Payton Jones

Country Life

Challenges and Opportunities

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Table of Contents

THE RURAL PROBLEM

ITS DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT URGENCY

I. The Problem Stated and Defined.

Early in the year 1912, some five hundred leading business and professional men of the cities of New York state met at a banquet, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association. During the evening it was discovered that nine-tenths of these influential city leaders had come from country homes. They were born on farms in the open country or in rural villages of 2,500 population or less.

Facts like these no longer surprise intelligent people. They are common to most cities, at least on our American continent; and herein is the crux of the rural problem. At great sacrifice for a century the country has been making the city. Doubtless thousands of incompetent citizens have been forced off the farms by the development of farm machinery; and the country was little poorer for their loss. But in surrendering to the city countless farm boys of character and promise who have since become the city's leaders, many a rural village has suffered irreparably. To be sure this seems to be one of the village's main functions, to furnish leaders for the city; and it has usually been proud of its opportunity. It is the *wholesale* character of this generous community sacrifice which has developed trouble.

The rural problem is the problem of maintaining in our farm and village communities a Christian civilization with modern American ideals of happiness, efficiency and progress.

It is a problem of industrial efficiency, of economic progress, of social cooperation and recreation, of home comfort, of educational equipment for rural life, of personal happiness, of religious vitality and of institutional

development for community service. Though the problem would exist independently of the city, its acuteness is due to city competition.

The fact that city leadership is still largely drawn from the country makes the rural problem of vital importance to the welfare of the city and in a real sense a national issue.

A Classification of Communities

The terms rural and urban, country and city, town, village and township are so variously used they cause much ambiguity. The last is primarily geographical rather than social. The word town means township in New England and nothing in particular anywhere else. The others are relative terms used differently by different people. For years the line between rural and urban was arbitrarily set at the 8,000 mark, but the thirteenth census has placed it at 2,500. It seems petty however to dub a village of 2,501 people a city! This is convenient but very inaccurate. There are 38 “towns” in Massachusetts alone having over 8,000 people which refuse to be called cities.

Cities of the first class have a population of 100,000 upwards; cities of the second class number from 25,000 to 100,000 people; and communities from 8,000 to 25,000 may well be styled small cities. The term village is naturally applied to a community of 2,500 or less. When located in the country it is a country village; when near a city it is a suburban village and essentially urban. When no community center is visible, the term “open country” best fits the case.

The disputed territory between 2,500 and 8,000 will be urban or rural, according to circumstances. A community of this size in the urban tract is by no means rural. But if away from the domination of city life it is purely country. The best term the writer has been able to find for this comfortable and prosperous type of American communities,—there are over 4,500 of them, between the village of 2,500 and the city of 8,000 people,—is the good old New England term *town*; which may be either rural or urban according to its distance from the nearest city.

In the last analysis the terms rural and urban are qualitative rather than quantitative. In spite of the apparent paradox, there are rural cities and urban villages; small provincial cities where the people are largely rural-minded, and suburban villages of a few hundred people whose interests are all in the life of the city. But in general, the scope of the term "country life" as used in this book will be understood to include the life of the open country, the rural village and most country towns of 8,000 people or less, whose outlook is the sky and the soil rather than the brick walls and limited horizon of the city streets.

II. City and Country.

How the Growing City Developed the Problem

We can almost say the growth of the city made the country problem. It would be nearer the truth to say, it made the problem serious. The problem of rural progress would still exist, even if there were no cities; but had the city not been drafting its best blood from the villages for more than half a century, we should probably not be anxious about the rural problem to-day, for it is this loss of leadership which has made rural progress so slow and difficult.

It is well to remember that the growth of cities is not merely an American fact. It is universal in all the civilized world. Wherever the modern industrial system holds sway the cities have been growing phenomenally. In fact the city population in this country is less in proportion than the city population of England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, Belgium, Saxony, The Netherlands and Prussia.

The present gains of American cities are largely due to immigration and to the natural increase of births over deaths, especially in recent years with improved sanitation, but for many decades past the city has gained largely at the expense of the country. Chicago became a city of over two million before the first white child born there died, in March, 1907. Meanwhile, in the decade preceding 1890, 792 Illinois rural townships lost population, in the following decade 522, and in the decade 1900-1910, 1113, in spite of the agricultural wealth of this rich prairie state. Likewise New York city (with Brooklyn) has doubled in twenty years since 1890; while in a single

decade almost 70% of the rural townships in the state reported a loss. The rural state of Iowa actually reports a net loss of 7,000 for the last decade (1900), though Des Moines alone gained 24,200, and all but two of the cities above 8,000 grew.[1]

Naturally in the older sections of the country the rural losses hitherto have been most startling. In the rural sections of New Hampshire Dr. W. L. Anderson found serious depletion from 1890 to 1900, "a great enough loss to strain rural society"; and the 1910 census reports even worse losses. The same has been only less true of the rural districts in Maine, Vermont, eastern Connecticut and portions of all the older states. The cities' gains cost the country dear, in abandoned farms, weakened schools and churches and discouraged communities drained of their vitality.

The Surprising Growth of Rural America

However, in spite of this story of rural depletion which has been often rehearsed, the rural sections of our country altogether have made surprising gains. City people especially are astonished to learn that our country, even if the cities should be eliminated entirely from the reckoning, has been making substantial progress. The 8,000 mark was for years reckoned as the urban point. Counting only communities of less than 8,000 people we find that in 1850 the country population numbered 20,294,290; in 1890, 44,349,747; and in 1906, 54,107,571. If we consider only communities of 2,500 or less, we find 35⅓ millions in 1880; over 45 millions in 1900; and nearly 50 millions in 1910. The last census reports almost 53½ millions of people living in villages of 5,000 or less; or 58.2% of the population.

It is obvious that in spite of dismal prophecies to the contrary from city specialists, and in spite of the undeniable drift to the city for decades, the total country population in America has continued to grow. Rural America is still growing 11.2% in a decade. Outside of the densely populated north-eastern states, the nation as a whole is still rural and will long remain so. Where the soil is poor, further rural depletion must be expected; but with normal conditions and with an increasingly attractive rural life, most country towns and villages may be expected to hold their own reasonably well against the city tide.

We hear little to-day about the abandoned farms of New England. In the decade past they have steadily found a market and hundreds of them have been reclaimed for summer occupancy or for suburban homes for city men. Even in rural counties where decay has been notable in many townships, there are always prosperous towns and villages, along the rivers and the railroads, where substantial prosperity will doubtless continue for many years to come.

A False and Misleading Comparison

Unquestionably a false impression on this question has prevailed in the cities for a generation past because of obviously unjust comparisons. Families coming from decadent villages to prosperous cities have talked much of rural decadence. Stories of murders and low morals in neglected rural communities have made a great impression on people living in clean city wards. Meanwhile, not five blocks away, congested city slums never visited by the prosperous, concealed from popular view, festering social corruption and indescribable poverty and vice. Let us be fair in our sociological comparisons and no longer judge our rural worst by our urban best. Let the rural slum be compared with the city slum and the city avenues with the prosperous, self-respecting sections of the country; then contrasts will not be so lurid and we shall see the facts in fair perspective.

As soon as we learn to discriminate we find that country life as a whole is wholesome, that country people as a rule are as happy as city people and fully as jovial and light-hearted and that the fundamental prosperity of most country districts has been gaining these past two decades. While rural depletion is widespread, rural *decadence* must be studied not as a general condition at all, but as the abnormal, unusual state found in special sections, such as regions handicapped by poor soil, sections drained by neighboring industrial centers, isolated mountain districts where life is bare and strenuous, and the open country away from railroads and the great life currents. With this word of caution let us examine the latest reports of rural depletion.

III. Rural Depletion and Rural Degeneracy.

The Present Extent of Rural Depletion

The thirteenth census (1910) shows that in spite of the steady gain in the country districts of the United States as a whole, thousands of rural townships have continued to lose population. These shrinking communities are found everywhere except in the newest agricultural regions of the West and in the black belt of the South. The older the communities the earlier this tendency to rural depletion became serious. The trouble began in New England, but now the rural problem is moving west. Until the last census New England was the only section of the country to show this loss as a whole; but the 1910 figures just reported give a net rural loss for the first time in the group of states known as the "east north central." Yet in both cases, the net rural loss for the section was less than 1%.

Taking 2,500 as the dividing line, the last census reports that in every state in the country the urban population has increased since 1900, but in six states the rural population has diminished. In two states, Montana and Wyoming, the country has outstripped the city; but in general, the country over, the cities grew from 1900 to 1910 three times as fast as the rural sections. While the country communities of the United States have grown 11.2% the cities and towns above 2,500 have increased 34.8%. In the prosperous state of Iowa, the only state reporting an absolute loss, the rural sections lost nearly 120,000. Rural Indiana lost 83,127, or 5.1%; rural Missouri lost 68,716, or 3.5%; rural villages in New Hampshire show a net loss of 10,108, or 5.4%; and rural Vermont has suffered a further loss of 8,222, or 4.2%, though the state as a whole made the largest gain for forty years.

These latest facts from the census are valuable for correcting false notions of rural depletion. It is unfair to count up the number of rural townships in a state which have failed to grow and report that state rurally decadent. For example, a very large majority of the Illinois townships with less than 2,500 people failed to hold their own the past decade,—1,113 out of 1,592. But in many cases the loss was merely nominal; consequently we find, in spite of the tremendous drain to Chicago, the rural population of the state as a whole made a slight gain. This case is typical. Thousands of rural villages have lost population; yet other thousands have gained enough to offset these losses in all but the six states mentioned.

Losses in Country Towns

New England continues to report losses, not only in the rural villages, but also in the country towns of between 2,500 and 5,000 population. This was true the last decade in every New England state except Vermont. Massachusetts towns of this type made a net loss of about 30,000, or 15%; although nearly all the larger towns and many villages in that remarkably prosperous state made gains. This class of towns has also made net losses the past decade in Indiana, Iowa, South Dakota, South Carolina, Alabama and Mississippi, although in these last four states the smaller communities under 2,500 made substantial gains. This indicates in some widely different sections of the country an apparently better prosperity in the open country than in many country towns. Similarly in several states, the larger towns between five and ten thousand population have netted a loss in the last decade, as in New York State, although the smaller villages have on the average prospered.

The Need of Qualitative Analysis of the Census

We must not be staggered by mere figures. A *qualitative* analysis of the census sometimes saves us from pessimism. Someone has said "Even a *growing* town has no moral insurance." Mere growth does not necessarily mean improvement either in business or morals. It is quite possible that some of the "decadent" villages which have lost 15% of their population are really better places for residence than they were before and possibly fully as prosperous. It depends entirely on the kind of people that remain. If it is really the survival of the fittest, there will be no serious problem. But if it is "the heritage of the unfit," if only the unambitious and shiftless have remained, then the village is probably doomed.

In any case, the situation is due to the inevitable process of social and economic adjustment. Changes in agricultural method and opportunity are responsible for much of it. Doubtless farm machinery has driven many laborers away. Likewise the rising price of land has sent away the speculative farmer to pastures new, especially from eastern Canada and the middle west in the States to the low-priced lands of the rich Canadian west.

[2] The falling native birthrate, especially in New England, has been as potent a factor in diminishing rural sections as has the lure of the cities.

"In the main," says Dr. Anderson in his very discriminating study of the problem, "rural depletion is over. In its whole course it has been an adjustment of industrial necessity and of economic health; everywhere it is a phase of progress and lends itself to the optimist that discerns deeper meanings. Nevertheless depletion has gone so far as to affect seriously all rural problems within the area of its action.

"The difficult and perplexing problems are found where the people are reduced in number. That broad though irregular belt of depleted rural communities, stretching from the marshes of the Atlantic shore to the banks of the Missouri, which have surrendered from ten to forty per cent. of their people, within which are many localities destined to experience further losses, calls for patient study of social forces and requires a reconstruction of the whole social outfit. But it should be remembered that an increasing population gathers in rural towns thickly strewn throughout the depleted tract, and that the cheer of their growth and thrift is as much a part of the rural situation as the perplexity incident to a diminishing body of people."[3]

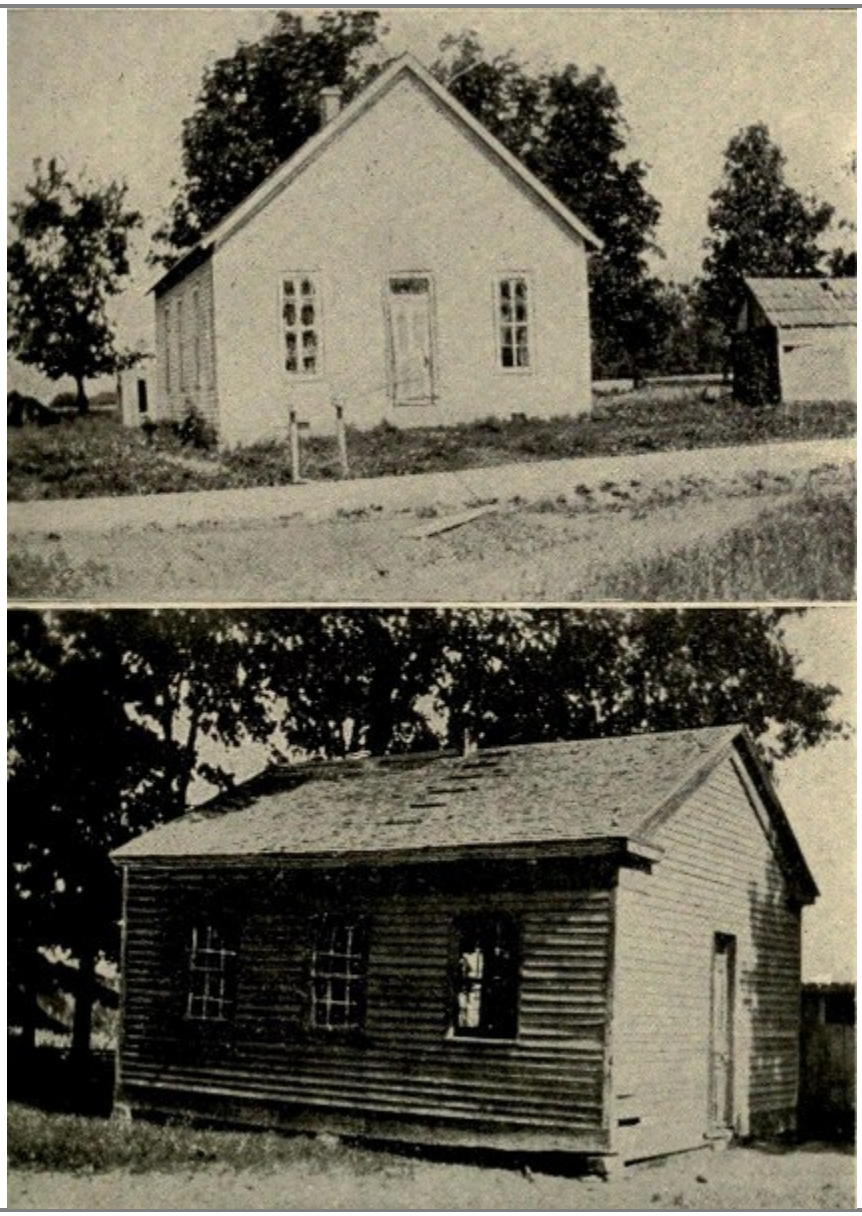
Whereas the main trend in rural districts is toward better social and moral conditions as well as material prosperity, we do not have to look far to find local degeneracy in the isolated places among the hills or in unfertile sections which have been deserted by the ambitious and intelligent, leaving a pitiable residuum of "poor whites" behind. Such localities furnish the facts for the startling disclosures which form the basis of occasional newspaper and magazine articles such as Rollin Lynde Hartt's in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 83, *The Forum*, June 1892, the *St. Albans Messenger* Jan. 2, 1904, et cetera.

The Question of Degeneracy in City and Country

The question has long been debated as to whether criminals and defectives are more common in the city or the country. Dwellers in prosperous, well-governed suburban cities, that know no slums, are positive that the rural districts are degenerate. Country people in prosperous rural sections of Kansas, for instance, where no poor-house or jail can be found for many

miles, insist that degeneracy is a city symptom! It is obvious that discrimination is necessary. The great majority of folks in both city and country are living a decent life; degeneracy is everywhere the exception. It would be fully as reasonable to condemn the city as a whole for the breeding places of vice, insanity and crime which we call the slums, as it is to characterize rural life in general as degenerate.

In view of the evident fact that both urban and rural communities have their defectives and delinquents, in varying ratio, depending on local conditions, Professor Giddings suggests a clear line of discrimination. “Degeneration manifests itself in the protean forms of suicide, insanity, crime and vice, which abound in the highest civilization, where the tension of life is extreme, and in those places from which civilization has ebbed and from which population has been drained, leaving a discouraged remnant to struggle against deteriorating conditions.... Like insanity, crime occurs most frequently in densely populated towns on the one hand, and on the other in partially deserted rural districts. Murder is a phenomenon of both the frontier life of an advancing population and of the declining civilization in its rear; it is preeminently the crime of the new town and the decaying town.... Crimes of all kinds are less frequent in prosperous agricultural communities and in thriving towns of moderate size, where the relation of income to the standard of living is such that the life struggle is not severe.”[4]



Rural Schools in Daviess County, Indiana.

Stages and Symptoms of Rural Decadence

In his discussion of the country problem, Dr. Josiah Strong reminds us that rural decadence comes as an easy evolution passing through rather distinct stages, when the rural community has really lost its best blood. Roads deteriorate,—those all-important arteries of country life; then property soon depreciates; schools and churches are weakened; often foreign immigrants

crowd out the native stock, sometimes infusing real strength, but often introducing the continental system of rural peasantry, with absentee landlords. Then isolation increases, with a strong tendency toward degeneracy and demoralization.

Where this process is going on we are not surprised to find such conditions as Rev. H. L. Hutchins described in 1906 in an address before the annual meeting of the Connecticut Bible Society at New Haven. From a very intimate experience of many years in the rural sections of Connecticut, he gave a most disheartening report, dwelling upon the increasing ignorance of the people, their growing vices, the open contempt for and disregard of marriage, the alarming growth of idiocy, partly the result of inbreeding and incest, some localities being cited where practically all the residents were brothers and sisters or cousins, often of the same name, so that surnames were wholly displaced by nicknames; the omnipresence of cheap whiskey with its terrible effects, the resulting frequency of crimes of violence; the feebleness and backwardness of the schools and the neglect and decay of the churches, resulting in inevitable lapse into virtual paganism and barbarism, in sections that two generations ago were inhabited by stalwart Christian men and women of the staunch old New England families.

Doubtless similar illustrations of degradation could be cited from the neglected corners of all the older states of the country, where several generations of social evolution have ensued under bad circumstances. In all the central states, conditions of rural degeneracy now exist which a few years ago were supposed to be confined to New England; for the same causes have been repeating themselves in other surroundings.

An illustration of “discouraged remnants” is cited by Dr. Warren H. Wilson. “I remember driving, in my early ministry, from a prosperous farming section into a weakened community, whose lands had a lowered value because they lay too far from the railroad. My path to a chapel service on Sunday afternoon lay past seven successive farmhouses in each of which lived one member of a family, clinging in solitary misery to a small acreage which had a few years earlier supported a household. In that same neighborhood was one group of descendants of two brothers, which had in two generations produced sixteen suicides. ‘They could not stand trouble,’ the neighbors said. The lowered value of their land, with consequent

burdens, humiliation and strain, had crushed them. The very ability and distinction of the family in the earlier period had the effect by contrast to sink them lower down."[5]

The Nam's Hollow Case

Ordinary rural degeneracy, however, is more apt to be associated with feeble-mindedness. An alarming, but perhaps typical case is described in a recent issue of *The Survey*. A small rural community in New York state, which the author calls for convenience Nam's Hollow, contains 232 licentious women and 199 licentious men out of a total population of 669; the great proportion being mentally as well as morally defective. A great amount of consanguineous marriage has taken place,—mostly without the formalities prescribed by law. Sex relations past and present are hopelessly entangled. Fifty-four of the inhabitants of the Hollow have been in custody either in county houses or asylums, many are paupers, and forty have served terms in state's prison or jail. There are 192 persons who are besotted by the use of liquor "in extreme quantities."

Apparently most of this degeneracy can be traced back to a single family whose descendants have numbered 800. With all sorts of evil traits to begin with, this family by constant inbreeding have made persistent these evil characteristics in all the different households and have cursed the whole life of the Hollow, not to mention the unknown evil wrought elsewhere, whither some of them have gone. "The imbeciles and harlots and criminalistic are bred in the Hollow, but they do not all stay there." A case is cited of a family of only five which has cost the county up to date $6,300, and the expense likely to continue for many years yet. "Would you rouse yourself if you learned there were ten cases of bubonic plague at a point not 200 miles away?" asks the investigator of Nam's Hollow. "Is not a breeding spot of uncontrolled animalism as much of a menace to our civilization?"[6]

A Note of Warning

These sad stories of rural degeneracy must not make us pessimists. We need not lose our faith in the open country. It is only the exceptional community which has really become decadent and demoralized. These communities

however warn us that even self-respecting rural villages are in danger of following the same sad process of decay unless they are kept on the high plane of wholesome Christian living and community efficiency. What is to prevent thousands of other rural townships, which are now losing population, gradually sinking to the low level of personal shiftlessness and institutional uselessness which are the marks of degeneracy? Nothing can prevent this but the right kind of intelligent, consecrated leadership. It is not so largely a quantitative matter, however, as Dr. Josiah Strong suggested twenty years ago in his stirring treatment of the subject. After citing the fact that 932 townships in New England were losing population in 1890, and 641 in New York, 919 in Pennsylvania, 775 in Ohio, et cetera, he suggests: "If this migration continues, and no new preventive measures are devised, I see no reason why isolation, irreligion, ignorance, vice and degradation should not increase in the country until we have a rural American peasantry, illiterate and immoral, possessing the rights of citizenship, but utterly incapable of performing or comprehending its duties."

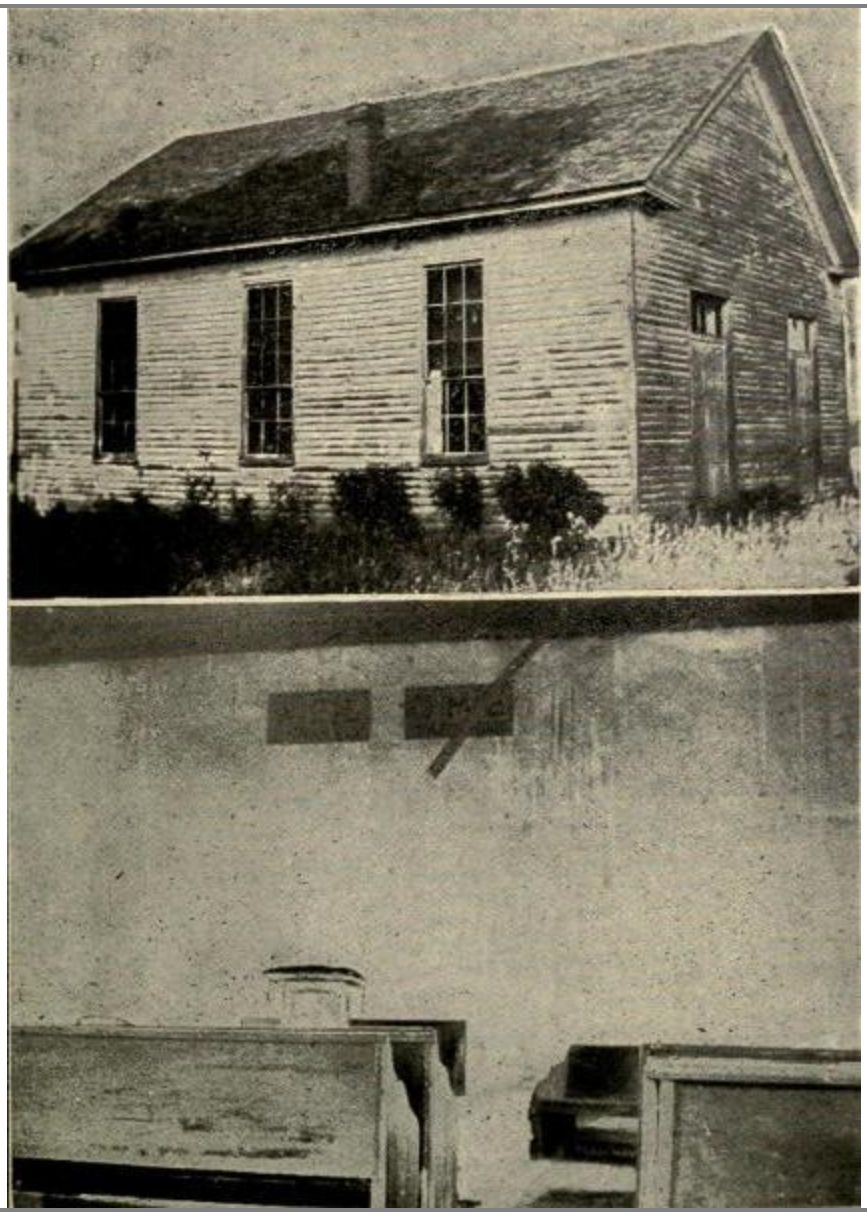
After twenty years we find the rural depletion still continuing. Though New England in 1910 reports 143 fewer losing towns than in 1890, the census of 1910 in general furnishes little hope that the migration from the country sections is diminishing.[7] Our hope for the country rests in the fact that the problem has at last been recognized as a national issue and that a Country Life Movement of immense significance is actually bringing in a new rural civilization. "We must expect the steady deterioration of our rural population, unless effective preventive measures are devised," was Dr. Strong's warning two decades ago. To-day the challenge of the country not only quotes the peril of rural depletion and threatened degeneracy, but also appeals to consecrated young manhood and womanhood with a living faith in the permanency of a reconstructed rural life.

