, are at times the worst enemies he has. He is in the hands of Him who causes His rain to fall alike, upon both the just and the unjust.

Yet in the face of all that he has to contend with, the farmer is remunerated. Fewer farmers go to the wall in utter failure and bankruptcy than from any other occupation in life. When we consider the millions upon millions engaged in this business, there is no other occupation where so small an amount of money, as is frequently invested in a farm, made to support a family comfortably, and still add to the principle. Here is an illustration—A inherited a farm. The time was not very far back in the history of that farm when it was worth about $4,000. At the time A inherited it, the $4,000 had grown to $8,000. Supporting a family all the time, A asked the advice of a man of business. He was told to sell the farm and invest the proceeds in city bonds, which would bring an income of about $400 annually. Not enough to meet A's requirements. A took possession of his land, and though, by no means a good farmer, his land is growing in value and furnishing much more than the annual interest on the same amount of money invested in city bonds would have produced.

The late Mr. George, of Queen Annes, was asked the pointed question—"What interest do you get on the money you have invested in farms." His unhesitating answer was—"Five per cent." He was a close calculator and knew what he was talking about. Where land will produce five per cent., it is one of the safest investments the moneyed man can make. Though for one, I am very glad for the country's sake that there are not very many moneyed men investing in land. The great land owner is not a blessing to any country. I would that every renter to-day could own the land he farms.

Crossing the bay some two years ago with a young farmer, we were talking about farm accounts. I asked him what was his system of book-keeping? "I have none," said he. "How do you know then whether you are making or losing?" "Some years," said he, "I come out about even, and then again, I have money in bank. I know I have made something, because I have been farming eighteen years, I have supported my family, have a good personalty, have bought a house in the village for which I gave $1,000, have bought also a small farm and don't owe any money." He has since sold his village property and bought another farm. This last property has not been entirely paid for, but it will be, as he is one of the thrifty kind.

I would not have to go very far not only to duplicate this case, but to quadruple it.

The results from farming are not always easily computed. The man has to sell out, or die, and his estate be settled up, before it can be determined what he has made. His land (if properly managed) will gradually increase in value, and his personalty may be year after year, while his bank account may show but small increase.

The poor man who has the capacity for farming, who loves an independent life, like to be out in the open and is willing to use his muscle, can make a better living in the country than in the city. He will never be classed among the great number of the unemployed. No matter what party may be in the ascendency, the "empty pail" will not be his.

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