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THE RURAL SCHOOL.

I have just read with deepest interest the preliminary report of the Maryland Country Life Commission. I presume it has been scattered abroad, and will fall into the hands of many of our citizens. It contains much valuable information, and should not by any one be cast aside without being first read and then deeply pondered over.

The two matters of greatest importance (which are brought before the public by this report) are the rural schools and the rural church. They are subjects of the most vital importance. Not only the present but the future of country life is absolutely dependent upon the school and the church. No community can hold its own where the school is not up to date, and where the church is not exercising an elevating and refining influence.

The school (so far as it appears to the country) is an unsolved question before our people to-day. The man who has passed his three score years, can see many and great changes have come about which have not only made the lives of children more endurable by adding to their bodily comfort, but which give them many more advantages than their predecessors had. Yet the present system under which we are working is not a perfect one by any means.

In writing upon this great subject I am not purposing to do more than air some opinions which have grown out of the experience of many years of country life. To bring this article within the space allotted me by the editor, I can only tell the reader what I think an education ought to do for a man.

It should fit him to take his position in life, and put him in a way not only to make his living, but to support those who are dependent upon him as well. If it does not do this, it is a failure of the worst sort. The house that is beautifully built and handsomely furnished but unfit to live in, represents wasted time, energy and material.

It ought to enable him to live longer, not in a physical sense, though it might not be going too far to say that the knowing man, who has control of himself, ought to live longer than the ignorant one who gives himself up to indulgences, which undermine his health. The educated man lives in the past and future as well as the present. He is not entirely dependent upon those around him for companionship. He holds communion with those who have gone before him. His books and papers greatly enlarge his sphere. He lives more while he does live.

Seated in his study, with a book of travels in his hand, the man with a trained mind is oblivious of his surroundings. The world is before him. He is out on the broad ocean with its unlimited space, or he is travelling among foreign peoples, deeply interested in their ways and customs; he is now in some grand old cathedral admiring its beautiful architecture, or he is mixing with the multitude which is thronging some busy thoroughfare. Many and varied are the associations of the man who is educated, and in whom there has been cultivated a fondness for research. He is not confined to the period in which he lives, nor to those with whom he associates for companionship.

It is far different with him who has not been so trained mentally. The sphere of such an one is limited indeed. His life is a short one. It is confined to his brief period of existence on earth and to his immediate surroundings. He has to feed upon himself and those with whom he comes personally in contact for his pleasures in life. The majority of people have limited spheres. From lack of opportunity, or from indifference, or gross neglect, they have allowed their opportunities to pass unimproved, so their lives have been shortened and their world has become a small one.

The education which really fits one for life (especially in our day and land) should broaden and deepen him. Narrowness and bigotry may be cultivated. They belong to the human race, naturally it requires the most assiduous training to overcome them, and this training has to begin with the tender years of childhood if it would become in any measure successful.

The educated man is not always a broad-minded one. We have known him to be just reverse; without patience in his dealing with those who thought not as he thought, harsh and uncompromising in his conduct towards those who were not of his school and class.

There is a kind of education which develops the mind only. It does not form character. It is one sided, and a small side at that. By it the man is taken out of his surroundings and is put, as it were, into a class by himself; he is not taught to look through that end of his telescope of life which brings all the rest of mankind near to him, but through the other end which makes things look as if they are so far off as to be unattainable. This was the mistake made in the schools up to the middle of the past century. The young man came forth from the colleges of that day, mentally, perhaps better furnished than he is to-day, when he takes his B. A. or A. M. degree, but he was an entirely different type of man. He had lived during the whole of his school days with a past generation, he was prepared to speak in a foreign, dead language, he looked entirely backward, and was not prepared, as he should have been, for his present and future. I have met with more than one such man in my day.

Visiting a dear friend and parishoner who lived in a handsome old country house, I was strolling around the place and came upon him in a room where he was looking for something that he needed. "Come in," he said, "This is my 'Omnium Gatherum,' a place for stowing everything not immediately needed." It was a perfect junk shop. If you found what you were after, it was only because you were diligent in your search. I am often reminded of that place when I meet a certain type of educated men. They have everything needed, but in such shape they cannot utilize it.