Our rural communities must be saved from decadence, for the sake of the nation. Professor Giddings well says: "Genius is rarely born in the city. The city owes the great discoveries and immortal creations to those who have lived with nature and with simple folk. The country produces the original ideas, the raw materials of social life, and the city combines ideas and forms the social mind." In the threatened decadence of depleted rural communities, and in the lack of adequate leadership in many places, to revive a dying church, to equip a modern school, to develop a new rural

civilization, to build a cooperating community with a really satisfying and efficient life, we have a problem which challenges both our patriotism and our religious spirit, for the problem is fundamentally a religious one.

IV. The Urgency of the Problem.

A broad-minded leader of the religious life of college men has recently expressed his opinion that *the rural problem is more pressing just now than any other North American problem*. He is a city man and is giving his attention impartially to the needs of all sections. Two classes of people will be surprised by his statement. Many of his city neighbors are so overwhelmed by the serious needs of the city, they near-sightedly cannot see any particular problem in the country,—except how to take the next train for New York! And doubtless many country people, contented with second-rate conditions, are even unaware that they and their environment are being studied as a problem at all. Some prosperous farmers really resent the "interference" of people interested in better rural conditions and say "the country would be all right if let alone." But neither sordid rural complacency nor urban obliviousness can satisfy thinking people. We know there is something the matter with country life. We discover that the vitality and stability of rural life is in very many places threatened. It is the business of Christian students and leaders to study the conditions and try to remove or remedy the causes.



An Abandoned Church, Daviess County, Indiana.

A Hunt for Fundamental Causes

Depletion added to isolation, and later tending toward degeneracy, is what makes the rural problem acute. It is the growth of the city which has made the problem serious. If we would discover a constructive policy for handling this problem successfully by making country life worth while, and better able to compete with the city, then we must find out why the boys

and girls go to the big towns and why their parents rent the farm and move into the village.

For two generations there has been a mighty life-current toward the cities, sweeping off the farm many of the brightest boys and most ambitious girls in all the country-side, whom the country could ill afford to spare. The city needed many of them doubtless; but not all, for it has not used all of them well. Everywhere the country has suffered from the loss of them. Why did they go? It is evident that a larger proportion of the brightest country boys and girls must be kept on the farms if the rural communities are to hold their own and the new rural civilization really have a chance to develop as it should.

The Unfortunate Urbanizing of Rural Life

As a rule the whole *educational* trend is toward the city. The teachers of rural schools are mostly from the larger villages and towns where they have caught the city fever, and they infect the children. Even in the lower grades the stories of city life begin early to allure the country children, and with a subtle suggestion the echoes of the distant city's surging life come with all the power of the Arabian Nights tales. Early visits to the enchanted land of busy streets and wonderful stores and factories, the circus and the theater, deepen the impression, and the fascination grows.

In proportion to the nearness to the city, there has been a distinct urbanizing of rural life. To a degree this has been well. It has raised the standard of comfort in country homes and has had a distinct influence in favor of real culture and a higher plane of living. But the impression has come to prevail widely that the city is the source of all that is interesting, profitable and worth while, until many country folks have really come to think meanly of themselves and their surroundings, taking the superficial city estimate of rural values as the true one.

A real slavery to city fashions has been growing insidiously in the country. So far as this has affected the facial adornments of the farmer, it has made for progress; but as seen in the adoption of unhospitable vertical city architecture for country homes,—an insult to broad acres which suggest home-like horizontals,—and the wearing by the women of cheap imitations

of the flaunting finery of returning "cityfied" stenographers, it is surely an abomination pure and simple.

Bulky catalogs of mail-order houses, alluringly illustrated, have added to the craze, and the new furnishings of many rural homes resemble the tinsel trappings of cheap city flats, while substantial heirlooms of real taste and dignity are relegated to the attic. Fine rural discrimination as to the appropriate and the artistic is fast crumbling before the all-convincing argument, "It is *the thing* now in the city." To be sure there is much the country may well learn from the city, the finer phases of real culture, the cultivation of social graces in place of rustic bashfulness and boorish manners, and the saving element of industrial cooperation; but let these gains not be bought by surrendering rural self-respect or compromising rural sincerity, or losing the wholesome ruggedness of the country character. The new rural civilization must be indigenous to the soil, not a mere urbanizing veneer. Only so can it foster genuine community pride and loyalty to its own environment. But herein is the heart of our problem.

Why Country Boys and Girls Leave the Farm

The mere summary of reasons alleged by many individuals will be sufficient for our purpose, without enlarging upon them. Many of these were obtained by Director L. H. Bailey of Cornell, the master student of this problem. Countless boys have fled from the farm because they found the work monotonous, laborious and uncongenial, the hours long, the work unorganized and apparently unrewarding, the father or employer hard, exacting and unfeeling. Many of them with experience only with old-fashioned methods, are sure that farming does not pay, that there is no money in the business compared with city employments, that the farmer cannot control prices, is forced to buy high and sell low, is handicapped by big mortgages, high taxes, and pressing creditors. It is both encouraging and suggestive that many country boys, with a real love for rural life, but feeling that farming requires a great deal of capital, are planning "to farm someday, after making enough money in some other business."

The phantom of farm drudgery haunts many boys. They feel that the work is too hard in old age, and that it cannot even be relieved sufficiently by

machinery, that it is not intellectual enough and furthermore leaves a man too tired at night to enjoy reading or social opportunities. The work of farming seems to them quite unscientific and too dependent upon luck and chance and the fickle whims of the weather.

Farm life is shunned by many boys and girls because they say it is too narrow and confining, lacking in freedom, social advantages, activities and pleasures, which the city offers in infinite variety. They see their mother overworked and growing old before her time, getting along with few comforts or conveniences, a patient, uncomplaining drudge, living in social isolation, except for uncultivated neighbors who gossip incessantly.

Many ambitious young people see little future on the farm. They feel that the farmer never can be famous in the outside world and that people have a low regard for him. In their village high school they have caught visions of high ideals; but they fail to discover high ideals in farm life and feel that high and noble achievement is impossible there, that the farmer cannot serve humanity in any large way and can attain little political influence or personal power.

With an adolescent craving for excitement, “something doing all the time,” they are famished in the quiet open country and are irresistibly drawn to the high-geared city life, bizarre, spectacular, noisy, full of variety in sights, sounds, experiences, pleasures, comradeships, like a living vaudeville; and offering freedom from restraint in a life of easy incognito, with more time for recreation and “doing as you please.” But with all the attractiveness of city life for the boys and girls, as compared with the simplicity of the rural home, the main pull cityward is probably “the job.” They follow what they think is the easiest road to making a living, fancying that great prizes await them in the business life of the town.

Superficial and unreasonable as most of these alleged reasons are to-day, we must study them as genuine symptoms of a serious problem. If country life is to develop a permanently satisfying opportunity for the farm boys and girls, these conditions must be met. Isolation and drudgery must be somehow conquered. The business of farming must be made more profitable, until clerking in the city cannot stand the competition. The social and recreative side of rural life must be developed. The rural community

must be socialized and the country school must really fit for rural life. The lot of the farm mothers and daughters must be made easier and happier. Scientific farming must worthily appeal to the boys as a genuine profession, not a mere matter of luck with the weather, and the farm boy must no longer be treated as a slave but a partner in the firm.[8]

The Folly of Exploiting the Country Boy

An eminent Western lawyer addressing a rural life conference in Missouri a few weeks ago explained thus his leaving the farm: “When I was a boy on the farm we were compelled to rise about 4 o’clock every morning. From the time we got on our clothes until 7:30 we fed the live stock and milked the cows. Then breakfast. After breakfast, we worked in the field until 11:30, when, after spending at least a half hour caring for the teams we went to dinner. We went back to work at 1 o’clock and remained in the field until 7:30 o’clock. After quitting the fields we did chores until 8:30 or 9 o’clock, and then we were advised to go to bed right away so that we would be able to do a good day’s work on the morrow.”

No wonder the boy rebelled! This story harks back to the days when a father owned his son’s labor until the boy was twenty-one, and could either use the boy on his own farm or have him “bound out” for a term of years for the father’s personal profit. Such harsh tactlessness is seldom found today; but little of it will be found in the new rural civilization.[9] Country boys must not be exploited if we expect them to stay in the country as community builders. Many of them will gladly stay if given a real life chance.

The City’s Dependence upon the Country

The country is the natural source of supply for the nation. The city has never yet been self-sustaining. It has always drawn its raw materials and its population from the open country. The country must continue to produce the food, the hardiest young men and women, and much of the idealism and best leadership of the nation. All of these have proven to be indigenous to country life. Our civilization is fundamentally rural, and the rural problem is a national problem, equally vital to the city and the whole country. The

cities should remember that they have a vast deal at stake in the welfare of the rural districts.

The country for centuries got along fairly well without the city, and could continue to do so; but the city could not live a month without the country! The great railway strike last fall in England revealed the fact that Birmingham *had but a week's food supply*. A serious famine threatened, and this forced a speedy settlement. Meanwhile food could not be brought to the city except in small quantities, and the people of Birmingham learned in a striking way their utter dependence upon the country as their source of supply. The philosophy of one of the sages of China, uttered ages ago, is still profoundly true: "The well-being of a people is like a tree; agriculture is its root, manufactures and commerce are its branches and its life; but if the root be injured, the leaves fall, the branches break away and the tree dies."[10]

That far-seeing Irish leader, Sir Horace Plunkett, after a searching study of American conditions, is inclined to think that our great prosperous cities are blundering seriously in not concerning themselves more earnestly with the rural problem: "Has it been sufficiently considered how far the moral and physical health of the modern city depends upon the constant influx of fresh blood from the country, which has ever been the source from which the town draws its best citizenship? You cannot keep on indefinitely skimming the pan and have equally good milk left. Sooner or later, if the balance of trade in this human traffic be not adjusted, the raw material out of which urban society is made will be seriously deteriorated, and the symptoms of national degeneracy will be properly charged against those who neglected to foresee the evil and treat the cause.... The people of every state are largely bred in rural districts, and the physical and moral well-being of those districts must eventually influence the quality of the whole people."[11]

V. A Challenge to Faith.

The seriousness of our problem is sufficiently clear. Our consideration in this chapter has been confined mainly to the personal factors. Certain important social and institutional factors will be further considered in

Chapter V under Country Life Deficiencies. With all its serious difficulties and discouragements the rural problem is a splendid challenge to faith. There are many with the narrow city outlook who despair of the rural problem and consider that country life is doomed. There are still others who have faith in the country town and village but have lost their faith in the open country as an abiding place for rural homes. Before giving such people of little faith further hearing, we must voice the testimony of a host of country lovers who have a great and enduring faith in the country as the best place for breeding men, the most natural arena for developing character, the most favorable place for happy homes, and, for a splendid host of country boys and girls the most challenging opportunity for a life of service.

Test Questions on Chapter I

1.—How would you define the Rural Problem?

2.—Illustrate how the growth of the city has affected the rural problem.

3.—Explain the terms rural, urban, city, town, and village.

4.—What misleading comparisons have been made between city and country conditions?

5.—In what six states has the rural population, as a whole, shown a net loss in the last ten years?

6.—To what extent has rural America grown in population the past half century?

7.—Describe the symptoms of a decadent village.

8.—Under what conditions do you find a village improving even when losing population?

9.—Discuss carefully the comparative degeneracy of the city and the country.

10.—Describe some of the stages of rural degeneracy.

11.—What signs of rural degeneracy have come under your personal observation and how do you account for the conditions?

12.—What evidences have you seen of the "urbanizing" of rural life, and what do you think about it?

13.—Why do country boys and girls leave the farm and go to the city?

14.—What must be done to make country life worth while, so that a fair share of the boys and girls may be expected to stay there?

15.—How do you think a farmer ought to treat his boys?

16.—To what extent is the city dependent upon the country.

17.—Why do so many prosperous farmers rent their farms and give up country life?

18.—How does the village problem differ from the problem of the open country?

19.—Do you believe the open country will be permanently occupied by American homes, or must we develop a hamlet system, as in Europe and Asia?

20.—To what extent have you faith in the ultimate solution of the country problem?

COUNTRY LIFE OPTIMISM

I. Signs of a New Faith in Rural Life.

THE FARM: BEST HOME OF THE FAMILY: MAIN SOURCE OF NATIONAL WEALTH: FOUNDATION OF CIVILIZED SOCIETY: THE NATURAL PROVIDENCE

This tribute to the fundamental value of rural life is a part of the classic inscription, cut in the marble over the massive entrances, on the new union railroad station at Washington, D. C. Its calm, clear faith is reassuring. It reminds us that there is unquestionably an abiding optimism in this matter of country life. It suggests, that in spite of rural depletion and decadence here and there, country life is so essential to our national welfare it will permanently maintain itself. So long as there is a city civilization to be fed and clothed, there must always be a rural civilization to produce the raw materials. The question is, will it be a *Christian* civilization?

Our opening chapter has made it clear, that if the rural problem is to be handled constructively and successfully, rural life must be made permanently satisfying and worth while. It must not only be attractive enough to retain *a fair share* of the boys and girls, but also rich enough in opportunity for self-expression, development and service to warrant their investing a life-time there without regrets.

The writer believes there are certain great attractions in country life and certain drawbacks and disadvantages in city life which, if fairly considered by the country boy, would help him to appreciate the privilege of living in the country. It is certainly true that there is a strong and growing sentiment in the city favoring rural life. Many city people are longing for the freedom of the open country and would be glad of the chance to move out on the land for their own sake as well as for the sake of their children.

In this connection the most interesting fact is the new interest in country life opportunity which city boys and young men are manifesting. The discontented country boy who has come to seek his fortune in the city finds there the city boy anxious to fit himself for a successful life in the country! In view of the facts, the farm boy tired of the old farm ought to ponder well Fishin' 'Zeke's philosophy:

"Fish don't bite just for the wishin',
Keep a pullin'!
Change your bait and keep on fishin';
Keep a pullin'!
Luck ain't nailed to any spot;
Men you envy, like as not,
Envy you your job and lot!
Keep a pullin'!"

In many agricultural colleges and state universities, we find an increasing proportion of students *coming from the cities* for training in the science of agriculture and the arts of rural life. This is a very significant and encouraging fact. It shows us that the tide has begun to turn. Rural life is coming to its own, for country life is beginning to be appreciated again after several decades of disfavor and neglect. Our purpose in this chapter is to discuss these matters in detail.

It is difficult to find a more comprehensive statement of the attractiveness of country life, in concrete terms, than this fine bit of rural optimism entitled The Country Boy's Creed:

THE COUNTRY BOY'S CREED

"I believe that the country which God made is more beautiful than the city which man made; that life out-of-doors and in touch with the earth is the natural life of man. I believe that work is work wherever I find it; but that work with Nature is more inspiring than work with the most intricate machinery. I believe that the dignity of labor depends not on what you do, but on how you do it; that

> opportunity comes to a boy on the farm as often as to a boy in the city; that life is larger and freer and happier on the farm than in the town; that my success depends not upon my location, but upon myself,—not upon my dreams, but upon what I actually do, not upon luck but upon pluck. I believe in working when you work and playing when you play, and in giving and demanding a square deal in every act of life."[12]

There are many contented country boys in comfortable modern homes and prosperous rural communities, who heartily assent to this rural confession of faith. "For substance of *doctrine*" many a man would frankly accept it after a more or less disappointing life in the city whirl. It is not difficult to find men who really regret that they left the farm in young manhood, now that country life has so greatly increased in attractiveness. "Farm life has changed a great deal," says one with a tone of regret, "since I left the farm twelve years ago. Machinery has been added, making the work easier; farming has become more scientific, giving scope to the man who does not wish to be a mere nobody. For the last few years there has been more money in farming."

Every year now at Cornell University, some men change their course from the overcrowded engineering to the agricultural department. This confession of a late change of heart about country life comes from one of the engineers who apparently wishes he had done likewise: "When I entered the university and registered in mechanical engineering, I had the idea that a fellow had to get off the farm, as the saying goes, 'to make something of himself in the world,' and that a living could be made more easily, with more enjoyment, in another profession. But now, after seeing a little of the other side of the question, if I had the four years back again, agriculture would be my college course. As for country life being unattractive, I have always found it much the reverse. The best and happiest days of my life have been on the farm, and I cannot but wish that I were going back again when through with school work."

City-bred Students in Agricultural Colleges

In reply to the question "Why are so many city boys studying agriculture?" a dean of a college of agriculture replied, "I think it is safe to say that a large number of city-bred boys are attracted to the agricultural colleges as a result of *the general movement of our cities toward the country*. The agitation which has caused the business man to look upon the rural community as more desirable than the city, leads him to send his son to an agricultural college in preference to other departments of the university."

This city-to-country movement is naturally strongest where the country-to-city movement has long been developing. The Massachusetts State College reports only about 25% of its new students sons of farmers and 50% of its enrollment from the cities. Yet even in the rural state of North Carolina, with 86% in rural territory (under 2,500), the number of city boys studying agriculture in the state college is "large enough to make the fact striking."

In the College of Agriculture of the University of Illinois, there are 756 students enrolled this year. Eighty-one of these came from Chicago and 257 from other cities and towns above $5,000; making 45% from urban centers. [13]

One-third of the agricultural students at the University of Missouri last year enrolled from cities of 8,000 or over, communities which formed 36% of the state's population. In general it seems to be true that the proportion of city boys in the various agricultural colleges is approximately as large as the ratio of city population in the state; which indicates that city boys are almost as likely to seek technical training for country professions as the country boys are. In a few cases, as in Massachusetts, it is partly accounted for by the fact that the Agricultural College is the only state institution with free tuition. The breadth of the courses also draws many who do not plan for general farming but for specialized farming and the increasing variety of the modern rural professions. The facts clearly show that the city boys in state after state are seeing the vision of country life opportunity.

A study of the home addresses of American students at the New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University, for a period of twelve years prior to 1907 shows 19% from large cities, 34% from small cities and

towns, and 47% from rural communities under 2,000. The proportion of city students is evidently now increasing, as indicated by this year's figures. Of the new students entering this year from within the state 57% came from cities of 5,000 or over, 51% of whom came from cities of 10,000 upwards. Making considerable allowance for the neglect to add "R. F. D." in registration, it is still evident that the splendid equipment for country life leadership offered at Cornell is attracting more and more young men and women from the cities.

Reasons for this City-to-Country Movement

Two months ago the agricultural students at the University of Illinois who came from cities and larger towns were asked, "What were the considerations which led you to choose an agricultural course?" Over two hundred gave their answers in writing. Love of country life was the main reason mentioned by 131; dislike for the city, 22; the financial inducements, 62; and, land in the family, 36. Farming was stated as the ambition of 167, teaching 21, experiment station work 23, landscape gardening 6, and other rural professions 15.

In a similar referendum at Cornell the city students mentioned many reasons for choosing their life work in the country. Among them were cited the love of nature and farm life, the desire to live out of doors, love for growing things, and love for animals, the financial rewards of farming, its independence, its interesting character and the healthful life it makes possible. Other interesting reasons given will be cited later in this chapter.

II. The Privilege of Living in the Country.

Some City Life Drawbacks

Millions of people unquestionably live in the country from choice. They would not live in the city unless compelled to do so. A peculiarly amusing kind of provincialism is the attitude of the superficial city dweller who cannot understand why any one could possibly prefer to live in the country! Yet an unusually able college professor with a national reputation recently

remarked that he could not conceive of anything which could induce him to live in the city.

With all the attractions of the city, it has serious drawbacks which are not found in the country. If country boys actually understood the conditions of the struggle into which they were entering in the city, more of them would stay on the farm. “I lived one year in the city; which was long enough,” writes a country boy. The severe nervous tension of city life, the high speed of both social life and industry and the tyranny to hours and close confinement in offices, banks and stores are particularly hard for the country bred. The many disadvantages of the wage-earner, slack work alternating with the cruel pace, occasional strikes or lockouts, and the impersonal character of the corporation employer, coupled with the fact often realized that in spite of the crowds there are “no neighbors” in the city, reminds the country-bred laborer of the truth of President Roosevelt’s words: “There is not in the cities the same sense of common underlying brotherliness which there is still in the country districts.”

A striking cartoon was recently published by the *Paterson* (N. J.) *Guardian* entitled “The City Problem.” It represented “Mr. Ruralite” in the foreground halting at the road which leads down to the city, while from the factory blocks by the river two colossal grimy hands are raised in warning, with the message, GO BACK! On one hand is written HIGH PRICES; on the other POOR HEALTH.

With the recent improvement in city sanitation, which has perceptibly lowered the death rate, the city is physically a safer place to live in than it used to be; but slum sections are still reeking with contagion, and through most of the city wilderness the smoke and grime is perpetual and both pure air and clear sunshine are luxuries indeed. For most people the crowded city offers little attraction for a home. The heart of great cities has ceased to grow. The growing sections are the outlying wards and the suburbs, for obvious reasons. The moral dangers of the city where the saloon is usually entrenched in politics and vice is flagrantly tolerated if not actually protected help to explain the fact that a continuous procession of city families is seeking homes in suburban or rural towns where the perils surrounding their children are not so serious.

The Attractiveness of Country Life

It is evidently true, as Dean Bailey suggests, “Even in this epoch of hurried city-building, the love of the open country and of plain, quiet living still remains as a real and vital force.” The chance to live in the open air, to do out of door work and enjoy consequently a vigorous health, is a great boon which is coming to be more and more appreciated. “I intend to stick to farm life,” writes a Cornell agricultural student, “for I see nothing in the turmoil of city life to tempt me to leave the quiet, calm and nearness to nature with which we, as farmers, are surrounded. I also see the possibilities of just as great financial success on a farm as in any profession which my circumstances permit me to attain.” Another contented country boy writes, “I think the farm offers the best opportunity for the ideal home. I believe that farming is the farthest removed of any business from the blind struggle after money, and that the farmer with a modest capital can be rich in independence, contentment and happiness.”

A variety of other significant reasons have been collected by Director Bailey from boys who are loyal to their country homes. Many speak of the profitableness of scientific farming, but the majority are thinking of other privileges in rural life which outweigh financial rewards, such as the fact that the farmer is really producing wealth first-hand and is serving the primary needs of society. “I expect to make a business of breeding live-stock. I like to work out of doors, where the sun shines and the wind blows, where I can look up from my work and not be obliged to look at a wall. I dislike to use a pen as a business. I want to make new things and create new wealth, not to collect to myself the money earned by others. I cannot feel the sympathy which makes me a part of nature, unless I can be nearer to it than office or university life allows. I like to create things. Had I been dexterous with my hands, I might have been an artist; but I have found that I can make use of as high ideals, use as much patience, and be of as much use in the world by modeling in flesh and bone as I can by modeling in marble.”

In spite of the common notion of the farm boys who shirk country life, there is a great attraction now in the fact that farming really requires brains of a high order, offers infinite opportunity for broad and deep study, a chance for

developing technical skill and personal initiative in quite a variety of lines of work, all of which means a growing, broadening life and increasing self-respect and satisfaction.

The Partnership With Nature

Any briefest mention of the attractiveness of country life would be incomplete without reference to the nearness to nature and the privilege of her inspiring comradeship. Not only is the farmer's sense of partnership with nature a mighty impulse which tends to make him an elemental man; but every dweller in the country with any fineness of perception cannot fail to respond to the subtle appeal of the beautiful in the natural life about him. As Washington Irving wrote, in describing rural life in England, "In rural occupation there is nothing mean and debasing. It leads a man forth among scenes of natural grandeur and beauty; it leaves him to the working of his own mind, operated upon by the purest and most elevating of external influences. Such a man may be simple and rough, but he cannot be vulgar."

As young Bryant wrote among the beautiful Berkshire hills, "To him who in the love of nature holds communion with her visible forms, she speaks a various language." Without an interpreter, sometimes the message to the soul is heard as in a foreign tongue; but the message is voiced again like the music of perennial springs, and others hear it with ear and heart, and it brings peace and comfort and God's love. In his beautiful chapter on this topic Dr. W. L. Anderson writes: "By a subtle potency the rural environment comes to be not the obtrusive masses of earth, nor the monotonous acres of grass, nor the dazzling stress of endless flowers, nor the disturbing chatter of the birds; but instead of these, hills that speak of freedom, a sky that brings the infinite near, meadows verdant with beauty, air vocal with song. Beauty, sublimity, music, freedom, are in the soul."[14] Surely the uplifting influence of nature is a wonderful gift to those who are fortunate enough to live in the country. It takes the petty and sordid out of life. It transfigures common things with beauty and fresh meaning, with the cycle of the seasons and ever freshness of the days. It brings to those who listen a quiet message of content.

Rural Sincerity and Real Neighborliness

Among the country privileges not often mentioned is the chance one has to live with real folks. There is a genuineness about country people that is not often found in crowded towns where conventionalities of life veneer even the ways of friends, and where custom dictates and fashion rules and the very breadth of social opportunity makes superficial people, flitting from friend to friend, not pausing to find the depths in the eye or the gold in the character.

