

FARMERS' EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

A good education is now recognized as a great advantage to the person possessing it whatever his position in life, but beyond the mere acknowledgement that it is good very vague ideas sometimes prevail as to what really constitutes a good course of instruction. By many, certain educational requirements are considered as altogether superfluous if not wholly unsuited to the life of a practical farmer, as tending to unfit him for labor inseparable from his calling. Such ideas are based on a misapprehension of what education ought to be, and therefore often stand in the way of the self-improvement which the farmers of this country have so freely brought within their reach.

Let us now examine more closely into the meaning of the word education. Instruction is known to be the teaching on any given subject or training in its practical application, but we must distinguish between mere instruction and its value when practically utilized. What is called learning is mostly concerned with books including the classics, modern languages, &c., but familiarity with these do not make up an education. Education to be appropriate and useful must have a wider scope and a more practical application than the mere discipline of the mind. In fact, it includes not only schooling and instruction, but such special training, mental, moral and even physical development, as fits a man for efficiently performing the duties of life in the station or calling in which he is placed. To the farmer, therefore, the study of classics and languages is not included in the word education, and the same may be said of other branches of learning. To be educated the Canadian will therefore first seek to know those things that help to make him a good farmer. He will not hinder him to add other intellectual acquirements if he so pleases. The long winters, when comparatively little can be done on the farm, place within the reach of the agriculturist of this country great opportunities for self-improvement, while books and papers on subjects connected with their calling bring the instruments useful to their instruction to their homes. Indeed, the opportunities for improving their minds by reading, study and social communication are so general that there can be no excuse for the farmer being or remaining narrow minded, slow and unenterprising. Unfortunately for the calling of farming, agriculture has been too often looked on as a slow uninteresting occupation, requiring little education or intelligence. There is, however, no profession, which to exercise it properly, involves a more varied circle of acquirements than that of the farmer. Bent down by continuous labor the pioneer farmers of this country had neither time nor means of self-improvement. They were restricted to the consideration of mere animal wants, and while physically and perhaps mentally the superior of the villagers they too often considered themselves and their calling inferior to the store keeper and his trade. Hence, young men have turned away from a sure and independent means of living to what they considered the more lucrative and refined calling of store-keeping. We need not say that these false notions regarding the relative merits of farming and store-keeping have done immense harm to the farming classes themselves by drawing many young men from a pursuit where success and independence would have crowned their efforts into embarking in business only to fail and penniless to have to fall back on the calling they once despised with many of life's best opportunities lost. All this is now changing, however. Education is uplifting the farmer to see his true position, and that in this country, especially, he is the foundation of the social edifice, and that consequently his mode of life is as dignified and as much to be coveted as any other. Nor will the diffusion of knowledge lessen the farmers interest in his calling and efficiency in pursuing it. On the contrary it will make them more efficient as farmers and better able to utilize the improved methods yearly brought to their aid by inventors and scientists, whereby every effort can be turned to good account.

But to place the agriculturist in a fully qualified position his education should consist of the literary and the practical.—The theory of agriculture will treat of the nature of soils, manures, and general farm management; the principles of drainage, rotation of crops, construction of farm implements, the cultivation of the different farm crops, their harvesting, &c. Then the various breeds of live stock, their feeding and treatment, with a knowledge of their weight by measurement, and the principles that govern market.—Farm book-keeping which enables the farmer to tell exactly the cost of labor and the items in each department of income and expenditure; such a know-

ledge of agricultural chemistry as will make him acquainted with the composition of crops, feeding stuffs, and artificial manures and the nature of the soil and its products.—The elementary principles of mechanics as applied to machinery and particularly to farm implements, with a knowledge of veterinary science, to be conversant with structure, principal diseases and treatment of farm animals. Looking over this list of subjects to which those having gone thus far, can add many others to their studies, it cannot be thought that the farmer's calling is dull and uninteresting and without occasion for drawing out the highest faculties of the mind. Only let a man get thoroughly interested in farming and in the study of these subjects connected with it, and it will afford him more pleasure, and to the end be a more substantial investment than most of the genteel callings for which the farm has too often been given up.

Every year the improved modes of carrying farm produce and live-stock to England is brightening the prospects of those engaged in farming here, and this coupled with the fact that farmers have placed within their easy reach an education by which they can make themselves familiar with all matters connected with their calling, should lead young men trained to farming to consider well before giving it up for other callings with which they are totally unacquainted. Let farmers but fully cultivate the opportunities of improvement within their reach, and make themselves thoroughly conversant with the subjects connected with agriculture and their own success will be assured while the country generally will become more prosperous.

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Corry, Pa.

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