The kind of education which I am trying to picture in this article is that which not only fills the mind with useful things, but enables the happy possessor to utilize them. Which broadens him so that he is able to look beyond into the great outside world; which does not unfit him for rubbing shoulder against shoulder with his fellow-man. While such a man may stand head and shoulder above those around him, he is not lifted out of sympathy with them. He only becomes their leader to higher and better things.

President Wilson is the type of man whom I have in mind. Profoundly educated, but at the same time *profoundly* a man among men, capable of leading the leaders of a great nation.

That kind of an education, which does not broaden a man, is to be shunned. It does him a positive injury. It puts him out of sympathy with his fellow-men. This is the tendency of all denominational schools where the trend of thought is diverted into narrow channels. In the vast majority of cases divisions in the christian church have been made because of differences about matters of minor importance which have been magnified beyond their due proportions, the bitterness and hatred which has been aroused, needs no catering to. It should rather be restrained. The man who differs with you is rarely ever *entirely* wrong. The truth lies between you. This can be found out only by rubbing up against him. This calls for manliness—it means burying prejudice—one of the hardest things in life to do.

Education ought to make a man happier, fitting him to take his place in life, making him live longer and broadening and depening his character. It will inevitably make him happier. If it fails in doing this it has failed at its most vital point.

My education is worse than a failure if it has not made me a happier man. Better by far to have been left to grope my way in ignorance, if happy, than to have the highest honors of the greatest institution of learning in the world bestowed upon me if I am not made happier by the possession. In this sense "where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise." If his education has not taught the man where to find happiness he becomes a dissatisfied and useless member of society and a dangerous citizen, who is to be supported as a pauper or confined as a criminal.

In a future article I shall endeavor to show that our public schools (so far at least as the rural school is concerned) are not fulfilling these ideals of an education. Having talked with many upon the subject, I feel sure I shall advance opinions which will be treated by some as mere vagaries, but will arouse the opposition of others. I have already been notified to that effect. I hope, however, that I have "the courage of my convictions."

Importance of Proper Pruning

Too much importance cannot be attached to the operation of pruning young fruit trees. Pruning should be done now before the buds swell. Each tree has its individuality and the pruner should know the fundamentals of the operation in order to develop trees along proper lines.

Many growers do not take sufficient pains or do not study the problem throughly to develop their trees to the best advantage. Often times severe pruning must be done in later years and often the tree can never be brought into proper shape owing to neglect during the first two or three years of life.

Representatives of the School of Horticulture of the Maryland Agricultural College are now arranging for pruning and spraying demonstrations in different parts of the State. All growers who have young orchards especially and who are not thoroughly familiar with the proper methods of pruning should communicate with the College and seek its help at this important time in the life of the orchard. The College will be pleased to arrange for as many demonstrations as its means will permit.

Old apple orchards should be reclaimed by pruning and spraying. All fruit trees should be sprayed with the Concentrated Lime Sulphur Solution before the buds open. Any one desiring information along these lines should write to the School of Horticulture, Maryland Agricultural College, College Park, Md.

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The Kent county rural route carriers are wearing broad smiles these days. On Saturday of last week the Senate passed the largest appropriation of either house of Congress, when it sent to conference the postoffice measure, carrying $311,492,067, an increase of nearly $840,000 over the bill as it was reported by the Postoffice Committee. All efforts to limit the power of the Postmaster-General to regulate the parcels Post rates, zones or weights were defeated. Rural mail carriers receive an increase of $100 a year from this appropriation and numerous other employees of the Postal Department may expect proportionate increases.

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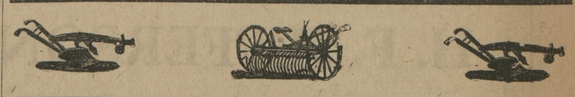

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