With fine simplicity, sometimes with blunt speech to be sure, our rural friends pierce through the artificial and find us where we are; honoring only what is worthy, caring nothing for titles or baubles, slow to welcome or woo or even to approve; but quick to befriend when real need appears, and having once befriended, steady and true in friendship, awkward in expression, maybe, but true as steel. To live with such country folks is to know the joy of real neighbors. To work with them takes patience, honest effort to overcome inborn conservatism, and a brother's sincere spirit; but when cooperation is once promised, your goal is gained. They will say what they mean. They will do as they say.

The Challenge of the Difficult in Rural Life

Since the invention of the sulky plow, the mowing machine and the riding harrow, et cetera, an American humorist remarked that farming is rapidly becoming a sedentary occupation! Drudgery has so largely been removed that it is probably true that there is no more "hack-work" or dull routine in agriculture than in other lines of business. But plenty of hard work remains the farmer's task. There is enough of the difficult left to challenge the strong and to frighten the weakling, and in this very fact is a bit of rural optimism. It applies not merely to farming but to country life in general.

Our pioneer days certainly developed a sturdy race of men. They lived a strenuous life with plenty of hardship, toil and danger, but it put iron into the blood of their children and made wonderful physiques, clear intellects, strong characters. This heroic training nurtured a remarkable race of continent conquerors fitted for colossal tasks and undaunted by difficulties.

The rise of great commonwealths, developing rapidly now into rich agricultural empires, has rewarded the pioneers' faith and sacrifice.

All are thankful that the rigor of those heroic days is gone with the conquest of the wilderness. But few discern in the luxurious comfort of hyper-civilized life a peculiar peril. Our fathers, with a fine scorn for the weather, braved the wintry storms with a courage which brought its own rewards in toughened fiber and lungs full of ozone. To-day in our super-heated houses we defy the winter to do us any good. We have reduced comfort to a fine art. Even heaven has lost its attractiveness to our generation. Luxury has become a national habit if not a national vice.

Our food is not coarse enough to maintain good digestion. Our desk-ridden thousands are losing the vigor that comes only from out-of-door life. Exercise for most men has become a lost art; they smoke instead! What with electric cars for the poor man and motor cars for the near rich, walking is losing out fast with the city multitudes. Our base ball we take by proxy, sitting on the bleachers; our recreation is done for us by professional entertainers in theater, club and opera. In a score of ways the creature comforts of a luxury loving age are surely enervating those who yield to them. Our modern flats equipped with every conceivable convenience to lure a man and a woman into losing the work habit and reducing to the minimum the expenditure of energy, are doing their share to take *effort* out of life and to make us merely effete products of civilization!

Modern city life, for the comfortably situated, is too luxurious to be good for the body, the mind or the morals. It dulls the "fighting edge"; it kills ambition with complacency; it often takes the best incentives out of life; it makes subtle assault upon early ideals and insidiously undermines the moral standards. We are fast losing the zest for the climbing life. We need the challenge of the difficult to spur us on to real conquests and to fit us for larger tasks.

It is the glory of country life that it is by no means enervated or over-civilized. Enough of the rough still remains for all practical purposes. Farm homes are comfortable usually but not luxurious. Rural life is full of the physical zest that keeps men young and vigorous. As Dr. F. E. Clark suggests, farming furnishes an ideal "*moral* equivalent of war." The annual

conquest of farm difficulties makes splendid fighting. There are plenty of natural enemies which must be fought to keep a man's fighting edge keen and to keep him physically and mentally alert. What with the weeds and the weather, the cut-worms, the gypsy, and the codling moths, the lice, the maggots, the caterpillars, the San Jose scale and the scurvy, the borers, the blight and the gorger, the peach yellows and the deadly curculio, the man behind the bug gun and the sprayer finds plenty of exercise for ingenuity and a royal chance to fight the good fight. Effeminacy is not a rural trait. Country life is great for making men; men of robust health and mental resources well tested by difficulty, men of the open-air life and the skyward outlook. Country dwellers may well be thankful for the challenge of the difficult. It tends to keep rural life strong.

Our rural optimism however does not rest solely upon the attractiveness of country life and the various assets which country life possesses. We find new courage in the fact that these assets have at last been capitalized and a great modern movement is promoting the enterprise.

III. The Country Life Movement.

Its Real Significance

The modern country life movement in America has little in common with the "back to the soil" agitation in recent years. This latter is mainly the cry of real estate speculators plus newspaper echoes. The recent years of high prices and exorbitant cost of city living have popularized this slogan, the assumption being that if there were only more farmers, then food prices would be lower. This assumes that the art of farming is easily acquired and that the untrained city man could go back to the soil and succeed. What we really need is better farmers rather than more farmers; and the untrained city man who buys a farm is rather apt to make a failure of it,—furnishing free amusement meanwhile for the natives,—for the work of farming is highly technical, and requires probably more technical knowledge than any other profession except the practice of medicine.

There are few abandoned farms to-day within easy distance of the cities. For several years it has been quite the fad for city men of means to buy a farm, and when a competent farm manager is placed in charge the

experiment is usually a safe one. Often it proves a costly experiment and seldom does the city-bred owner really become a valuable citizen among his rural neighbors. He remains socially a visitor, rather than a real factor in country life. Conspicuous exceptions could of course be cited, but unfortunately this seems to be the rule.

The kindly purpose of well-meaning philanthropists to transplant among the farmers the dwellers in the city slums is resented by both! It would be a questionable kindness anyway, for the slum dweller would be an unhappy misfit in the country and escape to his crowded alley on the earliest opportunity, like a drunkard to his cups. Sometimes a hard-working city clerk or tradesman hears the call to the country and succeeds in wresting his living from the soil. The city man need not fail as a farmer. It depends upon his capacity to learn and his power of adaptation to a strange environment. The “back to the soil” movement is not to be discouraged; but let us not expect great things from it. The real “Country Life Movement” is something quite different.

Rural Redirection by the County Committee of the Lake County, Ohio, Associations.

One hundred and forty farmers in “five day school,” the Ohio Agricultural College cooperating. A girls’ exhibit in cut flower contest. A May pole dance at a township school picnic. One of the boys participating in corn growing contest. The winner of the strawberry growing contest.

Its Objective: A Campaign for Rural Progress

The back-to-the-soil trend is a city movement. The real country life movement is a campaign for rural progress conducted mainly by rural people, not a paternalistic plan on the part of city folks for rural redemption. It is defined by one of the great rural leaders as the working out of the desire to make rural civilization as effective and satisfying as other civilization; to make country life as satisfying as city life and country forces as effective as city forces. Incidentally he remarks, "We call it a new movement. In reality it is new only to those who have recently discovered it."

Its Early History: Various Plans for Rural Welfare

The father of the country life movement seems to have been George Washington. He and Benjamin Franklin were among the founders of the first farmers' organization in America, the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, established in 1785. There were about a dozen such societies by 1800, patterned after similar organizations in England. President Washington had an extensive correspondence with prominent men in England on this subject and made it the subject of his last message to Congress. He called attention to the fundamental importance of agriculture, advocated agricultural fairs, a national agricultural society and government support for institutions making for rural progress.

Since these early days there have been many organized expressions of rural ambition, most of them only temporary but contributing more or less to the movement for the betterment of country life. There were over 900 agricultural societies in 1858 and these had increased to 1,350 by 1868 in spite of the setback of the civil war. Most of these were county organizations whose chief activity was an annual fair. Agricultural conventions were occasionally held, sometimes national in scope, which discussed frankly the great questions vital to farmers; and more permanent organizations soon developed which had a great influence in bringing the farmers of the country into cooperation with each other industrially and politically. Foremost among these were the Grange (1867), the Farmers'

Alliance (1875), the Farmers' Union (1885), Farmers' Mutual Benefit Organization (1883), and the Patrons of Industry (1887). The Farmers' National Congress has met annually since 1880, and has exerted great influence upon legislation during this period, in the interest of the rural communities.

Its Modern Sponsors: The Agricultural Colleges

Important as these efforts at organized cooperation among farmers have been, nothing has equalled the influence of the agricultural colleges, which are now found in every state and are generously supported by the states in addition to revenue from the "land-grant funds" which all the colleges possess. These great institutions have done noble service in providing the intelligent leadership not only in farm interests but also in all the affairs of country life. At first planned to teach agriculture almost exclusively, many of them are now giving most thorough courses in liberal culture interpreted in terms of country life. The vast service of these schools for rural welfare, in both intra-mural and extension work, can hardly be overestimated.

The Roosevelt Commission on Country Life

It will be seen that the country life movement has been making progress for years. But it really became a national issue for the first time when President Roosevelt appointed his Country Life Commission. Though greeted by some as an unnecessary effort and handicapped by an unfriendly Congress which was playing politics, the Commission did a most significant work. Thirty hearings were held in various parts of the country and a painstaking investigation was conducted both orally and by mail, the latter including detailed information and suggestion from over 120,000 people. The Commission's report, with the President's illuminating message, presents in the best form available the real meaning of the country life movement. It will serve our purpose well to quote from this report a few significant paragraphs:

"The farmers have hitherto had less than their full share of public attention along the lines of business and social life. There is too much belief among all our people that the prizes of life lie away from the farms. I am therefore

anxious to bring before the people of the United States the question of securing better business and better living on the farm, whether by cooperation among the farmers for buying, selling and borrowing; by promoting social advantages and opportunities in the country, or by any other legitimate means that will help to make country life more gainful, more attractive, and fuller of opportunities, pleasures and rewards for the men, women and children of the farms."

"The farm grows the raw material for the food and clothing of all our citizens; it supports directly almost half of them; and nearly half of the children of the United States are born and brought up on the farms. How can the life of the farm family be made less solitary, fuller of opportunity, freer from drudgery, more comfortable, happier and more attractive? Such a result is most earnestly to be desired. How can life on the farm be kept on the highest level, and where it is not already on that level, be so improved, dignified and brightened as to awaken and keep alive the pride and loyalty of the farmer's boys and girls, of the farmer's wife and of the farmer himself? How can a compelling desire to live on the farm be aroused in the children that are born on the farm? All these questions are of vital importance, not only to the farmer but to the whole nation."—*Theodore Roosevelt.*

Its Call for Rural Leadership

"We must picture to ourselves a new rural social structure, developed from the strong resident forces of the open country; and then we must set at work all the agencies that will tend to bring this about. The entire people need to be aroused to this avenue of usefulness. Most of the new leaders must be farmers who can find not only a satisfactory business career on the farm, but who will throw themselves into the service of upbuilding the community. A new race of teachers is also to appear in the country. A new rural clergy is to be trained. These leaders will see the great underlying problem of country life, and together they will work, each in his own field, for the one goal of a new and permanent rural civilization. Upon the development of this distinctively rural civilization rests ultimately our ability, by methods of farming requiring the highest intelligence, to continue to feed and clothe the hungry nations; to supply the city and

metropolis with fresh blood, clean bodies and clear brains that can endure the strain of modern urban life; and to preserve a race of men in the open country that, in the future as in the past, will be the stay and strength of the nation in time of war and its guiding and controlling spirit in time of peace."

"It is to be hoped that many young men and women, fresh from our schools and institutions of learning, and quick with ambition and trained intelligence, will feel a new and strong call to service."

Its Constructive Program for Rural Betterment

The Commission suggested a broad campaign of publicity on the whole subject of rural life, until there is an awakened appreciation of the necessity of giving this phase of our national development as much attention as has been given to other interests. They urge upon all country people a quickened sense of responsibility to the community and to the state in the conserving of soil fertility, and the necessity for diversifying farming in order to conserve this fertility. The need of a better rural society is suggested; also the better safeguarding of the strength and happiness of the farm women; a more widespread conviction of the necessity for organization, not only for economic but for social purposes, this organization to be more or less cooperative, so that all the people may share equally in the benefits and have voice in the essential affairs of the community. The farmer is reminded that he has a distinct natural responsibility toward the farm laborer, in providing him with good living facilities and in helping him to be a man among men; and all the rural people are reminded of the obligation to protect and develop the natural scenery and attractiveness of the open country.

The Country Life Commission made the following specific recommendations to Congress:

The encouragement of a system of thoroughgoing surveys of all agricultural regions in order to take stock and to collect local facts, with the idea of providing a basis on which to develop a scientifically and economically sound country life.

The encouragement of a system of extension work in rural communities through all the land-grant colleges with the people at their homes and on their farms.

A thoroughgoing investigation by experts of the middleman system of handling farm products, coupled with a general inquiry into the farmer's disadvantages in respect to taxation, transportation rates, cooperative organizations and credit, and the general business system.

An inquiry into the control and use of the streams of the United States with the object of protecting the people in their ownership and of saving for agricultural uses such benefits as should be reserved for such purposes.

The establishing of a highway engineering service, or equivalent organization, to be at the call of the states in working out effective and economical highway systems.

The establishing of a system of parcels post and postal savings banks.

The providing of some means or agency for the guidance of public opinion toward the development of a real rural society that shall rest directly on the land.

The enlargement of the United States Bureau of Education, to enable it to stimulate and coordinate the educational work of the nation.

Careful attention to the farmers' interests in legislation on the tariff, on regulation of railroads, control or regulation of corporations and of speculation, legislation in respect to rivers, forests and the utilization of swamp lands.

Increasing the powers of the Federal government in respect to the supervision and control of the public health.

Providing such regulations as will enable the states that do not permit the sale of liquors to protect themselves from traffic from adjoining states.

IV. Institutions and Agencies at Work

Organized Forces Making for a Better Rural Life

When we consider the vast scope of the Country Life Movement in America and the variety of agencies involved, it greatly increases our rural optimism. The following list was compiled by Dr. L. H. Bailey and is the most complete available.

1. Departments of Agriculture, national and state.

2. Colleges of agriculture, one for each state, territory, or province.

3. Agricultural experiment stations, in nearly all cases connected with the colleges of agriculture.

4. The public school system, into which agriculture is now being incorporated. Normal schools, into many of which agriculture is being introduced.

5. Special separate schools of agriculture and household subjects.

6. Special colleges, as veterinary and forestry institutions.

7. Departments or courses of agriculture in general or old-line colleges, and universities.

8. Farmers' Institutes, usually conducted by colleges of agriculture or by boards or departments of agriculture.

(The above institutions may engage in various forms of extension work.)

9. The agricultural press.

10. The general rural newspapers.

11. Agricultural and horticultural societies of all kinds.

12. The Patrons of Husbandry, Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union, and other national organizations.

13. Business societies and agencies, many of them cooperative.

14. Business men's associations and chambers of commerce in cities and towns.

15. Local political organizations (much in need of redirection).

16. Civic societies.

17. The church.

18. The Young Men's Christian Association, and other religious organizations.

19. Women's clubs and organizations, of many kinds.

20. Fairs and expositions.

21. Rural libraries.

22. Village improvement societies.

23. Historical societies.

24. Public health regulation.

25. Fraternal societies.

26. Musical organizations.

27. Organizations aiming to develop recreation, and games and play.

28. Rural free delivery of mail (a general parcels post is a necessity).

29. Postal savings banks.

30. Rural banks (often in need of redirection in their relations to the development of the open country).

31. Labor distributing bureaus.

32. Good thoroughfares.

33. Railroads, and trolley extensions (the latter needed to pierce the remoter districts rather than merely to parallel railroads and to connect large towns).

34. Telephones.

35. Auto-vehicles.

36. Country stores and trading places (in some cases).

37. Insurance organizations.

38. Many government agencies to safeguard the people, as public service commissions.

39. Books on agriculture and country life.

40. Good farmers, living on the land.

It is through the activity and growing cooperation of these various agencies that the new rural civilization is now rapidly developing. It will be the purpose of our next chapter to describe the process. Rural progress in recent decades has been surprising and encouraging in many quarters. Men of faith cannot fail to see that the providence of God is now using these modern forces in making a new world of the country. It may fairly be called a new world compared with the primitive past. Thus our rural optimism is justified, and we have increasing faith in the future of country life in America.

Test Questions on Chapter II

1.—What tribute to country life is inscribed on the Washington Union Station? It is a just tribute?

2.—Can you accept the "Country Boy's Creed"?

3.—Why are so many city boys studying in agricultural colleges? How is it in your own state?

4.—Discuss some of the disadvantages and drawbacks of modern city life.

5.—Why is country life attractive to you?

6.—What do you reckon among the privileges of living in the country?

7.—Discuss the real optimism you find in the "challenge of the difficult" in country life.

8.—How do you explain the "back-to-the-soil movement" from the cities to suburban and rural villages?

9.—Show how the real "Country Life Movement" differs from this.

10.—Mention some of the early plans for rural welfare in America.

11.—What part have the agricultural colleges had in the Country Life Movement?

12.—When did rural betterment first become a national issue in the United States?

13.—What definite rural needs did President Roosevelt mention in his message to the Country Life Commission?

14.—What special call for rural leadership did this Commission voice?

15.—What do you think about the program for rural progress which the Commission proposed to Congress?

16.—What do you think about the proposal to establish a parcels post?

17.—In what special ways do the farmers' interests need safeguarding?

18.—Make a list of improvements which you consider necessary in the country sections you know the best.

19.—Name as many agencies as you can which are making a better rural life.

20.—On what do you base your faith in the new rural civilization?

THE NEW RURAL CIVILIZATION

FACTORS THAT ARE MAKING A NEW WORLD IN THE COUNTRY

Introductory: Rural Self-Respect and Progress

The faith of the country life movement is justified by the remarkable rural progress of the past generation. City life has been revolutionized by inventive skill, modern machinery, new forms of wealth and higher standards of efficiency and comfort; but meanwhile this marvelous progress has not been confined to cities. To be sure depleted rural districts, drained of their best blood, have not kept pace. But suburban sections in close partnership with cities have shared the speed and the privileges of urban progress, and meanwhile healthy, self-sustaining rural counties, scorning any dependence upon cities except for market, have developed great prosperity of their own and a remarkably efficient and satisfying life, even though population may have somewhat declined.

This is so radically different from the life of the past, we may justly call it a new rural civilization. It is distinctly a rural civilization, not merely because of its characteristics, but because it is a triumph of rural leadership and the product of rural evolution, by fortunate selection and survival in the country of efficient manhood and womanhood best adapted to cope with their environment.

Thousands who failed in the country have gone to the cities, where it is often easier for incompetence to eke out an existence by living on casual jobs. Thousands of others have found better success in the city because they were better adapted to urban life. Often the net result of the migration has been profit for the country community which has held its best, that is, the country born and bred best adapted to be happy and successful in the rural environment.

Where you find the new rural civilization well developed, you find a self-respecting people, prosperous and happy, keeping abreast of the times in all important human interests, keenly alert to all new developments in agriculture and often proud of their country heritage. Because of this new prosperity and self-respect, ridicule of the "countryman" has ceased to be popular among intelligent people. The title "farmer" has taken on an utterly new meaning and is becoming a term of respect.

All this marks a return to the former days, before the age of supercilious cities, when most of the wealth and culture and family pride was in the open country and the village. To be sure in some sections of America this frank pride in rural life has never ceased. The real aristocracy of the South has always been mainly rural. Many of the "first families of Virginia" still live on the old plantations and maintain a highly self-respecting life, free from the corrosive envy of city conditions, often pitying the man whose business requires him to live in the crowded town, and rejoicing in the freedom and the wholesome joys of country life. The hospitable country mansions of the South still remind us of the fame of Westover, Mount Vernon and Monticello as centers of social grace and leadership; and the most select social groups in Richmond welcome the country gentlemen and women of refinement from these country homes, not merely because of the honored family names they bear, but because they themselves are worthy scions of a continuously worthy rural civilization. They have never pitied themselves for living in the country. They do not want to live in the city. They are justly proud of their rural heritage and their country homes.

I. The Triumph over Isolation.

Conquering the Great Enemy of Rural Contentment

The depressing effect of isolation has always been the most serious enemy of country life in America. Nowhere else in the world have farm homes been so scattered. Instead of living in hamlets, like the rest of the rural world, with outlying farms in the open country, American pioneers with characteristic independence have lived on their farms regardless of distance to neighbors. But social hungers, especially of the young people, could not safely be so disregarded, and in various ways the social instincts have had

their revenge. Isolation has proved to be the curse of the country, as its opposite, congestion, has in the city. The wonder is that the rural population of the country as a whole has steadily gained, nearly doubling in a generation, in spite of this handicap. Obviously the social handicap of isolation must be in a measure overcome, if country life becomes permanently satisfying. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the new rural civilization has developed many means of intercommunication, bringing the remotest country districts into vital touch with the world.

Among the factors that have revolutionized the life of country people and hastened the new rural civilization are the telephone, the daily mail service by rural free delivery, the rapid extension of good roads, the introduction of newspapers and magazines and farm journals, and traveling libraries as well, the extension of the trolley systems throughout the older states, and the rapid introduction of automobiles, especially through the West.

In these various ways the fruits of modern inventive skill and enterprise have enriched country life and have banished forever the extreme isolation which used to vex the farm household of the past. The farm now is conveniently near the market. The town churches and stores and schools are near enough to the farms. The world's daily messages are brought to the farmer's fireside. And the voice of the nearest neighbor may be heard in the room, though she may live a mile away.

The Social Value of the Telephone

Among these modern blessings in the country home, one of the most significant is the telephone. A business necessity in the city, it is a great social asset in the rural home, like an additional member of the family circle. It used to be said, though often questioned, that farmers' wives on western farms furnished the largest quota of insane asylum inmates, because of the monotony and loneliness of their life. The tendency was especially noticeable in the case of Scandinavian immigrant women, accustomed in the old home to the farm hamlet with its community life.

To-day the farmer's wife suffers no such isolation. To be sure the wizards of invention have not yet given us the *teleblepone*, by which the faces of distant friends can be made visible; but the telephone brings to us that

wonderfully personal element, the human voice, the best possible substitute for the personal presence. Socially, the telephone is a priceless boon to the country home, especially for the women, who have been most affected by isolation in the past. They can now lighten the lonely hours by a chat with neighbors over household matters, or even have a neighborhood council, with five on the line, to settle some question of village scandal! All sorts of community doings are speedily passed from ear to ear. Details of social plans for church or grange are conveniently arranged by wire. Symptoms are described by an anxious mother to a resourceful grandmother and a remedy prescribed which will cure the baby before the horse could even be harnessed. Or at any hour of the day or night the doctor in the village can be quickly summoned and a critical hour saved, which means the saving of precious life.

On some country lines a general ring at six o'clock calls all who care to hear the daily market quotations; and at noon the weather report for the day is issued. If the weather is not right, the gang of men coming from the village can be intercepted by phone. Or if the quotations are not satisfactory, a distant city can be called on the wire and the day's shipment sent to the highest bidder—saving money, time, and miles of travel.

All things considered the telephone is fully as valuable in the country as in the city and its development has been just as remarkable, especially in the middle West where thousands of independent rural lines have been extended in recent years, at very low expense. In 1902 there were 21,577 rural lines in the United States, with a total length of 259,306 miles of wires, and 266,969 rural phones.

Good Roads, the Index of Civilization

When John Frederick Oberlin began his remarkable work of community building in the stagnant villages of the Vosges Mountains, his very first move was to build a road. The status of any civilization is fairly clearly indicated by the condition of the highways. The first sign of rural decay in a discouraged community has often been the neglect of the thoroughfares. One of the widespread signs of rural progress is the recent attention given to good roads. In 1892 the Good Roads Association was formed. In the

previous year the first state aid for good road building was granted, and since then state after state has appropriated millions of dollars for this purpose. The proposal that a great macadam road be built by Congress from Washington to Gettysburg, as a memorial to President Lincoln, whether a wise proposition or not, shows how prominent this subject has finally become, in the eyes of the nation.

Progressive farmers have discovered that a bad road is a tax upon every ton of produce hauled to market; that in effect it lengthens the three mile distance to ten; that the trip requires three hours instead of one; and that a good macadam road, or some form of paving, varying with the nearness of materials, pays for itself again and again, in the saving of time and money, and wear and tear on rolling stock and teams. The social effects of good roads are almost as clear as the industrial benefits. There is more social cooperation. People go oftener to town, they gather more easily at church and social functions, and the intermingling means better acquaintance and more helpful friendships. Better business, better social life, better neighborhoods, follow the trail of better roads—and a far better chance for the country church.

Railroads, Steam and Electric

It is hard for us to imagine a world without railroads! Yet before 1830 all long distance travel was by stage coach or by water. The world-view of most men was very tiny and their mental outlook correspondingly narrow. Farm life was seriously restricted by the fact that a distant market for most goods was impossible. It cost $10 per ton per hundred miles to haul merchandise to market, a tax which only high-grade goods could stand.

The triumph of the railroads in conquering the continent has been one of the national marvels. Suffice it to say, though the railroad has helped to concentrate population in the cities, it has also served in a wonderful way to develop the country communities, to open up whole sections for settlement, furnishing a market and a base of supplies, making extensive agriculture possible and distant commerce profitable; meanwhile serving as main arteries of communication, with a constant influx of fresh world thought and life.

The interurban trolleys are doing much that the steam roads cannot do, connecting vast rural sections which hitherto have been aside from the beaten paths of life. The relative cheapness of building these electric lines, and the less expense for power, equipment and maintenance make their further extension probable as well as necessary for years to come. Their frequent trips, the near approach to thousands of farm homes, their short stops and low rates make them particularly serviceable for country people. "No king one hundred years ago," says Dr. Roads, "could have had a coach, warmed in winter, lighted up to read at night, running smoothly with scarcely a jolt, and more swiftly than his fastest horses. Through the loving providence of the heavenly Father, his poorest children have them now."[15] It is too early yet to estimate rightly the contribution the trolley has made to the new rural civilization. It has doubtless lessened in some respects the prestige of the village and especially of the village stores; and has brought in some evils, but it has interwoven, with its rapid shuttles, the city and the country, vastly enriching country life with broadened opportunity and making thousands more contented to live in country homes, because of lessened isolation as well as developing the suburban village, the most rapidly growing of all communities in America to-day.

