

The Farmer and Progress.



It used to be said if a man had brains he would make a doctor, a lawyer, or a minister; if active and skillful with tools, he would do for a mechanic; if good-looking and talkative, must be a society man or merchant. If he had none of these, or in fact no other commendable qualities or accomplishment he would do for a farmer.

There were yet in the very recent past a large number of people who advocated similar ideas. Even at the present time, it is not an uncommon thing to hear the young man or woman advised to prepare for a "more respectable," remun-

erative, and easy occupation. This, it seems to me is one of the principal reasons why farming has not ranked with the trades or professions. There are none so sure to fail as those who abuse themselves, for the man who 'kicks' himself is likely to have the assistance of his neighbors.

But this is not the only reason for the unfavorable position of the farmer. One evil is found in the methodical manner in which agricultural pursuits have been conducted - to rule farming - to the acceptance of too many things as matters of fact, never once going into an investigation of the causes acting necessary to the production of the final results.

There has, however, been a great change. The custom of sowing and harvesting by rule is mainly a thing of the past. What the

intelligent, enterprising farmer of the present calls for is the reason in all things. This way of sticking the seed into the ground, of feeding stock on dry corn, hay, and water, is not profitable, and progressive farmers are well aroused to investigation.

Another feature sure to give good results is that the number of people who ascribe every crop failure to natural causes rather than to lack of brain exertion or muscular energy is rapidly diminishing. The weather and the moon have influences less significant now than ever before.

All over our own, and in other countries, the last quarter of a century has seen developed an irresistible spirit of inquiry. The very condition of things, a rapidly growing population and as rapid an occupation of the

public lands has made necessary improved and more productive methods of cultivation. Besides the investigations of individuals for private information and profit, national governments have shown an intense interest in the development of agricultural science. Many fallacies have been exposed, many truths discovered, the benefits to be gained from which are only limited by the ability to practically use the knowledge gained.

To meet the closely competitive markets of the future, and be successful, will require more than has been required of the average farmer of the past. To make use of an abundance of experimental information the farmer must have, at least, a superficial insight into several sciences as chemistry, botany, and animal anatomy. Probably more important yet, he must

also be a student of economics as applied to farming. The wonderful transportation developments of the century have enabled American producers to place their pork, beef, and wheat in European markets at competitive profits, and, and, as it has come to be that a crop failure or success in Kansas has comparatively little influence on the prices in this or other states, so in our relations with other nations. A crop failure in western European countries, with all the lines of rapid transportation, is now easily overcome. German meat supplies fail and we, 45 miles distant, furnish her with pork; if, in the future, her grain yield is short, we will feed her hungry populace on corn bread. So if our grain yield is a failure, - other countries will readily make up the deficiency.

The farmer is learning a lesson from these things. With all the apparent benefits to be derived from supplying remote wants he will not rely on them alone as a source of profits, and rush wildly from one extreme to another. That European wheat fails will not justify him in giving over all other crops and growing only. Others may, but the thoughtful farmer knows it is the wheat now in the granary which must supply present deficiencies and not the & percent production. He will, then practice, if ever there was a rule which applied in farming, the rule of sowing what his neighbor doesn't sow.

Farming on such a plan must necessitate a wide knowledge of resources and the ability to foresee the probable demands at home and abroad. The successful farmer will,

then, not only know of the immediate forces connected with his calling but his stock of information will be so general as to include facts of trade, experience, and science, all conducive to prosperity. Such a farmer will understand that his increasing wealth does not depend on the success of one, two, or three crops, but on his close observation, his improved farm and its capability of yielding fair returns under all conditions - and I am not talking politics either.

But it will be safe to say the vast majority of farmers will hereafter, take a more active interest in all political, especially those pertaining to their profession. One reason why farming classes could not heretofore complain of legislative bodies being drawn from other than agricultural classes, is that they were not generally prepared on questions of law and state and nation.

al economy — not even on those of the trade influencing the profits on their own productions. But, with a wider knowledge of commercial relations, transportation, finances, and revenues, will come a demand for the exercise of "country brains" to displace the corruption of declining city politicians. Not only will the farming classes know how to vote intelligently, but they will know how to legislate intelligently.

The inducements will provide more than the bare literature of the farm. Besides the county paper and one or two papers on agricultural topics, literary and household magazines will lend their ennobling influences to round out, and give the tastes and graces of culture to every ambitious tiller of the soil. The young.

folks will, temporarily lay aside the worn out history of the United States, the fourth reader and the almanac for the new, interesting pages of an illustrated monthly. Most of the discontent of the young people of the country is due to the mechanical nature of their work and to inferior educational advantages - discontent which a slight outlay would overcome and reduce unquestionably the number of those who annually throng to our cities.

With the qualifications which the times will demand and extended insight into the advantages gained will come more liberal views in many directions. With such conditions we might anticipate a radical change in the home life of country people. Barren lands would be turned into production fields and billowy meadows!

straw sheds would give place to
commodious barns; in the place
of the ~~un~~empty, weather beaten shanty,
will be found the comfortable, home-
like cottage, handsomely furnished
within, neatly adorned without,
surrounded by fertile gardens,
fruit-laden orchards, and tasty lawns,
all bespeaking the owner's con-
tentment, peace, and prosperity.

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