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THE RURAL TEACHER

With the new development of rural life, there comes the demand for increased educational facilities and the impulse of universal education which is sweeping the country calls for intelligent and consecrated leadership in our rural schools. It is upon the rural teacher that one of the heaviest burdens of civilization falls, for not only must he lay the foundation of education, but he must also instill into the pupils the real love for country life, which will hold him on the farm and help to stem the townward tide.

In the city, the teacher is a cog in the vast wheel of educational machinery; in the country he is the wheel. It is he who must mold the character, inspire the ideals and shape the destiny of the farm boys and girls, and if he is fitted by nature for the task, not only will the results of his efforts be reflected in the pupils, but gradually the whole community will be leavened with a new ambition for progress.

He can organize around the school the main interests of the boys and girls and develop the impulse for co-operation, which in time will displace the old competitive individualism and make rural social life more congenial and satisfying. The possibilities for making the rural school the social and economic center of the community are almost endless, and the faculties of the rural teacher may have full play, for it will take all his time and ingenuity if he attains the full measure of success.

Must Be Community Leader.

A noted college professor recently said that three things are now required of a rural teacher. The first requirement is that he must be strong enough to establish himself as a leader in the community in which he lives and labors; second, that he must have a good grasp on the organization and management of the new and scientific farm school and, third, that he must show expert ability in dealing with the modern rural school curriculum.

If he lives up to the opportunities offered him as a rural leader, he will train boys and girls distinctly for rural life, not only by giving them the rudiments of agricultural training, but by enabling them to see the attractive side of farm life, and to realize that it is a scientific business, and one of the most complex of all professions with opportunities as great as those of any other calling.

"School for Parents" Needed.

The duties of the rural teacher are more varied and complicated than those of the city teacher, and he sometimes has to include the parents in directing his efforts for the best results. In communities where the older population is opposed to any departure of the younger generation from established customs in either social or economic life, their co-operation can often be secured by calling community meetings and instructing the parents on matters of community interest. It is related that a successful young teacher in a remote locality had weekly meetings attended by parents of his pupils, which finally evolved into a "school for parents" in which they were taught how to live a community life in its broadest and biggest sense.

Social Features Essential.

The successful rural school is the vital social and economic center of the community and the successful rural teacher is the one who realizes that the responsibility of training local leaders for the future devolves upon him. Organized play, inter-community athletics, community festivals, lyceum and debating clubs, Y. M. C. A.'s, with occasional neighborhood entertainments, utilizing home talent, contests in cooking and various other phases of home economics, in corn and hog clubs and other agricultural activities are a few of the methods employed by the successful rural teacher in stimulating interest and enthusiasm while teaching them the fundamental principles of successful community life.

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The Woman in the Field

Much has been said and more written about the woman in the factory and behind the counter, but how about the woman who works in the field, I want to say a few words in her behalf. I regret a necessity that compels woman to work for a livelihood, and I favor not only shortening her hours, but freeing her from manual labor entirely. I crave for society that high standard of excellence where the home is woman's throne and her life is devoted to molding the character and elevating the thought of the rising generation. But so long as want, greed and misfortune prevail in this world, women, through choice or necessity, will work, and perhaps they will work at one task or another as many hours per day as they please.

We may pity the weak and admire the strong in their struggle, but the farm woman is entitled to her share of sympathy and reward.

All Must Toil.

The labor problem, as relates to men, is a most vexatious one, and when we apply it to women it becomes more seriously complicated. We will always have to work unless some political genius can put a law on the statute book that will enable us to live without labor. So long as every person must meet toil face to face, the best we can do is to equitably distribute the burdens and reward labor, and if there is to be a revision of wages and a shortening of hours, I want the farm woman to get her share. She has more reason to complain than any other class of toilers. She has, as a rule, fewer comforts, fewer pleasures, less recreation and less opportunity for enjoyment than her sister in the city. She has not so many conveniences and fewer luxuries and less to be thankful for than women who live in the town, but she toils on, a model of consistency, patience and womanly devotion. Certainly she should be the first to be rewarded.

The Real Labor Problem is on the Farm.

The great dailies with flaming headlines deplore the lot of women who

toil in the cities, the city pulpit thunders with sympathy for her, and the legislators orate in her behalf, but not a line is written, a word said or a speech delivered in the interest of the million women who labor on the farm. Where one woman works in the cities in this state, there are a hundred mothers toiling in the field, and no mention is made of it. Is the woman in the city entitled to any more consideration than the woman on the farm? I contend that she is not. The city woman may be more easily restrained by legislation, and she may have a more attentive audience when she cries aloud, but the real labor problem, in so far as it relates to women and children, is on the farm—where mother and child, wielding the hoe and gathering the harvest, toil day in and day out without hope of reward.

The City Life Puny.

The farm women work from sun until sun. They do their housework and lull a half-million babes to sleep after the chickens go to roost, and they get breakfast and milk the cows before the lark sings. The city woman frequently chafes under hardships that the farm woman would consider a blessing. The city people are great talkers and oftentimes greatly magnify their troubles and enlarge their accomplishments. This characteristic permeates organized society as well as enters into the individual life of cities. There are orphan asylums which are doing commendable work and should be encouraged, that boast of their accomplishments, but I have seen widows in the country make a crop, drink branch water and eat corn-bread and molasses and raise more children and better children than many of these city orphan asylums. The cities need to get back to the soil with their ideals. They are hysterical, puny and feeble in their conception of life, its requirements and its opportunities.

The farmers' problems are pressing for solution and the awakening is at hand.