The Rural Postal Service

The day of the moss-back who went for his mail once every week, the same day he got shaved and sold his butter, is gone forever, so far as most of our country is concerned. To-day about 20,000,000 of our rural neighbors receive their mail at their own farms, delivered by Uncle Sam's messengers; and this great change has occurred in a decade and a half. In 1897 $40,000 was the appropriation by Congress for the experiment in rural free delivery. In 1909 the expense was about $36,000,000, and on June 1 of that year there were 40,637 rural routes, nearly all of them daily service. This rural army of the civil service is almost as large as the whole military force of the country and possibly quite as useful. It is rapidly driving from our rural homes the specters of ignorance, superstition, provincialism and prejudice, and the positive good accomplished cannot be estimated. Letter writing makes and keeps friends. Thousands of farmers' families have joined The League of the Golden Pen in recent years. Their mail collected and distributed doubles in four or five years after the local R. F. D. is started.

Among the new civilizing factors is the metropolitan daily, bringing to millions of farmers the daily stimulus to thought and action which the continued story of the throbbing life of the struggling world unfailingly brings. On one rural route the number of daily papers delivered increased in three years from thirteen to 113. The great interests of humanity are now intelligently discussed by the farmer and his boys as they go about their work, and the broadening of interests is what prevents stagnation and enriches life.

We are not surprised to find a wonderful increase of magazines and other periodical literature in the country, especially the farm journals which have attained such influence and excellence. R. F. D. did it. Likewise the remarkable increase of shopping by mail is due to the same cause. Though many such purchases are doubtless foolishly made, it is undoubtedly true that even the great catalogs of mail-order houses with their description of many of the comforts of modern civilization have been of great educative value and have stimulated the ambition of countless country homes for an improved scale of living.

A recent rural survey of Ohio revealed the fact that pianos or organs were found in 25.9% of the 300,000 rural homes of the state, though only 4.8% had bath tubs! We venture to guess that many of these musical instruments were bought by mail, after the family had for many days studied the alluring catalogs of Chicago mail-order houses. Incidentally, it would be well for Chicago to sell more bath tubs! The new rural civilization is rapidly requiring them.

The Automobile, a Western Farm Necessity

Often merely a luxurious plaything in the city, a saucy bit of flaunting pride particularly irritating to envious neighbors, the automobile finds great usefulness in the country. The average village as yet cares little for it; but the western farmer in the open country is finding it almost a necessity. The proportion of autos to farms, in the prosperous corn and wheat belt, is very surprising. Low salaried tradesmen in the cities have mortgaged their homes to buy the coveted automobile; the thrifty farmer has also been known to do the same, but with vastly better reason. A certain bank in a Mississippi

valley state tried to stop the withdrawal of funds for the purchase of machines, the vast sums being withdrawn from the state for this purpose had become so alarming; but it was like damming Niagara! In a prosperous little farm community in Iowa with only a few scattering families, there were nine automobiles last summer; and the situation is probably typical of prosperous western communities. A reliable authority vouches for the fact that 179 automobiles were sold in Cawker City, Kansas, in 1911. The population of the "city" in 1910 was 870. Obviously most of these machines must have been distributed among the farms in the outlying country. The village itself had last year but twenty-one automobiles.

Quite likely the per capita number of machines is greater in our great agricultural states than in the cities. It is needless to emphasize the social possibilities of this newest of our agencies for the newer rural civilization. As a means of communication it outstrips all but the telephone. It brings farm life right up to the minute for progressiveness, with a pardonable pride in being able to keep pace with the city. It annihilates distance and makes isolation a myth; and as the expense becomes less and less with every year, the time is soon coming when every farmer who can now afford the ordinary farm machinery will be able also to possess this newest symbol of rural prosperity.

II. The Emancipation from Drudgery.

The Social Revolution Wrought by Machinery

Next to the great social transformation caused by these modern means of fighting isolation comes the emancipation from drudgery brought in by farm machinery. Labor saving machinery is just as much a feature of modern civilization in the country as it is in the city. Machinery, by developing the factory system, centralized industry and produced the great cities, attracting thousands from the farms to man the looms. But this is only half the story. Meanwhile the invention of *agricultural* machinery made it possible for the farm work of the country to be done by fewer men. Therefore the farm population of the United States decreased from 47.6% in 1870 to 35.7% in 1900, representing a change from agriculture to other employments by three and a half millions of people. Meanwhile, comparing

the average value of farms, and the relative purchasing power of money, the average farmer was 42% better off at the end of the century than fifty years before.[16]

The tendency of farm machinery to throw men out of employment and send many to the city is shown by these facts from the thirteenth annual report of the U. S. Commissioner of Labor. The sowing of small grains is accomplished nowadays by machine methods in from one-fifth to one-fourth the time formerly required for hand-sowing. One man with a modern harvester can now do the work of eight men using the old methods, while the modern threshing machine has displaced fourteen to twenty-nine farm laborers. Machinery displaces the labor or increases the crop, according to circumstances; but usually both. It has greatly increased the output of farm products, sometimes reduced prices, and vastly increased the efficiency of the workers. Of nine of the more important crops, the average increase in labor efficiency in the past two generations has been 500%, while in the case of barley it was over 2,200%, and nearly the same for wheat.[17]

The Evolution of Farm Machinery

The great incentive in America for our astonishing development of farm machinery has been our cheap lands and our relatively high wages. But the noble desire to rise above the slavery of drudgery has constantly had its influence. American ambition has combined with Yankee ingenuity to produce this wonderful story. The plow, that greatest of all implements, has passed through constant changes, from the crude simplicity of early days to the giant steam gang-plow of the present.

The first steel plow was made in 1837 from an old saw blade! The first mowing machine was patented in 1831. Imperfect reapers appeared two years later and were made practicable by 1840, one of the triumphs of modern industry. Meanwhile threshing machines began to come into use and separaters were combined with them by 1850. The first steam thresher appeared in 1860.

It was a dramatic moment in history when at the Paris Exhibition of ’55 a hopeless contest was waged between six sturdy workmen with the old hand flail, and threshing machines from four different countries. In the half-day

test the six men threshed out by hand sixty liters of wheat; while a single American with his machine threshed 740 liters and easily beat all contestants.

By the time of the civil war great saving of labor had been effected by the invention of the corn planter and the two-horse cultivator. By 1865, about 250,000 reaping machines were in use and by 1880 our country had become the greatest exporter of wheat in the world. The invention of the twine-binder made this possible, making practicable the raising of greater crops of wheat; for as Professor T. N. Carver says: "The *harvesting* of the grain crop is the crucial point. The farmer has to ask himself, not, 'How much grain can I grow?' but, 'How much can I harvest with such help as I can get?'" By the late seventies the steam thresher was fast supplanting horse-power and a great impetus was given wheat growing when the roller process for manufacturing flour was invented. By this process better flour was made from spring wheat than had ever been produced from the winter grain, and this made Minneapolis the Flour City, in place of Rochester.

In rapid succession the check-rower, permitting cross cultivation of corn, the lister, for deep plowing and planting, the weeder, the riding cultivator, the disk harrow and other kindred machines greatly helped the production of corn, our greatest crop. Cheese and butter factories and improvements in dairy methods helped to make Americans probably the largest consumers of butter in the world. The Babcock test for determining the butter fat, and the centrifugal separater for extracting the cream, were most important.

The Evolution of the Plow

In the last quarter century the improvement on these earlier farm machines has been remarkable and elaborate. One of the most wonderful continued stories of human ingenuity is the evolution of the plow, from the historic crooked stick that merely tickled the surface of the ground (and is still used in many countries) to the steam gang-plow which tears up the earth at an astonishing pace, and thoroughly prepares the soil meanwhile. When with a gang-plow and five horses, it became possible for a man to plow five acres a day, it was supposed the acme of progress was attained. But soon steam

traction was introduced on the prairies and two men were able thus to plow a dozen furrows at once and cover thirty to forty acres in a day.

Now, however, a 110-horse power machine, a monster of titanic power and expert skill, plows a strip thirty feet wide, as fast as a man could comfortably walk, and also does the harrowing and sowing simultaneously. This completes the work of plowing and planting at the rate of 80 to 100 acres in a working day, or under favorable conditions even twelve acres an hour, thus doing the work of forty to fifty teams and men. Yet millions of people in the cities are not yet awake to the fact that we have a new rural civilization! When we think of the thousands of men who have patiently experimented and labored to perfect the plow, many of them now unknown, we must consider the modern planting machine not an individual but a race triumph. Among these innumerable experimenters was no less a man than Thomas Jefferson, gentleman farmer, who gave months and years of study in nature's laboratory to the single problem of perfecting the moldboard of the plow, that it might do the most thorough work with the least unnecessary friction.

Likewise the harrow, so simple in our grandfathers' days, has remarkably developed, and we have peg-tooth, spring-tooth, disk, spader and pulverizer harrows, drawn by horses or mules, which follow the plow with a four- to twenty-foot swath. But here again the city mechanic must tip his hat to the prairie farmer who uses twentieth century machinery, for we have now a harrowing machine 100 feet in reach which harrows thirty acres in an hour or a whole section of land in about two days! These astonishing facts are particularly staggering to the small farmer, but they need discourage only the incompetent. They have of course combined small farms into great enterprises, and have driven some slovenly farmers from poor soil. The pace is so fast. But specialized farming and intensive farming have their own successes to-day as well as extensive farming, and it all tends to elevate the whole scale of living and standard of efficiency upon the farms; in short producing a new rural civilization.[18]

Power Machinery on the Modern Farm

A most interesting chapter in the story of human industry is the evolution of power machinery. Gradually the drudgery of hand labor has been relieved by water power, horse power, steam power, wind power and the modern gasolene and electricity. The giant gang-plow with its 110-horsepower traction engine is a prairie triumph, but it has very little interest for the ordinary farmer on an average farm. Yet even the small farmer finds the gasolene portable engine wonderfully useful and a great labor-saver at slight expense.

Perhaps the surest way for a farmer to interest his discontented boy, who is crazy for the city, is to buy a gasolene engine. A machine shop on the farm is a great educator and a great resource for the boy as well as a money-saver for the farmer. But best of all is the portable engine, which not only relieves the boy of the most back-breaking labor but gives him the keen delight of *controlling power*,—a mighty fascination for every normal boy.

The most recent publication of a great farm machinery trust entitled "Three Hundred Years of Power Development," dismisses electricity as impracticable for farm uses because of its expense; and says of wind power: "This power at best is unreliable and usually unavailable when most needed." Yet the writer has discovered a 1,120-acre farm in North Dakota where electricity is generated by wind, and wind power is stored in electricity at a very slight cost, and it meets many of the mechanical needs of this prosperous farm. So far as known this is the first instance of a *storage-battery electric plant upon a farm, the battery being charged by wind power*! The ingenious older son, now a graduate of the State School of Science, experimented with this plan all through his boyhood and is now securing patent rights to protect his invention.[19] He discovered from the U. S. Weather Bureau reports the mean wind velocity which could be depended upon at Mooreton, N. D., and built his windmill accordingly. An ingenious automatic regulator protects the battery from over-charging. The electricity provides 75 lights for house, barn and other farm buildings; power for wheat elevator, all laundry machinery, washing, ironing, centrifugal drying; cream separater and other dairy machinery; electric cook stove, et cetera, in the farm kitchen; electric fans for the summer and bed warmers in the winter; electric pumps for irrigating, and even an electric vulcanizer for repairing the auto tires! This is the way one farm boy

succeeded in harnessing the fierce prairie winds and compelling them to do his drudgery.

The Social Effect of Lessened Drudgery

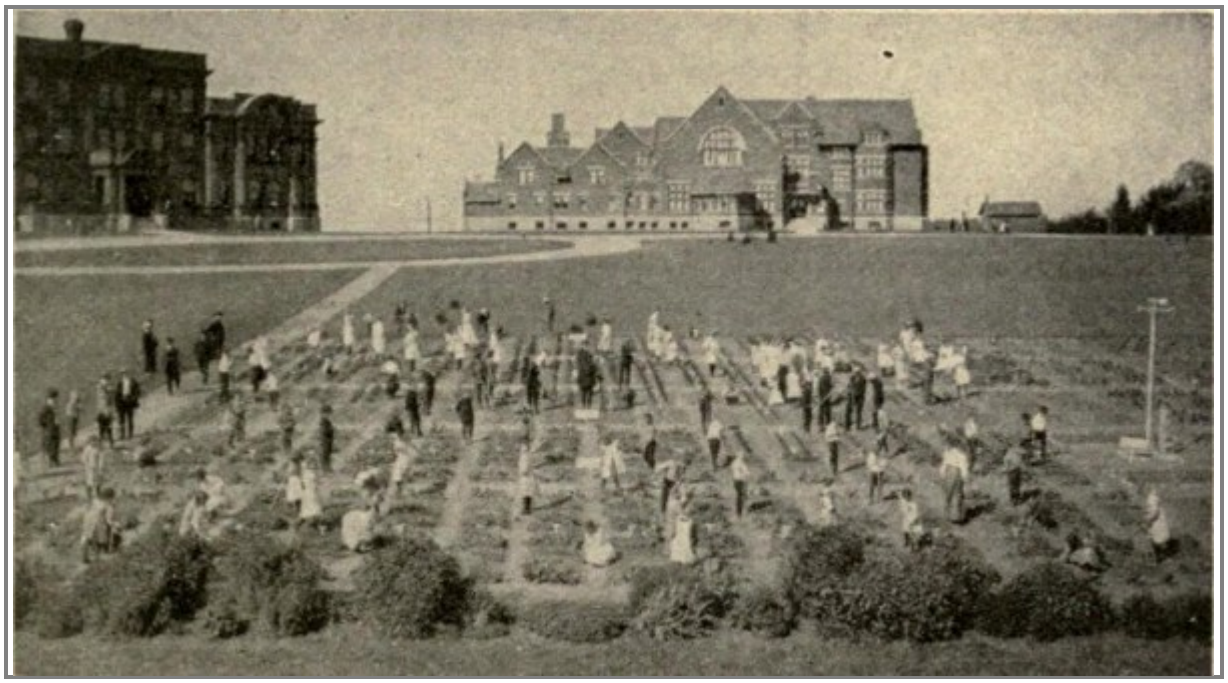
To the mechanic the story of agricultural machinery suggests the miracle of the conquest of nature by human ingenuity and perfected mechanical skill. To the economist it suggests fascinating new problems of production and consumption, and the new values of land, labor and capital. To the speculator it means a greatly enlarged field for manipulation and wilder dreams of profit. But to the country lover rejoicing in the new rural prosperity it first of all suggests that from thousands of progressive farms has the curse of drudgery been lifted.[20]

Hard, grinding, back-breaking labor, often with surprisingly meager returns, and in some seasons with total crop failure, has been in the past the bitter lot of the husbandman. Many a farm boy has thus had the courage crushed out of him in early teens and has ignominiously retreated to the city. Many a farmer's wife has grown prematurely old and has slaved herself to death, leaving her children and her home to a younger successor. These conditions of course still continue even in the new age. Great numbers of farmers are still hopelessly poor, many of them needlessly so, through ignorance, slovenly management, laziness or willful unprogressiveness. But the rural moss-back is being laid upon the shelf with other fossils and soon will possess only historical interest. Great organized effort is being made to redeem him by the gospel of scientific farming before he dies, and the effort is by no means vain.

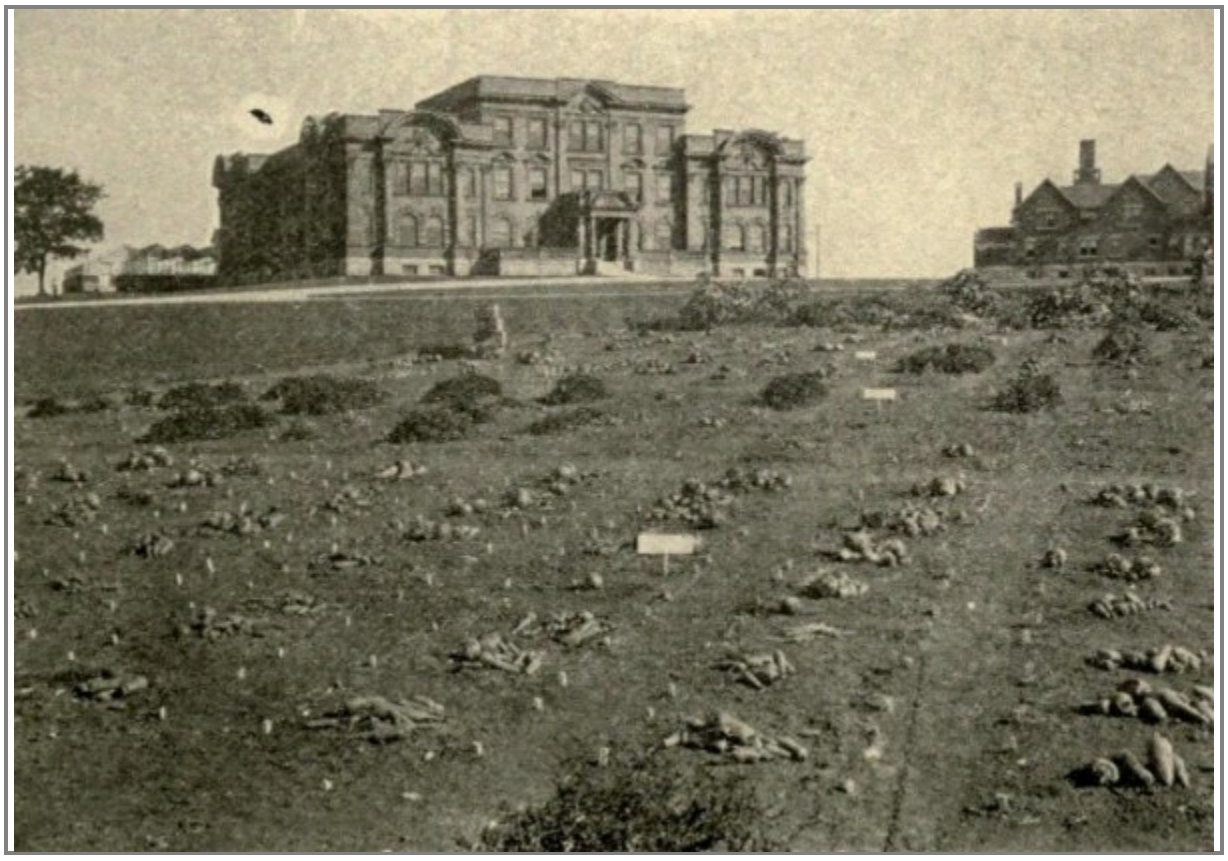
III. Increased Popular Intelligence.

The new rural civilization, however, is by no means a mere matter of methods. The farmer himself has been growing more intelligent. County agricultural societies, first organized in 1810, set the farmers to thinking. Many farm journals have contributed widely to the farmers' education. But in the past twenty years many agencies have united in what has been a great rural uplift. The government's department of agriculture, the experiment stations established in each state, the better-farming trains with their highly

educative exhibits, the countless farmers' institutes for fruitful discussions, the extension work of state universities, the local and traveling libraries, and especially the agricultural colleges, through their short courses in the winter, their stimulating and instructive bulletins, their great variety of extension service through their territory, are among the many agencies for popular education in country districts which are becoming thoroughly appreciated and highly effective. In a great variety of ways a genuine rural culture is being developed, with its own special characteristics and enduring values. All this is helping to make country life vastly worth while.



This picture illustrates school garden work at the Macdonald Consolidated School, Guelph, Canada,
E. A. Howes, Principal. The time is June.



The same garden at harvest time, in September.

This increased culture among country people is a great factor in the new rural civilization which must be given due consideration. It is this which is overcoming rural narrowness and provincialism. Herein is great hope for the future of the open country as a worthy home for people of the finest tastes and of genuine culture. This important topic will be considered in detail in Chapter VI, under Education for Country Life.

IV. The New Social Consciousness.

In these days when the gospel of class consciousness is being preached by labor union leaders, as requisite to success, the farmers may well heed the lesson. Let them stop the luxury of self-pity and discover a genuine pride in their life calling. Thousands do not in the least need this exhortation. They rejoice in their privilege as scientific tillers of the soil. They are also

discovering a real social spirit among themselves which speaks well for the future. As a class they are claiming their rights with a new insistence and a new dignity which is commanding a respectful hearing.

Legislatures and the national Congress are taking notice; likewise the railroads; but the middleman remains unterrified, secure in his speculative castle. He may look well to his profits however, for the days of organized agriculture are not far distant. The farmers are getting together for business and are comparing notes with the consumers. The producer finds he is often getting less than half what the consumer pays and the cooperative spirit grows apace. The efficiency of farmers' organizations for mutual profit has varied greatly in different sections, but they serve a genuine need and have a great future, as class consciousness increases among farmers.

But the new social consciousness in the country is not merely a matter of group loyalty. It has to do with the interests of the whole community. The selfish days of the independent farmer are rapidly passing. The social spirit of mutual interdependence is certainly growing. One of the tests of modern civilization is the capacity for cooperation. Tardily, very tardily, the country has been following the city in this ability to cooperate for common ends and the community welfare, but improvement is very evident.

The problem of community socialization will be treated in Chapter V. We shall find that the need of cooperation runs through every phase of rural life and explains the common weakness of every rural institution. But leaders of country life, both East and West, have caught the social vision and are sharing it with their neighbors. "*Together*" is the watchword of the new day in the country, and the incentive of cooperative endeavor is the key to the new success in every rural interest and organization.

V. Effect of the New Order on Rural Institutions.

For several decades we have been seriously troubled by the decay of rural institutions. The strain upon them resulting from rural depletion has been very serious. First of all the country schools began to deteriorate and thousands of them doubtless have been closed. With the decay of the village, the village store, that social center and fountain of all wisdom, has lost prestige and most of its trade. The trolley and the mail order houses

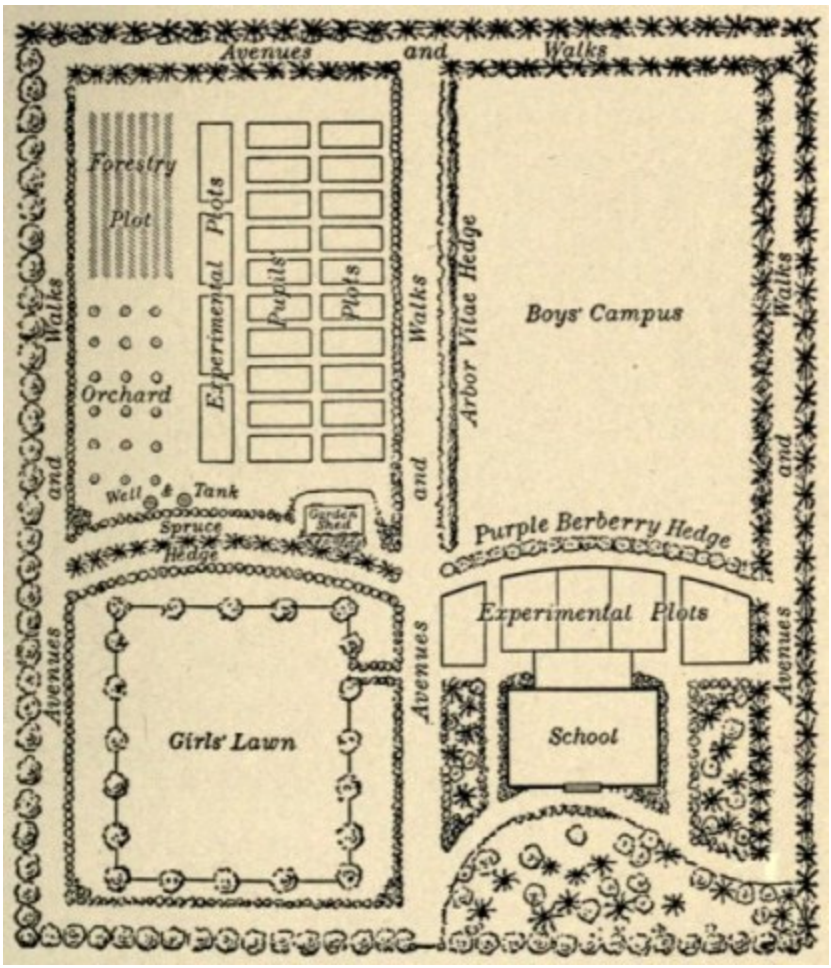
have made it unnecessary. With the coming of the rural delivery route, even the village post-office has lost all social importance. With the advent of farm machinery and fewer farm hands, many of the jolly social functions of the past, such as husking bees, barn raisings, spelling bees and lyceums, have ceased to be; while the rural churches in all depleted sections have suffered sadly and in hundreds of cases have succumbed.

In some scattered communities, away from the beaten paths, this social decay has resulted in de-socializing the neighborhood. Feuds, grudges, gross immoralities have followed and the people have relapsed into practical heathenism. But in many places *social readjustment has come*, with a new efficiency in rural institutions. Centralized schools have brought a new largeness of vision in place of the little district knowledge shop. The great advantages of the rural free delivery have certainly outweighed the loss of the social prestige of the post-office, just as the trolley is more valuable than the village store. Many of the old time social functions were worth while, but new institutions like the Grange and the farmers' clubs, institutes and cooperative organizations are better fitted to the modern age and are contributing largely to the new rural civilization, while the village church and the church in the open country are discovering new opportunities for service, broader community usefulness and a great social mission.

The new rural civilization is bringing a new prosperity into the great business of farming. It is bringing new and permanent satisfactions and comforts into country homes. It has greatly diminished the vexed problem of rural isolation, with its many new ways of communication. It has to a remarkable degree eliminated drudgery, through the use of wonderful machinery. It has popularized education and developed a new social consciousness and new efficiency in rural institutions, amounting often to a total redirection of the community life. But fundamentally the new civilization is naturally religious. It is revealing the strong religious sentiment in country folks, even when they are not associated with churches. It is calling upon the church to gird itself for new tasks and under a new, virile type of leadership undertake real community building with the modern church as the center of activity and source of inspiration and guidance. The church should be, and with adequate leadership is, the local power house of the country life movement.

Rural Progress and the Providence of God

Every man of faith must see in this new rural civilization the purpose of God to redeem the country from the dangers of a rural peasantry and moral decadence. Progress is the will of God. Christ's vision of a Kingdom of Heaven involved a redeemed world. That Kingdom of Heaven is coming ultimately in the country as well as in the city. Every sign of rural progress indicates it and should be hailed with joy by men of faith. The triumph over isolation and the gradual emancipation from drudgery, the development of good roads, trolleys, telephones, rural mail service, automobiles, and the wonderful evolution of farm machinery are all way-marks in the providence of God indicating the ultimate coming of his Kingdom. The increased intelligence among farming people, the many new agencies for popular education, the new social consciousness and growing spirit of cooperation, the new efficiency of rural institutions, a better school, a community-serving church, a character-building home, as well as a scientifically conducted farm, every one of these makes for better rural morals and better religion, and should delight the heart of every earnest man who "desires a *better country*, that is a heavenly."



Plan of Macdonald Consolidated School grounds and gardens, Bowesville, Ontario, Canada.

Test Questions on Chapter III

1.—Why are the terms "countryman" and "farmer" ceasing to be used as terms of ridicule?

2.—What effect, in past years, has *isolation* had upon people living in the country?

3.—What modern means of intercommunication have largely overcome the evils of rural isolation?

4.—What are the social possibilities of the telephone for people living in the open country?

5.—Why are good roads so essential, socially and industrially, in the country sections?

6.—When was the "Good Roads Association" formed, and how much has your state expended for state roads the past twenty years? (Inquire of your County Surveyor.)

7.—What do the rural sections owe to the steam railroad system of the country?

8.—What have the trolleys accomplished which the steam roads could not do?

9.—What changes in rural life are due to the rural free delivery of mail?

10.—Describe what these changes have accomplished in your own home county.

11.—To what extent has machinery relieved farm labor of its drudgery?

12.—Describe the evolution of the plow and the harrow.

13.—What inventions in farm machinery have had the greatest influence on rural progress?

14.—What can you say about the increase of intelligence in the country sections you have known?

15.—What agencies are now at work in the country making popular education possible?

16.—Have you observed anywhere yet the new social consciousness or class consciousness among farmers?

17.—To what extent do you think cooperation has gained acceptance in the country?

18.—In what rural institutions is cooperation still greatly lacking?

19.—What changes have already come in rural institutions?

19.—What changes have already come in rural institutions?

20.—How is this new rural civilization revealing the will of God, and what relation has it to the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven?

TRIUMPHS OF SCIENTIFIC AGRICULTURE

I. Its Struggle with Rural Conservatism.

Modern Efficiency not Confined to Cities

Efficiency is everywhere demanded by the spirit of our times. We are living in an age that does things. Whatever the difficulties, it somehow gets things done. It brings to pass even the seemingly impossible. Are there mountains in the way? It goes over, under, or through.—There are no mountains! Is there an isthmus, preventing the union of great seas and blocking commerce? It erases the isthmus from the world's map.—There is no isthmus! The masterful time-spirit has little patience with puttering inefficiency. It expects every man to pull his weight, to earn his keep, to do his own task, and not to whimper.

Our cities are hives of efficiency, cruel efficiency often. With new pace-makers every year, the wheels of industry speed ever faster, raising the percentage of effectiveness, per dollar of capital and per capita employed. Hundreds at the wheels, with scant nerves, fail to keep the pace; and the race goes by them. But the pace keeps up. Other workmen grow more deft and skillful. The product is both cheapened and perfected. The plant becomes more profitable, under fine executive efficiency. The junk-heap grows apace: Out goes every obsolete half-success. In comes every new machine which reduces friction, doubles results, halves the cost of maintenance, and swells dividends. Surely efficiency is the modern shibboleth.

Here is the new Tungsten electric lamp, which uses half the current, at low voltage, but doubles the light; the very dazzling symbol of efficiency. How it antiquates the best Edison lamp of yesterday! Yet the Tungsten becomes old-fashioned in a year. It is too fragile and is speedily displaced by the improved Mazda.

But *city* life has no monopoly on efficiency. In fact we do not find in the mills or factories the best illustrations of modern effectiveness. We have to go back to the soil. Agriculture has become the newest of the arts, by the grace of modern science. To make two blades of grass grow where one grew before is too easy now. Multiplying by two is small boys' play. Burbank has out-Edisoned Edison! He and other experimenters in the scientific breeding of plants and animals have increased the efficiency of every live farmer in the land, and have added perhaps a billion dollars a year to the nation's wealth.

They have not yet crossed the bee and the firefly, as some one has suggested, to produce an illuminated bee that could work at night by his own light. Nor have they produced woven-wire fences by crossing the spider and the wire-worm! Not yet; but they have done better. By skillful cross-breeding, they have raised the efficiency of the sugar beet from 7% to 15% sugar. They have produced hardy, seedless oranges, plums, apples, and strawberry plants which will stand the climate of the frozen north. They have developed fine, long-stapled cotton, high-yielding cereal grains, and mammoth carnations and chrysanthemums. They have produced the wonderberry, the Wealthy Apple and the Burbank Potato. They have developed flax with 25% more seed. And the "Minnesota Number Thirteen Corn," so hardy and sure, has carried the cornbelt in three great states fully fifty miles further to the north, with its magnificent wake of golden profits. No wonder America feeds the world. Such is our splendid Yankee genius for efficiency. It is the master-spirit, the ruling genius of our age; and it shows itself best on our fields and prairies. Other nations compete fairly well with our manufactures. They outstrip us in commerce. But they are hopelessly behind our American agriculture. The farm products of this country amounted in the year 1910 to almost nine billion dollars. The corn crop alone was worth a billion and a half; enough to cancel the entire interest-bearing debt of the United States, buy all of the gold and silver mined in all the countries of the earth in 1909, and still leave the farmers pocket-money.[21]

The Natural Conservatism of Farmers

In all fairness it must be said, the modern gospel of progressiveness has not been everywhere accepted, far from it. Plenty of farmers, doubtless the majority, are still following the old traditions. Country folks as a rule are conservative. They like the old ways and are suspicious of "new-fangled notions." Director Bailey of Cornell enjoys telling the comment he overheard one day from a farmer of this sort. It was after he had been speaking at a rural life conference, doubtless proposing various plans for better farming, which differed from the honored superstitions of the neighborhood. A stolid native was overheard saying to his neighbor, "John, let them blow! They can't hurt me none." He prided himself on being immune to all appeals at such a rural life revival.

Such a man is very common among the hills, and wherever the soil is poor; but he is beginning to feel lonesome in really prosperous rural communities, for the new agriculture is fast winning its way. That is, the application of science to agriculture has proved its efficiency by actual tangible results. A farmer may be so superstitious as to begin nothing on a Friday, nor butcher during a waning moon for fear his meat will shrink, nor use an iron plow for fear it may poison the soil! But when his neighbor by modern methods adds 50% to his crop, he knows there must be something in it. The new *theory* he always greets with "I don't believe it!" but the knock-down argument of facts compels his reluctant faith. Soon he gives the new heresy a trial himself; and success makes him a convert to the new gospel.

An experience like this is a serious thing for a hide-bound conservative, long wedded to old methods. It means that "the former things are passed away and behold all things are become new." He loses his superstitions as he discovers the laws of cause and effect. He gradually concludes that farming is not a matter of luck but largely a matter of science; that it is not merely tickling Dame Nature till she grudgingly shares her bounties, but that it is a scientific process, the laws of which may be discovered. This means mental growth for the farmer, the stimulus of many new ideas which bring wider horizons and a larger life; and incidentally a heightened respect for his own life-work.

What is Progressive Agriculture?

The old-fashioned farmer, particularly in America where methods have been so wasteful because of the cheapness of land, has planted and harvested just for the season's returns, with little regard for the future. The modern farmer, self-respecting and far-sighted, plans for the future welfare of his farm. He learns how to analyze and treat his soil and to conserve its fertility, just as he would protect his capital in any business investment. Scientific management and farm economy are taking the place of mere soil-mining and reckless waste. The best farmers plan to leave their farms a little more fertile than they found them. Good authorities in rural economics assert that if depletion of soil fertility were taken into account, the wasteful methods of American agriculture in the past, though producing apparently large returns, have actually been unprofitable. So long as new land could easily be obtained from the government for a mere song and a few months' patience, the pioneer farmer was utterly careless in his treatment of the soil. He moved from state to state, skimming the fat of the land but never fertilizing, following the frontier line westward and leaving half-wasted lands in his trail.

It was really a blessing to the land when the scarcity of free homesteads brought this wasteful process towards its end. When new lands became scarce, the farms of the middle West increased in value. For twenty years farm values have been rising steadily, with two evident results: intensive farming and speculation. The demoralizing effects of the latter are at once apparent. It was a sad day when the prairie farmer ceased to think of his farm as a permanent home, but as a speculative asset. But it was a good day for the business of farming when the farmer discovered the need of more careful, intensive cultivation to keep pace with rising values. This marks the beginning of scientific thoroughness and efficiency in our tilling of the soil.

Its Development by Government Patronage

Just then something very timely happened. The modern period of American agriculture really dates from 1887, when Congress, by the Hatch Act, established the first national system of agricultural experiment stations in the world. Previous to this date there had been a few private and state enterprises; but this Act of Congress established at public expense an experiment station in every state and territory. The vast usefulness of this

movement in developing a real science of agriculture is evident from this paragraph from the law:

"Sec. 2. That it shall be the object and duty of said experiment stations to conduct original researches or verify experiments on the physiology of plants and animals; the diseases to which they are severally subject, with the remedies for the same; the chemical composition of useful plants at their different stages of growth; the comparative advantages of rotative cropping, as pursued under the varying series of crops; the capacity of new plants or trees for acclimation; the analysis of soils and water; the chemical composition of manures, natural or artificial, with experiments designed to test their comparative effects on crops of different kinds; the adaptation and value of grasses and forage plants; the composition and digestibility of the different kinds of food for domestic animals; the scientific and economic questions involved in the production of butter and cheese, et cetera."

As a result of this and later laws, over three millions of dollars are now spent annually, by the national and state governments, to support experiment station work. Over a thousand men are employed in the investigations and their publications cover practically the whole range of the science and art of agriculture. About five hundred separate bulletins are issued each year, which may be obtained free on application.

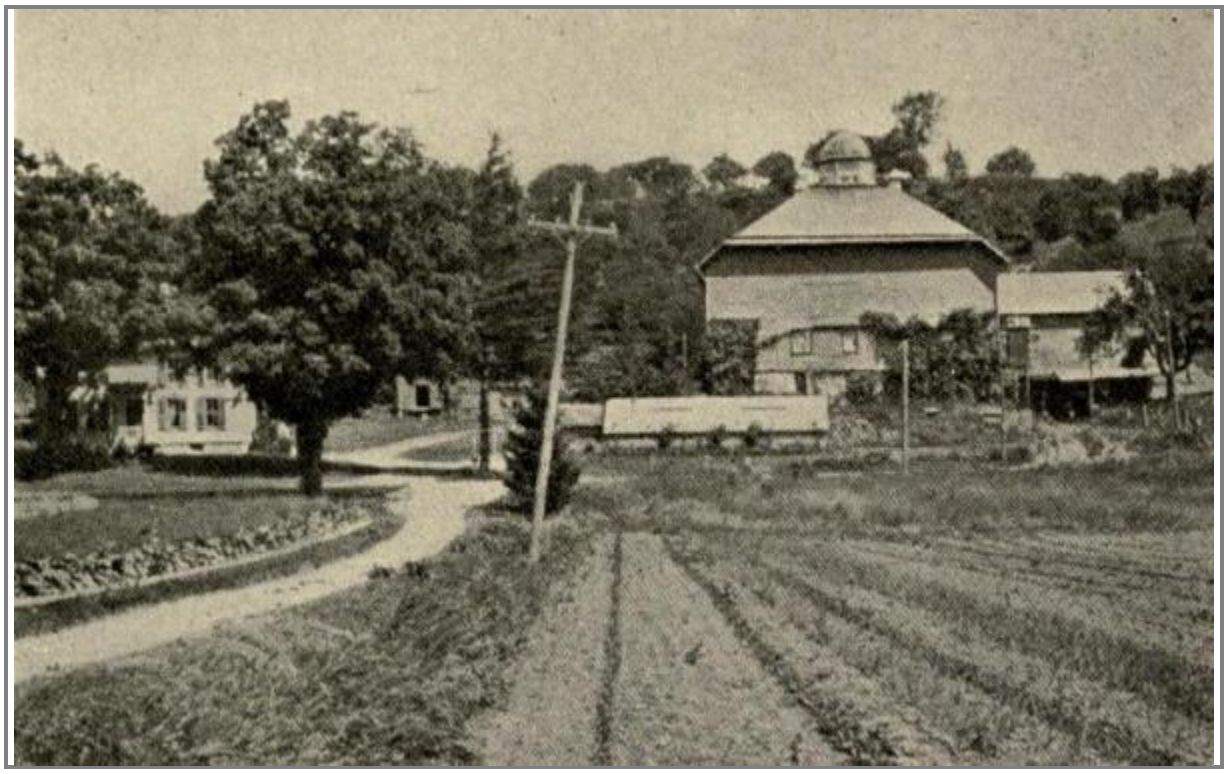
This great chain of experiment stations is working wonders. In cooperation with the agricultural colleges and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, they are raising agriculture to scientific levels. They are, by their laboratory work, doing the farmer's experimenting for him and doing it better and with greater certainty. Thus they are eliminating much of the uncertainty and "luck" from farming which has been its curse and discouragement. And thus they are equipping the farmer to cope more effectively with the difficulties of nature and to put a more confident fight with stubborn climate and fickle weather, because he knows the scientific points of the game.

II. Some Special Aspects of Scientific Agriculture.

Intensive Farming and Conservation of Fertility

The opening of the rich prairie lands to cultivation, with the marvels of extensive agriculture, is a wonderful story. Our last chapter suggested it in outline. But *intensive* farming has its own triumphs, though they may be less spectacular. There is something that wins our respect in the careful, thorough methods of European agriculture, by which whole nations are able to make a living on tiny farms by intensive farming. Tilling every little scrap of ground, even roadside and dooryard, and guarding the soil fertility as the precious business capital of the family, it is wonderful how few square rods can be made to sustain a large family.

Frugality is not attractive to Americans, especially the European type which often means peasant farming, and a low scale of living. We are discovering, however, the vast possibilities of farm economy and intensive cultivation. Professor Carver says, “Where land is cheap and labor dear, wasteful and extensive farming is natural, and it is useless to preach against it.... We always tend to waste that which is cheap and economize that which is dear. The condition of this country in all the preceding periods dictated the wasteful use of land and the economic use of labor, as shown by the unprecedented development of agricultural machinery. But as land becomes dearer, relatively to labor, as it inevitably will, the tendency will be equally inevitable toward more intensive agriculture, that is, toward a system which produces more per acre. This will follow through the normal working of economic laws, as surely as water will flow down hill.”



The Stockman-Farmer Pub. Co.

A modern Fruit and Truck Farm in high state of fertility.

It is wonderful what can be accomplished by intensive cultivation. If the old New England orchards were given as thorough care and treatment as the scientifically tended and doctored apple trees of Oregon, the results would surprise the oldest citizen! Conserving moisture and keeping the soil clean from weeds is worth all the painstaking care it requires. The renovation of the soil by regular fertilizing is a lesson the wasteful West is slowly learning, coupled with scientific schemes of crop rotation to conserve the soil's quality. Farmers are astonishingly slow to adopt these methods, however, thinking that they know best the needs of their own soil. The North Dakota experiment station is inducing farmers to adopt their advice as to seed selection and crop rotation with the promise to set aside five acres for experimentation in accordance with the advice given. This is extremely wise policy. Doubtless, if directions are faithfully followed, the contrast with the rest of the farm will be highly favorable to the five-acre lot and agricultural progress will win out.

Achievements in Scientific Breeding

In the earlier pages of this chapter we have already alluded to this fascinating subject as an illustration of modern efficiency in country life. Four years ago Assistant Secretary Hays of the Department of Agriculture asserted that scientific breeding of better stock and plant life was netting this country a billion dollars a year, of the total agricultural production of seven and a half billions in 1907.[22] In 1910 the total reached about nine billions and it is probable that scientific agriculture was the main cause of the great increase rather than additional acreage.

One of the wonders of modern science is this story of the development of new plant species and improvement in the best of the old, by the skillful processes of plant breeding. Notable also has been the improvement in American horses, cattle, swine and poultry, developed by the same scientific principles. Projected efficiency, or breeding power to beget valuable progeny, is the central idea. Simple selection is the method. Out of a large number of animals the phenomenal individual is selected for his notable capacity for reproducing in his offspring his own desirable characteristics. Thus the best blood is multiplied and the less desirable is discarded. Sometimes by close inbreeding the eugenic process has been hastened. In this way scientific stock raisers have been able practically to make to order animals with any desired quality. For instance, the great demand for bacon in England has been met by a masterly bit of agricultural statesmanship, for which Mr. John Dryden, chief of the Canadian Agricultural Department, is responsible. After careful study and experiment, the Yorkshire and Tamworth breeds of hogs were crossed and a special breed developed especially valuable for bacon with exceptionally long sides of uniform thickness and with alternating layers of fat and lean. Selected bacon made to order!

New breeds of sheep have been developed which have combined phenomenal wool-producing power with superior meat production; similarly short-horn cattle with great milk-giving capacity and beef production; and more remarkable still have been the results in horse breeding. In spite of all the motor-cycles and automobiles, the horse is becoming more and more useful, because more highly civilized and

specialized. The breeders know how to build up horse-flesh to suit your special needs for draft horse, family horse, trotter or pacer, with any desired form, proportions or talent, almost as accurately as a druggist compounds prescriptions! The wonderful possibilities involved challenge our imagination. Among the results of this stock-raising strategy we ought to expect not only happier and richer farmers, but better and cheaper food and clothing for all classes of people. The very fact that the business is now on a scientific basis has appealed to students and is attracting men of large abilities who see the opportunity to better rapidly, year by year, the live-stock quality of the whole country.

Marvels in Plant Production

In the field of plant breeding these marvelous results are more rapid and startling because of the wider range of selection. Hybridization, the crossing of different species, has accomplished much more than simple selection. Dr. William Saunders of Canada succeeded in crossing the Ladoga and Fife varieties of wheat and secured a wheat which was earlier than Fife and yielded better than Ladoga. Likewise, Luther Burbank was able to produce a hybrid walnut by crossing the English and Black walnuts; and Webber and Swingle developed the new fruits called tangerines and citranges by crossing sweet oranges with carefully selected specimens of the wild fruit. Experiments last year in blueberry culture developed luscious berries a half inch in diameter. Possibilities in berry development are almost unlimited, especially by crossing with hardy wild varieties.

Peach raisers have two great obstacles to sure success: drought in the Southwest and frost toward the North. Science is helping them to compete successfully with the severities of nature. A hardy wild peach has been found in Northern China and grafting on this stock has produced (this last year) the hardiest peach in Iowa; while another strain bids fair to meet the drought-resisting needs of the Southwest fruit grower.

Our agricultural explorers are searching the world for new varieties which can be used in hybridizing to perfect the American species. For instance, a wild wheat has been found in Palestine which requires very little water. So a specialist in acclimatization was sent directly to the slopes of Mount

Hermon to discover its possibilities for American dry farming. If the plant doctors succeed in developing wheat which can be raised in our arid wilderness, it would repay a thousand fold the expense of a round-the-world trip. The possible profits in skillful plant breeding are almost unlimited. Burbank is quoted as asserting: “The right man under favorable conditions can make one dollar yield a million dollars in plant breeding.” In 1908 the Minnesota Experiment Station had spent $40,000 in breeding the cereal grains. The agricultural department is authority for the opinion that “the increased production is estimated at a thousand fold, or $40,000,000.”[23]

The justly famous navel oranges of California can all be traced to two scions sent from the U. S. Department of Agriculture some years ago. The Wealthy apple, which thrives in the cold north better than any other good variety, goes back to the early struggles of Peter Gideon at Lake Minnetonka, who faced the Minnesota winter almost penniless, coatless and with a family dependent upon him; but had faith enough to invest his hard-earned dollars in selected apple-seed from his far off home in Maine. The largest single contributor to the wealth produced by scientific breeding is said to be the Burbank potato. The van-guard of American experimenters are ranging the world and bringing home large-fruited jujubes (as good as dates) from the dry fields of Central Asia; seedless Chinese persimmons which have just been successfully fruited in North Carolina; a Japanese salad plant and a vegetable called *udo* which is similar to asparagus; edible roots called *aroids* which thrive in swampy land where the potato rots; hardy alfalfa from central Asia successfully crossed with our own varieties for our cold northwest; drought-resisting cherries, apricots with sweet kernels, Caucasian peaches, olives hardy in zero temperatures, mangoes from Porto Rico, the Paradise apple which grows wild in the Caucasus, the Slew Abrikose, an apricot as smooth as the nectarine, and wild strawberries fruiting in February on the dry cliffs of western Asia which, through cross-breeding may help to carry our native strawberry many miles still farther to the north.

The story is endless; but these items suggest to us the thoroughly statesmanlike way in which our agricultural leaders are increasing year by year the possibilities of our soil in spite of all drawbacks of condition and climate. No wonder they are already prophesying that our annual agricultural production will before long reach twenty billions. When it

comes, a large part of the credit must be given to the skillful agricultural scientists who are furnishing all progressive farmers these newer species of plants and animals which are superseding the inferior varieties.

Irrigation and the Problem of the Desert

When it is the problem of sterility, it is hopeless. But usually it is merely the problem of aridity; which is only a challenge to enterprise. Much of our "Great American Desert," as the old geography used to describe it, is in reality the most fertile of all soils; no wonder it can easily be made to "blossom as the rose."

Dr. W. E. Smythe in his fascinating book "The Conquest of Arid America" calls attention to the fact that the real dividing line between the east and the west is the 97th meridian which divides in twain the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. East of this line is the region of fairly assured rainfall. To the westward stretches the vast area of arid land with a rainfall insufficient to sustain agriculture; and with only three or four people to the square mile, though with resources enough to support a hundred million people. With a climate matchless for health and a varied and beautiful scenery, coupled with untold mineral deposits and a soil fertility that is remarkable, this great section is slowly coming to its own, through the method of irrigation, from the mountains and the streams.

With characteristic western spirit the above author remarks, "Even in humid regions nothing is so uncertain as the time and amount of the rainfall. In the whole range of modern industry nothing is so crude, uncalculating and unscientific as the childlike dependence on the mood of the clouds for the moisture essential to the production of the staple necessities of life." The superiority of irrigation as a certain means of water supply which can be regulated at will is a thesis easy to maintain. The results make a marvelous story. "The canal is an insurance policy against loss of crops by drought, while aridity is a substantial guarantee against injury by flood. The rich soils of the arid region produce from four to ten times as largely with irrigation, as the soil of the humid region without it. Twenty acres in the irrigated West should equal 100 acres elsewhere. Certainty, abundance, variety—all this upon an area so small as to be within the control of a single

family through its own area, are the elements which compose industrial independence under irrigation."

The small farm unit, usually from five to twenty-five acres, brings neighbors close together, abolishing loneliness and most of the social ills of farm life in the East. Beautiful irrigated villages are springing up which rival in comfort and privilege most places on earth, and combine both city and country privileges, where rural and urban meet. The spirit of cooperation is strong in irrigated communities, enforced by the common dependence upon the common enterprise and water supply. This is well illustrated by the Mormon commonwealth, the pioneer irrigators of the West.

The enthusiastic irrigating farmer asserts that irrigation is "the foundation of truly scientific agriculture." "The western farmer who has learned to irrigate thinks it would be quite as illogical for him to leave the watering of his potato patch to the caprice of the clouds as for the housewife to defer her wash-day until she could catch rainwater in her tubs." Irrigation certainly furnishes the ideal method for raising a varied crop, giving each crop individual treatment, serving each of thirty varieties of plants and trees with just the amount of daily moisture they individually need, so as to produce maximum products. No wonder three crops in a year sometimes result, and sometimes five crops of alfalfa in the Southwest. Here we come to the highest development of intensive farming where the utmost value of agricultural science has free play and rivals the results of research and skill in any other line of human effort.

Dry Farming Possibilities

Wonderful as these irrigation projects are, we must not fail to notice that this method of reclaiming arid lands can only be used where there are mountains, rivers or water courses which can be tapped. Ultimately an area as large as New England and New York State will probably be blessed by irrigation. But this is only a small fraction of the arid West. How shall the rest be reclaimed from the desert? Obviously by some method of dry farming, depending on and conserving the meager rain-fall.

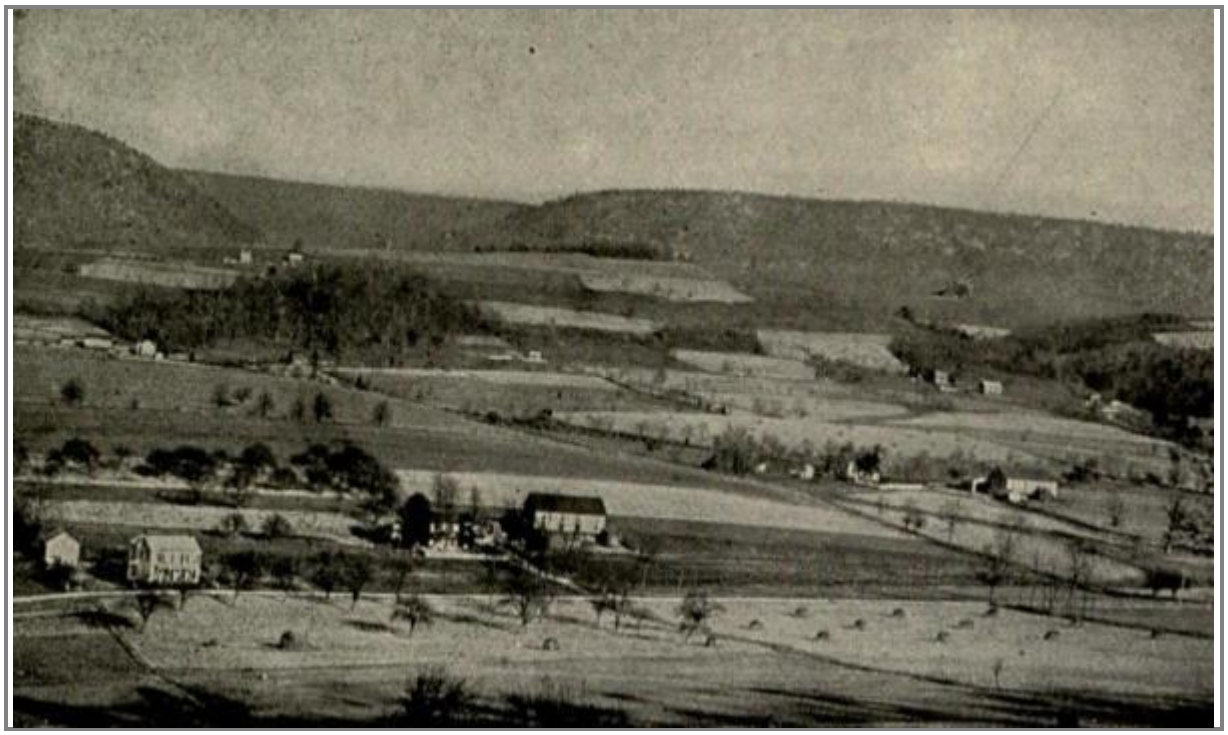
A few simple principles have been discovered, and some specialized machinery developed, by which successful dry farming is now conducted on an extensive scale along the arid plains between the Missouri river basin and the Sierra Nevada mountains. In brief these principles are: deep plowing, sub-soil packing, intensive cultivation, maintaining a fine dust mulch on the surface, the use of drought-resisting grains, especially certain varieties of wheat, allowing the land to lie fallow every other year to store moisture, and keeping a good per cent. of humus (vegetable matter) in the soil to resist evaporation. In every possible way the dry farmer conserves moisture. The dry mulch is particularly effective. Only a few years ago it was discovered that by capillary attraction much of the water absorbed by the spongy soil during a rain is lost by rapid evaporation, coming to the surface, just as oil runs up a wick. But by stirring the surface the "capillary ducts" are broken up and the moisture tends to stay down in the sub soil; for the two inches of dust mulch on the surface acts like a blanket, protecting the precious moisture from the dry winds.

III. Some Results of Scientific Farming.

Agriculture Now a Profession

In such a brief treatment it is not to be expected that the writer could do justice to the subject of modern agriculture. In fact there has been little reference to the topic of general farming in this chapter. In its main outline it is a familiar topic and requires little attention here. The descriptions of certain varieties of specialized agriculture have been given as illustrations of the more remarkable phases of the application of scientific methods to country life. We hope two results have thus been attained, that the dignity and efficiency and scientific possibilities of modern agriculture as a profession have been brought to the attention both of our readers in the city and of the discontented farm boys in the country. Both need a higher appreciation of country life. It should be evident to all that agriculture to-day is thoroughly scientific when rightly practiced, which is simply saying that the practice of the new agriculture is a *profession*. It is among the most difficult and highly technical of all professions. No profession, with the possible exception of medicine, has a broader scientific basis or is at present deriving a greater benefit from vast inductive work in world-wide

experimentation at both public and private expense. This profession has made wonderful gains in recent years in both extensive and intensive efficiency, and has written among its triumphs many of the most romantic stories of modern mechanical skill, inventive genius, economic profit and scientific achievement.



Pennsylvania Farm Land.

This honorable profession is not only worthy of the finest and ablest of our American young manhood, but its opportunity and present need is a distinct challenge to their attention. Mr. James J. Hill recently stated as his opinion that not more than one per cent. of American farmers in the middle West were keeping in touch with the agricultural institutions; which is the same as saying they are not keeping up to date. This suggests the need of more intelligent modern farmers tilling the soil as a profession and thus pointing the way to progress for all their neighbors.

Conservation: A New Appeal to Patriotism

This word conservation has but recently won its place of honor in our popular speech; but it is a word of mighty import. The battle for conservation of our national resources is on, and it challenges the attention of our young collegians.

It is encouraging to see results already. By a happy combination of progressiveness with true conservatism, we are conserving our national assets from Niagara to the mighty forests of Washington and California and from the arid lands of the mighty empire of Montana to the swamps of Florida. The nation is repenting of its prodigal wastefulness and is now guarding jealously its forest reserves, its vast water-power privileges, its coal and mineral deposits and its soil fertility, for upon these stores of fundamental wealth depends the prosperity of endless generations. Many alluring chances will come to men now in college to share in this great task of the nation, this fascinating enterprise of conservation.

Permanency of Rural Christendom Now Possible

Any reader must be quite lacking in vision who has been able to read this chapter on the remarkable progress of modern agricultural science without discerning the deep religious significance of it all. Civilization unquestionably is based on economics. Rural prosperity is a primary condition of rural permanence. Farming must be profitable enough to maintain a self-respecting rural folk; or the open country would be speedily abandoned to a race of peasants and rural heathenism would be imminent.

Progress in agriculture, developing rural prosperity, means the survival of the best rural homes and the finest rural ideals,—otherwise these would go to the city. Retaining in the country a genuine Christian constituency and rural leadership means the survival of the country church. The Christian forces in the country have a vast stake in rural prosperity. You cannot hope to build a prosperous country church on poor soil or maintain it on bad farming. This is not a mere matter of scarcity of contributions. It is a result of the poverty of personality among people who are poor Christians because they are poor farmers.

Christian leaders should therefore rejoice in the advance of modern agriculture not only because it all signifies a richer and broader rural prosperity, but also because it makes possible the permanence of rural Christendom and the survival of successful country churches. The more profitable modern farming is made, the richer becomes the opportunity of country life, the larger proportion of the brightest sons and daughters of the farm will resist the lure of the city. Nothing is so vital to the country church, humanly speaking, as to keep in the country parishes a fair share of the country boys and girls of the finest type. With them it lives and serves its community. Without them it will die and its community will become decadent.

It is no selfish Christian spirit that rejoices in the broadening opportunities of country life. The church is but a means to an end. The great objective is the coming of the Kingdom of God for which Jesus prayed. As fast as the very soil of a country is recognized as "holy land," and preserving its fertility is felt to be a patriotic duty; as fast as better live stock, better plant species and a better breed of men are sought as a working ideal; as fast as the conservation of all natural resources becomes a national life purpose; so rapidly and inevitably the Kingdom of Heaven will come. The Country Life Movement is fundamentally religious.

Test Questions on Chapter IV

1.—Mention a few evidences of modern industrial efficiency.

2.—What can you say of the efficiency of modern agriculture?

3.—In what ways have you noticed country people to be especially conservative?

4.—Compare the wasteful farm methods of a half century ago with the careful intensive cultivation of to-day.

5.—How has the government helped progressive agriculture?

6.—What are the experiment stations accomplishing?

7.—What do you think of the evil of soil-piracy?

8.—Mention some of the remarkable achievements of scientific breeding of farm animals.

9.—What should be the results of all this improvement in our live stock? What stands in the way?

10.—What has especially interested you among the marvels of plant production by cross-cultivation?

11.—Why are representatives of our Agricultural Department searching the world for new species of plants?

12.—Locate the desert sections of America where the rainfall is insufficient to sustain agriculture.

13.—What do you think of the advantages and possibilities of irrigation?

14.—Explain the methods of dry farming, especially the principle involved in the "dust mulch."

15.—To what extent is it true that scientific agriculture has now become a profession?

16.—Explain the real patriotism in the modern policy of conservation of natural resources.

17.—To what extent do you think the government ought to own or control the great forests, the water power and the coal deposits? Why?

18.—How does this whole subject of progressive agriculture affect the religious life of the country?

19.—Upon what economic basis does the permanence of religious institutions in the country quite largely depend?

20.—What do you think is the great religious objective in all rural progress?

RURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

A. COUNTRY LIFE DEFICIENCIES

I. Social Diagnosis: Rural Individualism.

The preceding chapters have emphasized the riches of country life sufficiently to save the author from the charge of pessimism. Let us hold fast to our rural optimism. We shall need it all. But let it not blind us to the unfortunate facts in rural life, for diagnosis is the first step toward recovery. We are to notice now some of the fundamental social deficiencies which are almost universal in our American rural society.

Dr. Butterfield calls the American farmer "a rampant individualist!" Independence has been his national boast and his personal glory. Pioneer life developing heroic virtues in his personality has made him as a class perhaps the most self-reliant in history. The ownership of land always gives a man the feeling of independence. Let the world spin,—his broad acres will support him and his family. If one crop fail, another will succeed, though the weather act its worst. American farms average perhaps the largest in the world, nearly one-fourth of a square mile. Hence the distance between farm homes, and the habit of social independence which is bred by isolation.

"Every man for himself; look out for number one" is the natural philosophy of life under such conditions. Self-protection and aggrandizement, jealousy of personal rights, slowness to accept advice, proneness to law suits over property, thrifty frugality to a fault, indifference to public opinion, disregard of even the opinions of experts,—all are very characteristic of people of such independence of life. They seldom yield to argument. They do not easily respond to leadership. They are likely to view strangers with

suspicion. Self-reliance overdeveloped leads them to distrust any initiative but their own. Hence they do not readily work with other people. They refuse to recognize superiority in others of their own class. All of which results in a most serious social weakness; *failure in cooperation*, a fatal failure in any society. Positively, this explains the jealousies and feuds so common in rural neighborhoods. Negatively, it accounts for the lack of effective social organization.

Where a progressive rural community has readjusted itself to the social ideals of the new century, these weaknesses are quietly disappearing. Elsewhere you still find them.

The Weakness in Rural Institutions

This unsocial streak of distrust and poor social cooperation runs through every sort of institution in rural life. Schools are usually run on the old school-district plan with over-thrifty supervisors, no continuous policy, and with each pupil buying his own text books; roads are repaired by township districts, with individuals "working out their taxes;" churches are maintained on the retail plan, the minister being hired by the year or even by the week; the churches themselves are numerous and small, because of the selfish insistence upon individual views; even cooperative agreements in business have been repudiated by farmers under stress of temptation to personal gain; while rural distrust of banks and organized business is proverbial.

All of these unsocial tendencies are probably less due to selfishness than to lack of practice in cooperation. City people however have had constant practice in cooperation; hence they work together readily and successfully. They are organized for every conceivable purpose good or bad. In fact they are so intoxicated with the joy of social effort, they are apt to carry all sorts of social life to an extreme. The social fabric is as complex and confusing in the city as it is simple and bare in the country. The problem for the country is to develop a wholesome social life and an efficient institutional life which shall avoid the extremes of the city and yet shall get country people to working together harmoniously and happily. Only thus can life in the open country maintain itself in a social age for successful business, church,

home, school or social life. Only thus can country character develop its capacity for those social satisfactions which are the crowning joys of a complete and harmonious civilization. But those who have faith in the fundamental vitality and adaptability of rural life believe that even this serious weakness in cooperation can be gradually overcome and country life be made as effective for its own purposes as life in the city. This faith is justified by large success already thus attained in progressive rural sections with the modern spirit.

The Difficulty of Organizing Farmers

Five reasons are mentioned by President Butterfield to account for this difficulty: Ingrained habits of individual initiative; Financial considerations; Economic and political delusions which have wrecked previous organizations of farmers; Lack of leadership; and Lack of unity. Under lack of leadership, he says: "The farm has been prolific of reformers, fruitful in developing organizers, but scanty in its supply of administrators. It has had a leadership that could agitate a reform, project a remedial scheme, but not much of that leadership that could hold together diverse elements, administer large enterprises, steer to great ends petty ambitions."[24] Yet country-bred leaders have been wonderfully successful in the city under different social conditions.

Failures in leadership are often due to failure to get support for the project in hand. This in turn is due to lack of common purposes and ideals. A successful leader personifies the ideals of his following. Unless there is unity in ideals the following disintegrates. Here again the rural unsocial streak shows plainly. Individual notions, ideas and remedies for social ills have been so various, it has taken the stress of some great common cause, the impulse of some powerful sentiment, or the heat of some mighty moral conflict to fuse together the independent fragments. This was done when Lincoln sounded the appeal to patriotism in '61; when Bryan's stirring eloquence aroused particularly the debtor farmer class in '96; and when the projectors of the Farmers' Alliance, the Grange and the Populist Party succeeded in their appeals to class consciousness and convinced the farmers of their need of union. Rural movements however have usually been short-lived.

II. Failures in Rural Cooperation.

Lack of Political Effectiveness

Farmers usually do their duty serving on juries and in minor civil offices. They are usually fairly well represented in state legislatures. But few farmers go to Congress or gain real leadership in politics. In proportion to their numbers, the rural people have marvelously little influence in the affairs of government. We have in this country no Agrarian party. The farmers are divided among the different political camps and seldom do they exert any great influence as a class in the making of the laws. There are about seventy times as many agriculturists as lawyers in the United States, —yet the lawyers exert vastly greater civic influence and greatly outnumber farmers in most law-making bodies.

Yet there are about fifty million rural people in the country, largely in farm households. The average farmer in 1910 paid taxes on 138 acres besides other property. Why should he not have more political influence? Why has he not demanded and secured a dominating influence in the state? There is probably no reason except lack of cooperation, and adequate leadership to accomplish it.

Lack of Cooperation in Business

Successful farming is essentially cooperative. The most successful classes of farmers in the country, according to Professor Carver, are the Pennsylvania Dutch, the Mormons and the Quakers. All of these cooperate in their farming operations to a high degree, as well as in their social and church life. They occupy their farms permanently as family homes. Their land is not for sale, in spite of the rising values. To a large extent they buy and sell, and work their farms together, to their great mutual advantage.

The old-fashioned farm management however, which still generally persists, is competitive, and therefore wasteful and unsocial. With rapid transportation and the lengthening distance between producer and consumer, the function of the middleman has grown and his power vastly increased. Consequently on many products the rise in selling price is due to

the series of middlemen through whose hands the article has passed on the way to market. Investigations at Decatur, Ill., revealed the fact that head-lettuce sold there was raised within five miles of Chicago, shipped into the city, repacked and shipped by freight to Decatur, a five-hour trip; then stored in the latter city over night; and finally displayed, wilted in the sun, in a store window, and sold to a housewife who buys it for fresh goods! If raised in a suburb of Decatur, it might have been sold at half the price, and been really fresh enough to eat. The same story of flagrant waste through poor management might be told of butter, cream, and practically all farm products which are not sold in a public market near the producer's home.

Not only are both the farmer and his ultimate customer suffering a considerable loss from this competitive system of marketing, the process itself is bad socially, for this reason. It cuts off the farmer from his normal market, the nearest village, and isolates him and his family so that they have virtually no interests there. If the farmer should sell his product in the village stores or through a public market, or a cooperative commission house, he would have more at stake in that town. He would probably trade and go to church there, his wife would do her buying there, they would be persons of importance to the townspeople and would form friendships and social relationships there. As it is, a wall of mutual suspicion and disregard separates this family from the people of the town.

It is doubtful whether farming can be sufficiently profitable to-day, or the life of the open country be really satisfying, without some degree of cooperation in business. More and more men are realizing this; are overcoming their natural weakness for independence and are discovering numerous modern ways to cooperate with other farmers; to their great mutual advantage both financially and socially, as will be indicated later.

Lack of Religious Cooperation

The old self-sufficing and competitive methods of farming have been closely paralleled by the selfish ideals in religion; the great aim being to save one's own soul and enjoy the religious privileges of one's favorite type of church, whatever happened meanwhile to the community. In most country places religion is still strongly individualistic. Rural folk have seen

little of the social vision or felt the power of the social gospel of Jesus, which aims not only to convert the individual, but to redeem his environment and reorganize the community life by Christian standards. Consequently rural churches are depending too exclusively on preaching and periodic revivals rather than on organized brotherliness, systematic religious education and broad unselfish service. All of these are essential.

This lack of cooperation is very widely in evidence in the division of country communities into petty little churches, so small and ineffective as to be objects of pity instead of respect and enthusiastic loyalty. In the older sections of the country, rural communities often have twice as many churches as are needed; but in the middle West and the still newer sections further westward the problem of divided Christian forces is even more serious. Many a small township has five churches where one or two would be quite sufficient, and all are struggling for existence. The problem is less serious in the South, where denominations are fewer and where union services are exceedingly common.

In a sparsely settled section in Center County, Pennsylvania, there are 24 churches within a radius of four miles. This fact was vouched for in 1911 by the Presbyterian Department of the Church and Country Life. The same authority suggests the following:

In Marshall County, Indiana, with a total population of but 24,175, there are twenty-nine varieties of churches, separating Christian people. The situation is typical and the names are so suggestive as to be worth recording: Amish Mennonite, Baptist, Primitive Baptist, Brethren, Catholic, Christian, Church of Christ Scientist, Church of God (Adventists), Church of God (Saints), Come-Outers, Congregational, Disciple, Episcopalian, Evangelical Association, German Evangelical, Holiness, Lutheran (Synod of Chicago), Lutheran (Synod of Missouri), Swedish Lutheran, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Protestant, Pentecostal Holiness, Presbyterian, Progressive Brethren, Reformed, Seventh Day Adventist, United Brethren, United Brethren (Old Constitution), and Wesleyan Methodist.

The village of Lapaz in this county has only 252 inhabitants, but there are three churches. They have 20 members all told! There are 68 persons in the village who claim to be church members, but 48 belong to churches of 12

denominations elsewhere. There are 93 people affiliated with no church whatever; and no boy or young man in the village belongs to any church. No wonder!

III. Rural Morals and the Recreation Problem.

Lack of Wholesome Social Life for Young People

In three adjoining townships in Indiana there are 21 country churches, all but four of which are dead or dying. The average membership is 52. One of the local leaders significantly said, “We don’t believe in any social life in our church. Socialism never saved anybody.” Exactly. Such churches ought to die and certainly will.

The perfectly natural craving in all healthy young people for social life is a fact the rural districts fail to appreciate. By years of drudgery the farmers and their wives may starve to death this social craving in themselves. The work-slave forgets how to play and outlives his social hungers. But his children are not born that way. They have natural human instincts and appetites and these imperiously demand opportunity for expression. The religion that imagines that these things are born of Satan and must be repressed, is a religion of death not life.

It is worse than useless for the church to discourage the social life among its young people. If it tries to starve their social hungers and furnishes no chance in the church for young people to meet freely in friendly intercourse, those young people will meet elsewhere, as surely as the moon shines. To put the ban of the church on dancing and all other popular amusements, and then offer no substitute whatever, is not only unreasoning cruelty, it is pure foolishness.

You cannot hope to dam a stream and make no other outlet. Undoubtedly the country dance is usually a bad social enterprise; but the only way to fight it successfully is with social competition, not opposition. The loyalty of young people to the church often begins when they discover the church people really understand their social cravings and are doing something sensible to meet them. Happy the village where the young people have all their best times under Christian leadership.

But unfortunately rural life is seriously lacking, both in and out of the church, in social opportunities; and the condition is far worse than in generations past. To begin with, farmers' families are perhaps only two-thirds as large as they used to be.[25] There are fewer children in the home and in the school. Farm machinery has displaced three-fourths of the hired men. Fewer older boys are really needed on the father's farm; so they are free to go to the city where the social life strongly attracts them. The same is all too true of the farm daughters.

The incoming of urban standards has helped to displace the old-fashioned rural recreations which were natural to country life, and the taste for vaudeville, the public dance, amusement parks and picture shows has developed instead. The husking-bees and the apple-cuttings and the sugaring-offs, the quilting bees and the singing schools and spelling matches, wholesome, home-made neighborhood pastimes, which meant enjoyment from within instead of mere amusement from without, have silently disappeared. Little remains in many rural places but unmitigated toil, relieved by an occasional social spasm in the nearest village. In short, recreation has become commercialized. Instead of the normal expression of the social instinct in cooperative and wholesome pleasures which were natural to country life, social stimulus is bought for a nickel or a quarter; and an electric age furnishes forthwith the desired nerve excitement.

Lack of Recreation and Organized Play

This modern sort of recreation is not as good as the old for two reasons. It is really a sort of intoxication instead of a mild stimulant; and it is often solitary instead of social. Solitary pleasure is subtle selfishness. Even the rural sports are apt to be solitary, such as hunting and fishing. If the country is ever to be socialized and a spirit of cooperation developed which will make possible strong team-work in business, politics and religion, then we must begin with the laboratory practice of organized play. As a successful country minister says, "The reason why farmers cannot seem to cooperate when they are grown up is in the fact that *they did not learn team-play when they were boys*." Faithfulness to the daily work is a great character builder, but Dr. Luther H. Gulick rightly insists that play, because of its highly voluntary character, trains men in a better morality than work does.

Especially is this true of wage-earners, students in school, and all those who work for others. As Dr. Wilson in his fine chapter on Rural Morality and Recreation, so well says, "What we do for hire, or under the orders of other people, or in the routine of life is done because we have to. We do not choose the minor acts of study in school, of work in the factory, of labor in the house, of composition in writing a book. All these little acts are part of a routine which is imposed upon us and we call them work. But play is entirely voluntary. Every action is chosen, and expresses will and preference. Therefore play is highly moral. It is the bursting up of our own individuality and it expresses especially in the lesser things, the preferences of life. The great school for training men in the little things that make up the bulk of character is team-work and cooperation in play. Here is the school of obedience to others, of self-sacrifice for a company and for a common end, of honor and truthfulness, of the subordination of one to another, of courage, of persistent devotion to a purpose, and of cooperation."[26]

Morality and the Play Spirit

The undeniable fact that rural morality is so closely dependent upon wholesome recreation makes this subject a most vital one. Life in the country ought to be sweeter, purer and morally stronger than life in the city. The very fact that *incognito* life is impossible in the country is a great moral restraint. But the moral stamina of country people will surely give way, under stress of constant toil, unless relieved by play and its wholesome reactions. Investigate the sad stories of sexual immorality so common among country young people and you will find one of the ultimate causes to be the serious lack of wholesome recreation and organized play. The recreation problem is fundamental in this matter of rural morality and the sooner we face the facts the sooner we shall see a cleaner village life.

It is not enough to encourage occasional socials and picnics, track athletics and baseball games under church auspices, as a sort of *social bait*, to attract and attach people to the church. The Y. M. C. A. has taught us that these social and physical things are *essential in and of themselves*. They cannot be neglected safely. In a sense they are moral safety-valves, for releasing animal spirits which might be dangerous to the community under pressure. Certainly some measure of play is needed to keep the balance of sanity and

efficiency in all human lives. Rural life, made solitary and mechanical by modern farm machinery, is seriously lacking in the play spirit and team-play practice. Here is its most serious failure in cooperative living. Here its socialization must begin.

B. THE NEW COOPERATION IN COUNTRY COMMUNITIES

I. Social Cooperation.

The Problem of Community Socialization

The seriousness of the problem as described in the previous pages has not been overstated, though dwellers in progressive and comfortable country communities may think so. Let them be duly thankful if their social environment is better than the average here described. Speaking from broad experience of the tragic results of rural individualism, Mr. John R. Boardman says, "There is a great social impulse in the country but its force is centrifugal. It tends to split up the community into jealous, suspicious groups, and we therefore find sects and parties disintegrating and multiplying often by division. This is nothing short of *a social crime*. Strong measures must be taken not only to prevent further social stratification of a prejudicial character, but to compel a practical organic federation which will unite the personal forces, combine available resources and focus on mutual interests."

Country folks must learn to cooperate; to live harmoniously together in rural neighborhoods, to find real recreation in organized play, to work effectively at mutual tasks and to utilize more successfully all social organizations and means for community welfare. Interdependence must be made to take the place of boasted independence. Selfish individualism must yield to social cooperation. Only thus can life in the open country be made to survive. Otherwise tenant farming will continue to increase and a rural peasantry finally develop on the land, with absentee landlords living in comfort in the more normal social conditions of the villages and towns. Already 37% of farm owners do not live on their farms; and the farm renter is cursing the soil.

This acute social problem is a great challenge to true lovers of the country. We believe rural life will survive the test. In most respects it has made great progress in recent years, and in many quarters it is rapidly learning the practical value of cooperation. Given adequate, intelligent leadership, country life will surely grow in social efficiency and happiness, and thus be better able to hold its best people loyal to the open country.

The problem, then, of socializing the community so that it will cooperate successfully, is to unite all the personal and social resources, federate all worth-while institutions for concerted action for mutual welfare; then "focus on mutual interests" and work together on the common tasks. Fellowship in work or play is a great uniter of hearts. It irresistibly develops a community spirit.

Who Shall Take the Initiative?

Woe to the man who starts anything in the country! He must have a good cause and an obvious reason. The success of any rural enterprise usually depends overwhelmingly upon its leader. In a "Get Together Campaign" for community betterment, the strongest local personality or institution would better issue the call. If there is a strong Farmers' Club, or Cooperative Association, or Community Library Board, or a Village Board of Trade with community ideals, they may well assume the right to take the first step toward an ultimate union of all the community interests. If there is only a single church in the place and it commands the respect and loyalty of the people, it may well be the federating agency. Or the strongest church can invite in the others and together they can make this movement a community welfare proposition with a definitely religious stamp; working through committees of a church federation in the interests of all the people. Often this is best done by the Rural Young Men's Christian Association, working in behalf of all the churches.

In short, whatever institution controls the greatest local influence, and is most representative of the people, has the best right to take the lead in socializing the community. Perhaps it may not be a religious body at all. It may be a social club, or a village improvement society, or a civic league, or a Rural Progress Association embodying modern rural ideals. If it has the

backing of the people, it is responsible for using its social influence in the most effective way. For instance, in the prosperous little rural community of Evergreen, Iowa, the popular and effective socializing agency is "The Evergreen Sporting Association"! It unites all the young people in the neighborhood, both married and unmarried, and for some fifteen years has had a fine record for social efficiency. By its elaborate and varied annual program of popular interests it has made life in Evergreen wholesome, happy and worth while. The young people as a rule are loyal to the place and stay on their prosperous farms instead of losing themselves in the city.

A Community Plan for Socialization

Rural social life is simple and should be kept so. Elaborate organization is never necessary. What we need is that "touch of human nature which makes the whole world kin." We do not need another institution, but possibly a social center and a working plan which can express and develop the common humanhood. The place may be an up to date "Neighborhood House" with rest room and reading room with its chimney corner; a place for tired mothers and babies, and a meeting place for men of business; or it may be just a room at the church or the school house or the public library, easily accessible to all. Or the social spirit can be developed wholly without any special equipment. The main point is the growth of community ideals and a willingness to work together to attain them.

The plan should be the result of careful study of community needs by the social survey method, and a more or less definite program of constructive propositions to work out as conditions allow. It may be a thorough-going plan from the start, or a gradual growth as the vision enlarges; in any case it should embody and stimulate the community desire for progress. The first result of such a community effort will be a natural reaction on the local institutions, tending to encourage them and help them to function normally; bringing a finer spirit of cooperation into the church, new efficiency into the school and a revival of responsibility in many homes. The beautifying of public and private grounds, the establishing of play grounds and possibly a lecture or entertainment course, the stimulating of the local social life in an infinite variety of ways, will be suggested in detail by the local needs.

The Gospel of Organized Play

"A new gospel of the recreative life needs to be proclaimed in the country," says J. R. Boardman. "Rural America must be compelled to play. It has, to a degree, toiled itself into deformity, disease, depravity and depression. Its long hours of drudgery, its jealousy of every moment of daylight, its scorn of leisure and of pleasure, must give way to shorter hours of labor, occasional periods of complete relaxation and wholehearted participation in wholesome plays, picnics, festivals, games and other recreative amusements. Better health, greater satisfaction and a richer life wait on the wise development of this recreative ideal."[27]

(Top) A game of stone hustle at a one-room school two miles from railroad; the teacher and boys and girls of all ages participating.

(Right) One of the leaders' corps at work during recess time.

(Bottom) London Bridge and graded games. Home-made bean-bags and balls help give expression to the spirit of cooperation.

The county committee of the Orange County, N. Y., Associations is cooperating with the public schools for play on the school grounds. Bullying, fist fights and bad manners have given way to the spirit of courage, endurance, chivalry and helpfulness.

Very slowly people in the country are coming to believe that play is a necessity, not merely a luxury, for children and that it is a law of the child's growth. But it is not merely a matter of health nor of child life. It is a matter of social welfare and the development of community spirit. It affects every individual, old as well as young.

Consequently we find in the past six years, since the organization of the Playground Association of America at Washington under President Roosevelt's patronage, great attention has been given to the subject. Country children, whose repertory of games was found to be very limited, have been taught to play a great variety of new and interesting games; and this has given them a new zest in life. Country school athletic contests have been organized and inter-community meets held, sometimes on the county basis. Great field days have been held, rural picnics have been developed which have been marvelously successful in interesting adults as well as children; out-of-door folk-dancing has been revived; play festivals have interested whole townships, with hundreds of visitors, many of whom have tested their strength and skill at the various games and contests. It has not been a commercialized or professional performance by paid experts, but a day of play, of, for, and by the people.

The social effect of these play festivals is far reaching. "Acquaintances formed on these occasions," says Prof. M. T. Scudder, "may be followed up by profitable correspondence, by exchanging visits, and thus lead to the establishment of life-long friendships. The names of those who excel in one sport or another become household words throughout the county. How this stimulates self-respect and ambition! The real leaders in each community become known, be they boys or girls, men or women, and these may be brought together thereafter for organized efforts in worthy enterprises for the common good. And all the time the isolation of country life is being lessened."[28]

More and more at these festivals the products of manual training, industrial and domestic arts are being exhibited. There are competitions in bread making, sewing, gardening, carving, basketry, corn and vegetable raising, with every opportunity for varied interest. The dramatic instinct is developed by the revival of pageantry, in connection usually with the Fourth of July or other holidays, often with special local historical

significance. “The Pageant of Thetford” is an interesting pamphlet describing a successful program of this order in Vermont. It may be obtained of the Playground Association.

In summarizing the value of such efforts, Dr. Scudder claims, “Perhaps it is not too much to say that through a series of properly conceived and well-conducted festivals the civic and institutional life of an entire country or district, and the lives of many individuals of all ages, may be permanently quickened and inspired; the play movement thus making surely for greater contentment, cleaner morals, and more intense patriotism and righteousness on the farm lands and in the village populations of our country. Such indeed are the socializing effects of organized and supervised play.”[29]

The School a Social Center

Under the modern system the centralized school has become sometimes the chief social center of the township. The mere fact of the gathering of numbers gives it initial prestige. Often a fine school spirit is developed by the inter-community contests and teachers of the modern type are not slow to see their opportunity to cooperate with the pupils out of school hours in wholesome games. The school building is often in the winter the meeting place of the young people for social purposes and its central location, its large capacity, its neutral and public character make it often the most desirable social center in the township. This topic will receive fuller treatment in our next chapter on rural education.

The Social Influence of the Grange

The ordinary fraternal orders are seldom found in the rural districts except in villages of some size. They are essentially a town institution, and are of little assistance in the rural situation. But an organization of great influence and social value is the Grange, the Patrons of Husbandry, which is frankly endeavoring to serve the economic, intellectual and social needs of the working farmer and his family.

Founded in 1867, the Grange had a quiet growth for six years, then suddenly developed surprising strength in the panic year of ’73 because of

the popularity of its economic program for the relief of farmers, just when their grievances were most pressing. On the crest of this mighty wave of discontent 20,000 local granges were organized within two years; but decline soon followed and by 1880 the movement had utterly collapsed, as suddenly as it had developed. It had disappointed those who had expected too much of it. It could not make good its promises of panacea legislation which would cure all the troubles of the farm; and many of its academic schemes for business cooperation failed ignominiously, after arousing the steadfast faith of thousands.

The order was not dead however. It never declined in New England, and from that quarter has renewed its strength in the East and middle West, so that it is now more prosperous than ever in its history. It has little hold yet in the South or far West; but is easily the most influential farmers' organization in the country.

The Grange has done a splendid service in thousands of communities by uniting the people of all ages on a broad platform of mutual benefit and community welfare. Often where rival churches tend to divide the neighborhood unpleasantly, the Grange unifies with its broad fellowship and constructive program. Its greatest service has been social, but it has rendered also large educational and economic service and has taught the people the simple fundamentals of cooperation. Out of the wreck of its earlier experiments, its mutual fire insurance and cooperative purchasing have survived and developed successfully.

Unique among fraternal orders, the Grange has emphasized in a most helpful way the instruction of the people in all matters of popular interest, particularly on subjects relating to farming and the farm home. It has immeasurably broadened the horizons of countless farm women and has thus raised the whole level of rural life in many places. In promoting social fellowship in countless ways it has relieved the bareness of a life of toil and its plans for wholesome recreation have greatly enriched the community life. After years of meager opportunity, country folks are apt to go to social extremes, and the Grange's greatest danger in some places seems to be to yield to the pleasure-loving spirit rather than to serve all the vital needs of rural people.

II. Business Cooperation.

Modern Rural Cooperative Movements

The rather reckless plunge of the Grange, in its earlier years, into the untried schemes of business cooperation expressed the very general belief of farmers that somehow their common interests demand cooperative enterprise to gain real success. It is a mighty truth. They blundered only in details of method. In an age of trust consolidation, in which manufacturing and commercial interests have attained wonderful development and success by merging their resources and their operations under united management, the spirit of cooperation has slowly but inevitably made its way in rural life. But "rampant individualism" dies hard; and most farm communities are still competitive rather than cooperative.

In recent years however there has been a most encouraging increase of cooperation in all important rural interests, which indicates that the old individualism is doomed. In 1907 there were over 85,000 agricultural cooperative societies with a membership of three million different farmers (excluding duplicates); a large proportion of the total farm operators of the country, and doubtless the most progressive of them all. This number included 1,000 cooperative selling agencies; 2,400 cooperative creameries and cheese factories; 1,800 community grain elevators; 4,000 purchasing societies; 15,000 telephone companies on cooperative lines; 15,650 cooperative insurance companies and some 30,000 cooperative irrigation projects.

Not only has this vast development of cooperation served to unite farmers and develop common initiative and community spirit; it has greatly reduced the expense of farm business and the cost of living. Professor Valgren estimates that mutual fire insurance saves the Minnesota farmers annually $750,000. Cooperative telephones save often one-half the cost of the service. Cooperation reduced the price of reapers from $275 to $175; of sewing machines from $75 to $40; of wagons from $150 to $90; and of threshers from $300 to $200. The Pepin County Cooperative Company of Wisconsin did about a quarter of a million business in the year 1909 in its nine retail stores. A far greater cooperative plan is the Right Relationship

League which has a hundred successful stores in Minnesota and Wisconsin, though incorporated but six years ago.

Cooperation Among Fruit Growers

It is safe to say that the great success of fruit growing on the Pacific slope would have been impossible without cooperation. Individual growers were at the mercy of the railroads and the middlemen; but unitedly they have mastered the situation and control the New York market. The fruit is inspected, sorted and packed by the company, not by the individual growers, and thus the standard is maintained and all trickery eliminated. The organization is able to get all possible advantages in the way of low rates for large shipments, to secure ideal accommodations in refrigerated fast freights and storage warehouses; and to keep in touch, by telegraph, with the market conditions in all eastern centers, thus preventing over-supply.

These associations often purchase for their members all supplies needed in the business and keep their laborers busy in the slack seasons making boxes, crates, etc., so that they are able to develop and retain a permanent force of skilled labor instead of depending on the precarious supply of seasonal help. The Grand Junction Fruit Growers' Union of Colorado bought, in 1906, 224 carloads of supplies for its members, both for business and household use.

For fifteen years past, three-fourths of the citrus growers of California have been cooperating successfully and are most efficiently organized. Their central agency markets an annual product worth fifteen millions and keeps representatives in some seventy-five leading markets of America and in London. They command the highest market price for their product and distribute it at a saving of about one-half the expense.

Some Elements of Success and Failure

Cooperation is succeeding well not only among fruit growers, but producers of tobacco, onions, potatoes, tomatoes, celery, and, to a limited extent, cereals. Experience has proved that it pays for farmers of a whole section to

specialize on the same product; and the most uniform success has come in societies that are purely cooperative, that is, not joint-stock companies with voting power according to shares, but *one vote for each member*, the profits being of course proportionate to the relative volume of business each contributes.

Short-sighted selfishness resists this plan and yields slowly to pure cooperation; but experience shows that, as Prof. E. K. Eyerly states, "in the stock companies the large shareholders are tempted constantly to increase the dividend rate on capital at the expense of the other patrons. This may explain in part the difficulty of the cooperative creamery in New England to hold its own, where only 20% are of the purely cooperative type." Dr. Eyerly includes among the more common causes of failure individualism, conservatism, jealousy, mercenary traits, poor business management, a lack of knowledge of what other societies are doing, and lack of restrictions on share voting and the number of shares owned.

In the local beginnings of cooperation, ingrained selfishness as well as rural suspicion and ignorance, sometimes blocks progress. When the strong California Fruit Growers' Exchange began twenty years ago, it had difficulty holding some of its members to their agreements. After pledging their crops to the company they would sometimes yield to the temptations offered by outside buyers, for the sake of greater temporary profit; but after a few lawsuits this tendency to break cooperative contracts was entirely checked.

Our Debt to Immigrants

Unquestionably this great cooperative movement of the last two decades means an entire redirection of rural life and the ultimate conquest of its worst enemy, individualism. We must thank our adopted citizens for the main impulse given to this movement. Cooperative principles and the cooperative spirit have been imported from Denmark, Germany and Italy, where they had already proved successful, and have taken deep root in our middle-western and north-central states, gradually overcoming the native Yankee individualism characteristic of the older settlers. Dr. Eyerly of Amherst is authority for the statement that the only successful cooperative

stores organized in New England for a generation past have been, with one or two exceptions, among foreigners.

In connection with the interesting fact that *interstate* immigration also stimulates cooperation, the same writer says: “In those parts of the country into which there has recently been a considerable influx of interstate immigrants, as in the Pacific coast states, in Texas and certain other parts of the south and southwest, the cooperative movement has rapidly developed. While this is due in part to the intensive and specialized agriculture practiced and to the nature of the crops grown, e. g., fruits and vegetables, it is due also in part to the *transplanting of individuals into new social groups* in which the ‘cake of custom’ is likely to be broken up and new adjustments made under some intellectual leadership.”[30]

The Cooperative Success of Denmark

Sir Horace Plunkett in Ireland, Raiffeisen in Germany and Wollemborg in Italy have led the cooperative movement in their respective countries to remarkable success; but the classic illustration of the wonderful possibilities for rural transformation through cooperation is the story of modern Denmark. Space forbids adequate description here. Suffice it to say that from a condition close to bankruptcy, following a devastating war in 1864, and with sadly depleted fertility, that enterprising little nation of farmers has become the richest in Europe in per capita wealth and about the most productive. An enlightened patriotism working through cooperation accounts for the change.

The Central Cooperative Committee of Denmark controls the situation with consummate skill, with subordinate societies for production of every nature; for the manufacture of rural products such as butter and cheese; for the protection of credit, insurance, health, savings, etc.; even for the protection of the poor farmer against the loss of his single cow! The movement has become closely identified with the religious and patriotic sentiments and in fact springs from both.

It is evident that with this strong movement for cooperation developing in America, two things must eventually follow. The unsocial, narrowly sectarian church must go; and our excessive Anglo-Saxon individualism is

doomed,—that unsocial streak in rural life. There is surely a new spirit of cooperation in our country communities east and west which will ultimately overcome our country life deficiencies and make it the most satisfying life in all the world. Meanwhile the struggle is far from won and for men of vision, courage, social initiative and tact there is a great opportunity for leadership in social reconstruction which will challenge and reward the utmost consecration.

Test Questions on Chapter V

1.—How do you account for the extreme independence and individualism of the American farmer?

2.—In what unsocial ways does this rural individualism express itself?

3.—What common weakness do you notice in every sort of rural institution?

4.—Why do city people as a rule cooperate more readily than most country people do?

5.—Why has it proven a rather difficult task to organize farmers?

6.—How do you account for the fact that farmers have less influence in politics than lawyers, though the farmers are seventy times as numerous?

7.—In what ways do farmers need to cooperate in their business relations? Illustrate.

8.—What shows the failure of country folks to cooperate in religious activities?

9.—What old-fashioned forms of recreation are now seldom seen in the country? What has taken their place?

10.—Why is a wholesome play spirit so essential to the morals of a community?

11.—Suggest different ways to "socialize" a country community.

12.—What plans for rural betterment would you include in your community program for the people to work out together?

13.—What specific plans would you suggest for organized play and community recreation?

14.—What should be done about Sunday baseball in country villages?

15.—What is the special usefulness of the Grange in a rural community?

16.—In what lines of business has cooperation proved successful in the country? Illustrate from the fruit growing industry.

17.—Why has cooperation proved more successful in the newer sections of the country than in the East?

18.—What can you say about the success of cooperation in Denmark?

19.—What is the difference between a joint-stock creamery and a purely cooperative creamery?

20.—In what ways can Christian people illustrate the principles of brotherhood and cooperation so as to overcome the social deficiencies of country life?

EDUCATION FOR COUNTRY LIFE

HOW EFFICIENT RURAL CITIZENSHIP IS DEVELOPED

I. Weaknesses in Rural Education.

It is easy to blame the one-room schoolhouse for the failures of rural life. It would be fairer to say the rural schools have not kept pace with the rising standards of their own communities. There remains a deal of sentiment about the "little red schoolhouse" of the olden time; yet, discounted in cash, it fails even to keep the building painted. A recent survey of social conditions in northern Missouri reports that in thirty miles of travel on country roads not one unpainted barn or farmhouse was observed, but every schoolhouse was out of repair.

It is evident, both from this neglect of the property and the meager appropriation for school support, that the farmer to-day has no special loyalty to the little red schoolhouse. In fact in some quarters there is great dissatisfaction with the schools as distinctly hostile to rural life, not in sympathy with rural ideals, and serving mainly as a "gang-way" to the life of the town. The Country Life Commission reports: "The schools are held responsible for ineffective farming, lack of ideals and the drift to town. This is not because the rural schools as a whole are declining, but because they are in a state of arrested development, and have not yet put themselves in consonance with the recently changed conditions of life."

The country people have a right to insist that their schools shall fit their boys and girls for country life, inculcate in them a genuine love for the country and an appreciation of rural values, with the natural expectation that most of them will be needed on the farm. Even if a third of the pupils should ultimately go to the city, it is unjust to the majority and to the community, to make the country school simply a preparation for city life.

The Urbanized Country School

"The education given to country children," says Sir Horace Plunkett, "has been invented for them in the town, and it not only bears no relation to the life they are to lead, but actually attracts them toward a town career."

From the beginning, doubtless, teachers have been largely city-trained. Though country-bred perhaps, they have caught the city fever and it seems to be very contagious. They have brought city manners and styles in clothing, the city standards and ideals and the love for city life. Unconsciously perhaps they have impressed the minds of children with the superiority of all things urban. Even the text-books are products of the city. The city curriculum has been adopted whole,—contrary to all reason. The teaching material often, instead of being connected with the farm, echoes the distant city's surging life. It deals with stocks and bonds and commerce, rather than problems of the dairy, the silo or the soil.

The suggestive power of such books and teachers is very great with impressionable children. The lesson is quickly learned to honor commerce above farming, city speed above country thoroughness, superficial success above the homely virtues, and mere numbers, bigness, roar and hustle above the lasting joy of tested friendships. With the young minds filled with the tales of the wonderful city, which rival the Arabian Nights in allurement, the wonder is, not that so many are dazzled and follow the flame, but that so many remain on the farm. Insofar as the schools do stimulate the two great disintegrating tendencies of rural life, the townward trend of the boys and girls and the increase of absentee landlords, the country folks have a right to complain. Let the schools train for the soil rather than away from the soil. Let them exalt rural ideals and develop rural interests. Let them open the eyes of the country boys and girls not for fault finding and discontent, but to see the beauty of the country, the privilege of country freedom and the vast possibilities of scientific farming and soil productiveness. Before this can be done, normal schools for rural teachers must move out of the city, or import, straight from the country, enough country sense and sympathy to fit the teachers personally for their tasks. Probably the latter. To meet this evident need, progressive Wisconsin has established county training schools which give prospective teachers

distinctly the rural point of view; and more than sixty normal schools have established special departments for the training of teachers in country life and the essentials of a rural education. Meanwhile some serious problems handicap the rural school.[31]

Inferior Equipment and Meager Support

There are twelve million country school children in the United States and only half that number of children in cities. Yet the city has invested twice as much as the country in public school property and spends far more for school support each year. The average country boy's education costs but $12.52 a year; while the cities spend $30.78 annually on each pupil.

The question is a fair one, should the boy and girl be penalized for living in the country? Why should the boy who happens by the accident of birth to live in the country suffer a needless handicap? When our Puritan ancestors established the free public school system, the purpose was to maintain *equal rights for all*, the children of both rich and poor alike. The welfare of a republic depends on the maintenance of this principle.

It was a significant way-mark of human progress when schools were established in every community, in city or country, where all children might have an equal chance before the law. But with the growth of great cities and the decadence of once prosperous rural communities, the country boy has been losing his share. The city's growth has in many ways cost the country dear. It is certainly but fair that in return the state as a whole should share the expense of the rural school.

The Weakness of the District System

A relic of pioneer days when rural life was closely organized within small communities, the district unit for school management still persists in most states to the present day. It originated in Massachusetts, but that state was the first to discard it, thirty years ago. Long ago Horace Mann declared the law of 1789 which established the district system "the most unfortunate law on the subject of common schools ever enacted in the state."

The school district is too small a unit either for school management or taxation. It is democratic to a fault; but it is too easy for stingy individuals to control the situation and weaken the schools by their parsimony. Local jealousies and shameless favoritism also make the system bad. The loss of population has naturally aggravated this evil, leaving in many a once thriving school a little lonely group of children, devoid of any enthusiasm or school spirit. The township is the smallest possible unit for efficiency, and the county unit, so successful in Georgia and elsewhere in the South, is better still. Ultimately the state is likely to be the unit both of school taxation and administration. Only thus can reasonable uniformity and standard of efficiency be maintained, in city and country.

Other Problems of the Country School

Next to the blunder of the district unit, growing worse in the face of a shrinking population, is the serious difficulty of securing capable teachers and holding them long enough to gain real success. The problem of maintenance is crucial here. So small are the salaries, men are rapidly being crowded out of the ranks. In the North Atlantic states only one teacher in seven is a man; and less than one in four in all the country. There can be no hope for better rural schools till the salary is made respectable. Maryland, North Dakota and other states have enacted minimum salary laws which have decidedly raised the standard.

The problem of supervision is a serious one, especially when complicated with politics as is often true of the county or state superintendency. Professor H. W. Foght significantly suggests: “The man who supervises the schools should have at least as good an academic and professional preparation as the teacher working under him. *This is seldom the case.*” The incompetency of the school board, and the unwillingness of competent men to serve, still further complicates the problem. In many a community less earnest attention is given to the school which must train the boys and girls for life than is given to the problem of breeding horses and cattle.

In most rural communities the school building is still the little building of the “box-car type,” unattractive without and bare within, and as devoid of practical utility in equipment as of aesthetic charm. Equipment is less

essential than personality, but to accomplish results with such a handicap is heartbreaking work. Slowly the modern type of rural school is making its appearance along the country-side; and by its sheer attractiveness is winning back to the school something of local pride.

The great problem of what to teach, in order best to fit the pupils for a satisfying and successful country life, is only beginning to be faced frankly by many rural schools. In the past six years, however, the idea has been slowly gaining attention that the country school does not need the city curriculum, but requires a special program of its own. This involves much more than the technical study of rudimentary agriculture, but it must include that. By giving the reasons underlying the ordinary processes of farming and introducing the boys to the elements of the science as well as stimulating them to become proficient in the oldest of the arts, the school is able to arouse a real ambition to remain in country life and be a successful farmer on modern lines.

II. Modern Plans for School Improvement.

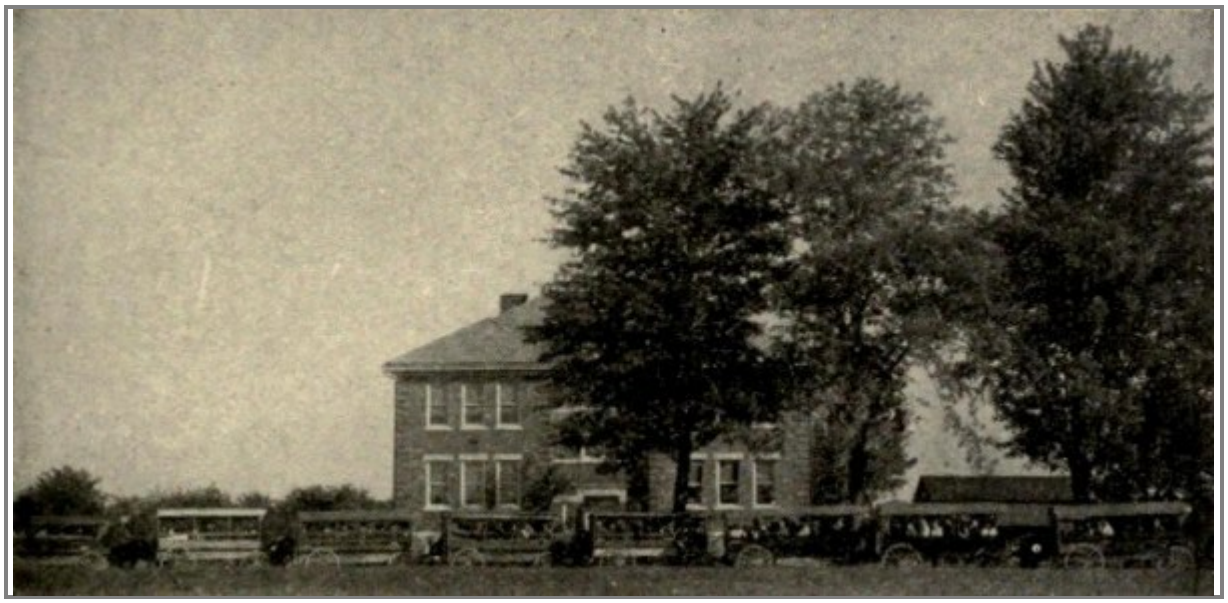
Arguments for and Against Consolidation

The centralization of country schools has been forced by the logic of circumstances. “Suppose you start to a creamery with 100 pounds of milk, and 45 pounds leak out on the way, could you make your business pay?” asks Dr. J. W. Robertson, a Canadian leader. “And still, of every 100 children in the elementary schools, 45 of them fall out by the way,—in other words, the average attendance is but 55%. But the consolidated schools in the five eastern provinces, with their gardens, manual training and domestic economy, now bring 97 of 100 children to school every day, and with no additional expense.”

Consolidation is simply efficiency applied to the rural school situation. Instead of perhaps eight separate schools, housed in badly ventilated and insanitary buildings, with very poor equipment, there is one central building, modern in construction and satisfactory in every detail. Instead of eight teachers wasting time over six to fifteen pupils each, with no enthusiasm, there are four teachers working splendidly in team-work, and a fine school spirit, the pupils attending regularly, partly because they no

longer have to trudge two miles to school but are conveyed at public expense and partly because they are more interested in a really effective school. The saving of waste sometimes makes it possible to conduct such a school at an actual reduction in expense over the district system, as is the experience in South Carolina. The motive, however, is not economy but to furnish the children better teaching and better facilities for effective education.

While consolidation clearly spells greater efficiency, the plan is obviously impossible under certain conditions and sometimes undesirable. In a widely scattered country the small district school is the only alternative to instruction at home, at least for children under high school age. There is a reasonable limit to the distance to which pupils should be carried. Opinions naturally will differ greatly in determining this reasonable limit. Furthermore weather conditions greatly complicate the problem, particularly where muddy roads are impassable or the northern climate prescribes deep snow drifts which prohibit transportation. Of course even the neighborhood school suffers under these conditions; but the consolidated school in a large township would be obliged to close during seasons of extreme weather.



Consolidated school at North Madison, Madison Township, Lake County, Ohio.

Eight conveyances filled with children may be seen lined up in the foreground.
(Courtesy of A. B. Graham, College of Agriculture, Columbus, Ohio.)

The John Swaney School, District 532, McNabb, Illinois. Irwin A. Madden, Principal.

Moral and social objections must also be faced in this connection. Granting, as everyone must, the efficiency argument for the centralized rural school, we must be careful that our teaching efficiency is not gained at too high a cost. It is a rather serious thing for small children to be far from home regularly through the day; and the usual viewpoint of the mother easily wins our sympathy. We have less consideration for the community pride which suffers when the district is abolished as a social unit. But when we are reminded of the actual moral dangers to which children are sometimes

subjected in the privacy of the covered wagon, we cannot dismiss the objection lightly. The solution, however, is not in the direction of the inefficient district school, for that, too, has its moral dangers; but in thorough supervision of the transportation under trustworthy adults.

While the gospel of consolidation is rapidly gaining, all through the country, closing thousands of unnecessary schools every year, the movement often meets determined opposition, though advocated by all leading educational authorities. In time, however, in a disintegrating community, the scarcity of children forces centralization. The Indiana statute makes this automatic by its very sensible provisions. The law enacted eleven years ago permitted school trustees to close schools having less than 12 for an average attendance. The amended law of 1907 allowed the abandonment of schools with an attendance of 15 or less and made it compulsory if the number fell below 13. Consequently 679 rural schools in Indiana were abandoned in 1904, 830 in 1906 and 1,314 in 1908 and in the latter year 16,034 children were carried to school.

Advantages of Purely Rural Centralization

In a closely settled township the natural center for the consolidated school is the village, other things being equal. But if the center is a city or a large town, results are not ideal. It is not good for country children to be village or city commuters. If the driver is the right sort of a man, the drive itself need not be harmful; but distance from home, particularly in a village among strangers, day after day, is not a good thing for most children. Furthermore, to add the country children to the city or village school means one more method of exploiting the rural neighborhoods and urbanizing the children. From the country view-point it is not desirable. The town school does not pretend to fit for rural life, but is frankly based on city needs.

The purely rural type of consolidated school is gaining in favor. To this plan must country lovers look for a school which combines efficiency with real training for rural life and avoids many of the objections to village centralization. Professor Foght speaks of it with enthusiasm: “This is the ideal type. It contemplates the establishment of the school right in the heart of the rural community, where the child can dwell in close communion with

nature, away from the attractions and allurements of the city. In such an environment establish the farm child's school. Build it good and large; equip it with all the working tools necessary to the greatest measure of successful work. Add broad acres for beautiful grounds and garden and experimental areas. *And surely the rural school problem will then be in a fair way to solution.*"[32]

A Thoroughly Modern Rural School

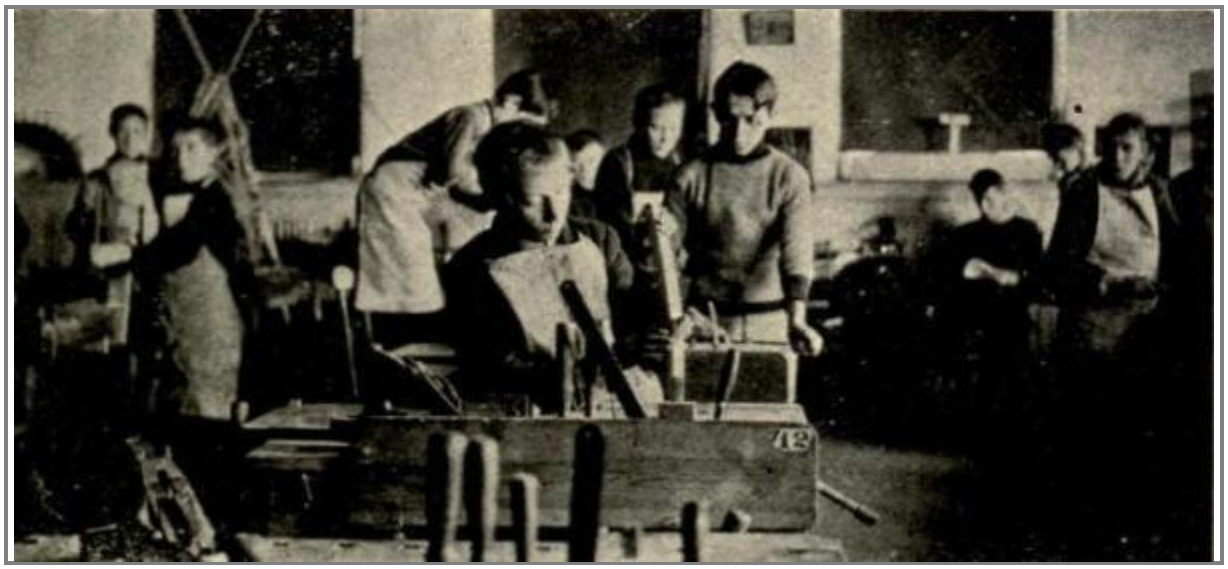
The finest type of the modern rural school seems to have been at last reports the "John Swaney School" in Putnam County, Illinois, located in the open country two miles from the small village of McNabb. This school was reported to the Cleveland Convention of the National Education Association, by a special committee on rural schools "as affording the best illustration of public sentiment, private liberality and wise organization combined, that the committee was able to find in any consolidated district in the United States." In making this report Prof. O. J. Kern said further, "The building stands near the north side of a beautiful campus of twenty-four acres of timber pasture. This campus was donated by Mr. John Swaney, who is a farmer of moderate circumstances, a man who believes in better things for country children. His was a worthy deed in behalf of a worthy cause and should prove a suggestion and an inspiration to public spirited farmers in other communities. The consolidated school is an illustration of the fundamental fact that if country people want better schools in the country for country children, they must spend more money for education and spend it in a better way. There is no other way."

The building is an attractive brick building located among beautiful shade trees. It contains four recitation rooms besides a large auditorium used for lectures, concerts and basket-ball; two laboratories, two library and office rooms, girls' play room, cloak room, and a room in the basement for manual training which is well equipped. It has apparatus also for teaching cooking and sewing. It is equipped with steam heat, running water by air-pressure system, and a gasolene gas generator. The campus is ample for agricultural work besides the football and baseball fields and tennis courts and the home for the five resident teachers.

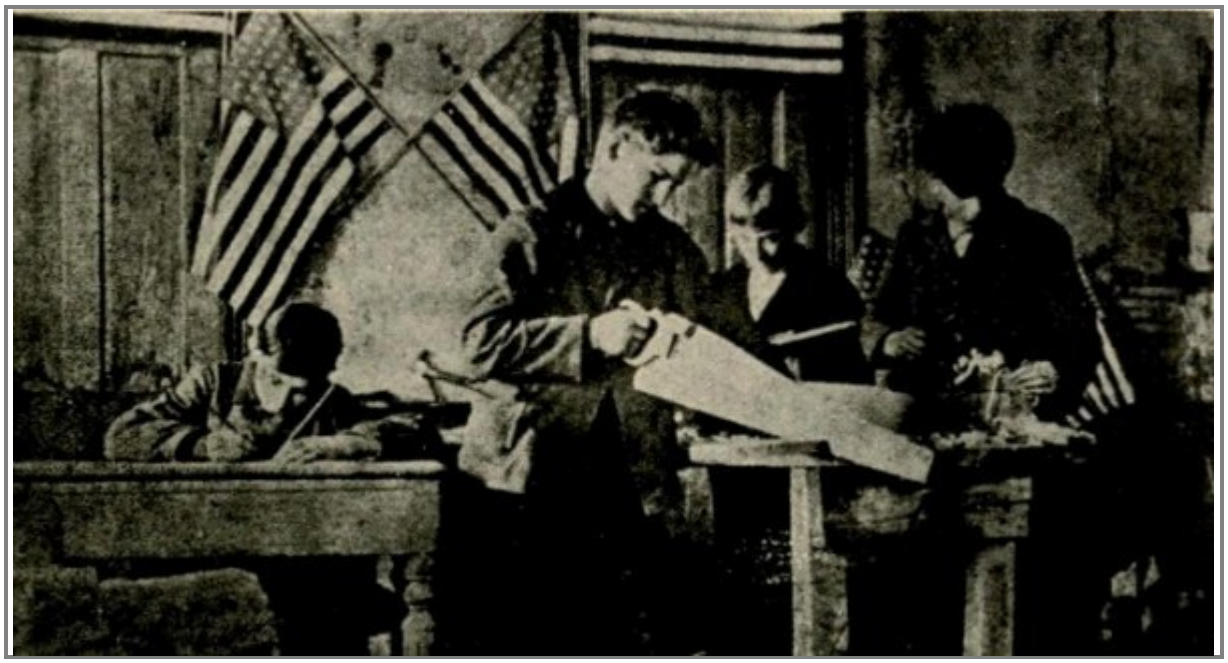
A Rural High School Course of Study

In the high school department of this consolidated school a well balanced curriculum is followed, based upon the special needs of rural life, strong in vocational courses, yet not lacking in the liberal culture studies. It includes the following: *First Year*, English I, Algebra, Physiology, Agronomy I or Latin, Household Science or Manual Training, Physical Geography, Horticulture or Latin. *Second Year*, English II, Algebra, Geometry, Zoology, Ancient History, Botany, Animal Husbandry or Household Science, Drawing and Music. *Third Year*, English III, Chemistry, Agronomy II or Latin or Household Science, English History, Animal Husbandry. *Fourth Year*, English IV, Physics, Household Science or Agronomy III, American History, Bookkeeping, Arithmetic and Civics. The farm laboratory work is in charge of experts from the Illinois Experiment Station.

Domestic Economy Rooms, Macdonald Consolidated School, Guelph, Canada.



Manual Training Department of the Same School.



Manual Training in a Small Rural School, Edgar County, Illinois.

As Dr. Warren H. Wilson states so well, “The teaching of agriculture is not for the making of farmers, but men and women. It must be more than a mere school of rural money-making. The teaching of agriculture needed in

the schools is for the purpose of training in country life. The country school must make the open country worth while. It will teach agriculture as the basis of an ideal life, rather than as a quick way of profits." However, though this is strictly true of the boys who study agriculture, if they can actually become proficient enough to give their fathers points, the evident "practical" value of the modern school will appeal so strongly to the farmers that its future support is assured. The farmers cannot be blamed for having little love for the school which alienates their children from country life; but schools which really train for rural citizenship will be appreciated by the country folks. And in time there will be more John Swaneys, men who will show their love for a real school for country life by endowing it after the manner of the old New England academies.

Elementary Agriculture and School Gardens

To delay the teaching of agriculture until the high school years would be to lose its most strategic value. It should be a regular course in all rural schools, beginning before the natural rural interests have been turned to discontent. As a rural educator says, "Let them early learn to know nature and to love it, and to know that they are indigenous to the soil; that here they must live and die. Give us many such schools, and the farm youth is in no danger of leaving the farm."

Although agricultural teaching has been slowly winning its way into our American schools, it has been a feature of even the primary schools in France since 1879 and in most other European countries more recently. The wonderful agricultural revival of Denmark dates from the introduction of this subject in the schools. Elementary agriculture is taught in every rural district of the land, and it gives the children that love for the very soil which makes Danish patriotism unique.

The Macdonald movement in Canada, backed by the government, has put that country well in the lead on our continent in this matter. It is spreading fast now in the States, however. Seven states in the South alone require by law agricultural instruction in rural schools. Many states now require normal school students to prepare to teach the subject as an essential branch of rural education; so that its future is assured.

The laboratory work in school gardens is a most interesting feature of great value. Only recently has the garden movement developed in America, beginning in Roxbury, Boston, in 1891; but every European nation but England popularized it long ago. Comenius believed that "a garden should be connected with every school," and his country, Moravia, early enacted this conviction into law. The rural schools of Prussia introduced school gardens as early as 1819; and they are now common everywhere in continental Europe. The movement is now spreading fast in this country and has proved very successful in stimulating interest in listless boys. In Dayton, Ohio, school gardens were established in 1903, and it has been observed there that boys taking gardening make 30% more progress than others in their studies. The moral effects are sometimes notable, especially in vicious surroundings.

III. Allies of the School in Rural Education.

School Improvement Leagues

This movement started in Maine, where it has over 60,000 members, and has spread to other states. It seeks to stimulate the loyalty of pupils, teachers and patrons to the schools in every feasible way. It gives coherence and direction to a rising local pride in a successful school and helps greatly to develop a local school spirit. When once aroused, this interest can be directed in any useful way which is most needed at the time. It often finds most natural expression in beautifying the school grounds with shrubbery, trees and flowers, and in furnishing the rooms with pictures and artistic decorations of real merit. Rural communities are proverbially lacking in aesthetic taste, and this is the best method conceivable for developing it. From a well-kept schoolyard, and schoolrooms relieved of their bareness by copies of the great masterpieces, there will radiate all through the township the spirit of order and beauty which will bless the whole community.

Rural Libraries and Literature

The state of Massachusetts, where the first free public library was opened long ago, now has such an institution in every town and city of the Commonwealth. In most states, however, libraries in rural communities are

not common; but in many states traveling libraries are obtainable from the state librarian which vastly broaden the mental outlook of the country people. In these days of abundant books, it is easier to secure books than it is to be sure that the books will get read. Rural reading circles and literary clubs can serve their communities well by helping to popularize the reading habit, and advising in the choice of books.

So vast has the country literature become in recent years, one can little imagine the great educational service of the numerous farm journals and magazines of country life. Rare is the farmer's home where none of them enters. They have apparently great influence in broadening the horizons of the farm home as well as teaching the people the newer ideals of our rural civilization. So popular has the topic of rural life recently become, many non-rural magazines frequently bring it before their readers, notably the *World's Work*. As a magazine devoted to all the interests of the country life movement, and frankly religious in its purpose, *Rural Manhood* is unique in its sphere. It is the organ of the Rural Young Men's Christian Association and by its remarkably broad survey of rural social movements has made itself indispensable to lovers of the country.

Farmers' Institutes and Government Cooperation

Space forbids even the enumeration of all the agencies and methods by which the standards of rural education are being raised. Both state and national governments, the state experiment stations and the department of agriculture at Washington are constantly reporting the latest results of agricultural science and investigation both in the form of printed bulletins and public sessions of Farmers' Institutes and similar occasions. The great majority of working farmers have not yet learned to value and to use these privileges as they should; but the appreciative ones who do use them are becoming constantly better informed about the secrets of country life and the wonderful ways of nature. The great national organization of the Grange, by its local discussions of farm topics and its effective lecture work, is another of the great educational forces in rural life, and the rural church and minister often have a fine educational opportunity, especially in country communities where the educational equipment is meager and the unmet need is great.

Agricultural Colleges and their Extension Work

Essentially a part of the government service, the state colleges of agriculture with their learned faculties of rural experts are the ultimate authorities in agriculture and all rural interests, and therefore are both the climax and the ultimate source of education for country life. With the remarkable popularity the past five years of rural study and the strong trend toward the rural professions, the agricultural colleges are probably growing faster than any other schools in the land. The Massachusetts State College has doubled in numbers and doubtless in efficiency in the past five years, and many other schools have shown remarkable development. With a faculty of a hundred men, and a budget this year of half a million dollars, the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell has become in reality a great school of liberal culture interpreted in terms of country life. Its enrolment has multiplied by five in the past nine years. The extension work accomplished by these and similar institutions is wonderfully broad and more and more serviceable to the people of their several states, as their community of interest is increasingly appreciated. The teachers are no longer "mere book farmers." They are constantly out among the people for every variety of social service; and the people, once or twice a year during the great "Farmers' Weeks" flock to the college by the hundred with no feeling of restraint but of actual ownership.

It is thus, from the humblest "box-car school" to the great university, that the people of the open country are being educated to appreciate their privileges and to live a more effective country life. It is a great educational movement, weak and halting here and there, but moving on with a better sense of unity and a clearer vision of the goal, with every passing decade. It all gives us courage to believe that the providence of God has in store for our rural America not the stolid domination of a rural peasantry, mere renters and pirates of the soil, but ultimately an enlightened, progressive citizenship, alert for progress and unswerving in their loyalty to "the holy land."

Test Questions on Chapter VI

1.—Why do many rural communities take so little interest in their schools?

2.—Show how most rural schools train country children away from the farms to the city instead of fitting them for country life.

3.—How does the expense of American rural schools compare, per capita, with the expense of the city schools?

4.—How can the country boys and girls be given a fair chance in our public school system?

5.—In what ways does the district school plan work badly as a unit of management and of taxation?

6.—What is wrong with the construction of most country school buildings?

7.—Why is the consolidated school in the town or village a bad thing for children from the farms?

8.—State the efficiency argument for consolidation of rural schools.

9.—Describe the Indiana law on this subject and give your opinions about it.

10.—Show the superior advantages of the purely rural type of centralized school.

11.—Describe the consolidated rural school in Illinois, known as the "John Swaney School," and tell what you like about it.

12.—How do you think a high school course of study in the country ought to differ from that in the city?

13.—Why should agriculture, domestic science, animal husbandry, et cetera, be taught in rural schools? How early would you begin?

14.—Compare the history of specific education for rural life in Europe and in America.

15.—What can you say about school gardens as a feature in rural education?

16.—How can "School Improvement Leagues" become powerful allies of the country school forces?

17.—What are some of the educational possibilities of rural libraries?

18.—In your experience what educational service can Farmers' Institutes render the farming community?

19.—Show something of the broad field of the agricultural colleges and their extension work, and the part they take in rural education.

20.—Write out concisely the best statement you can make of the immediate needs in rural education and the constructive policy you would propose to meet these needs.

RURAL CHRISTIAN FORCES

THE COMMUNITY-SERVING CHURCH AND ITS ALLIES

I. The Opportunity and Function of the Country Church.

Its Necessity to Rural Progress

The city man's judgment of many things rural is apt to be warped. The country is a better place than he thinks it is. Country institutions are doing better than he thinks they are; and the country church is by no means as dead and useless as he is apt to imagine. Ridiculing the plan to federate three village churches, a typical city man remarked, "What is the use? Three ciphers are just as useless together as alone!" Such a superficial verdict must not be accepted. The church in the country is certainly involved in a serious and complex problem. In many places it is decadent. In most places it is easily criticised for its meager successes in this age of progress; but it is still essential in spite of its defects.

No amount of unfavorable criticism can refute the fact that a community-serving church is the most essential institution in country life. Criticise it as we may for its inefficiency, it is to the country church that we must look to save the country. Even though it may be usually a struggling institution, inadequately equipped, poorly financed, narrow in its conception of its mission, slow in responding to the progressive spirit of the age, wasting its resources in fruitless competitions, and often crude in its theology and ineffective in its leadership,—nevertheless it is blessing millions of our people, and remains still the one supreme institution for social and religious betterment. It may be criticised, pitied, ridiculed. It has not yet been displaced.

Because the rural church is absolutely essential to the rural community, it must be maintained, whatever be the cost. Let *surplus* local churches die, as

they ultimately will, by the law of the survival of the fittest. The community-serving church must live. The man who refuses to sustain it is a bad citizen. Dr. Anderson rightly claims "The community needs nothing so much as a church, to interpret life; to diffuse a common standard of morals; to plead for the common interest; to inculcate unselfishness, neighborliness, cooperation; to uphold ideals and to stand for the supremacy of the spirit. In the depleted town with shattered institutions and broken hopes, in the perplexity of changing times, in the perils of degeneracy, the church is the vital center which is to be saved at any cost. In the readjustments of the times, the country church has suffered; but if in its sacrifices it has learned to serve the community, it lives and will live."[33]

To condense diagnosis and prescription into a single sentence: *The country church has become decadent where it has ceased to serve its community. It may find its largest life again in the broadest kind of sacrificial service.*

Stages of Country Church Evolution

In this rapidly growing country, particularly in the past century of empire-building in the great West, four rather distinct stages of development may be traced in the history of the country church. As the railroads have pushed out into all sections for the development of our natural resources, the apostles of the Christian faith have usually been in the van of the new civilization. Too often they have been apostles of diverse sects, pious promoters coveting for the church of their zeal strategic locations and a favorable advantage in the conquest of the country for The King. But in general, the story of beginnings in the planting of our American churches has been a tale of real heroism, of devotion to the highest welfare of humanity and the glory of God, and of untold sacrifice. In brief these stages of church evolution are as follows:

1. The period of pioneer struggle and weakness, through which practically all churches have had to pass.

2. Usually a period of growth and prosperity, sharing the growth of the community; or, if the new town failed to justify its hopes, a period of marking time, under the burden of a building debt.

3. The period of struggle against rural depletion, the rural church meanwhile losing many members to the cities. Apparently a majority of country churches are now in this stage and for many of them it is a noble struggle for efficient survival. Thousands of churches however have succumbed, 1,700 in the single state of Illinois.

4. The ultimate stage of this evolution is the survival of the fittest, the inevitable result of the struggle. Most churches have not yet worked this through, but when they do, it is by *readjustment to a redirected rural life*. It costs much sacrifice in time and money. It requires the church to study frankly its situation and to surrender cheerfully old notions of success and to broaden its ideals of service.

Old and New Church Ideals

The pioneer type of the circuit-rider church may still be found among the mountains and other neglected or scattered sections of the country. Its ideal of success is very simple: a monthly preaching service when the "elder" makes his rounds; and an annual "protracted meeting" in which the leader "prays the power down" and all hands "get religion," presumably enough to last them through the year. For this kind of success only three factors seem to be essential: a leader with marked hypnotic power, an expectant crowd ready to respond to his suggestion, and a place to meet. The place may be simply a roof over a pulpit. Results are meager and the same souls, may be, have to be saved next year.

We would not deny the itinerant heroes of pioneer days the credit they deserve for their self-sacrificing labors. Unquestionably they served their generation well, as well as conditions allowed. But most churches have outgrown this low ideal of success. They plan a more continuous work. They desire more than merely emotional results. They appeal to intelligence and to the will and make the culture of Christian character the great objective. Such work is vastly important; but a still higher and broader standard must be raised to-day for country church success.

A few weeks ago there came from an ambitious and active country minister (who evidently wanted a city church) a tabulated, type-written statement of his work for the year. According to widely accepted standards it was

evidence of his efficiency and the success of his church. It gave the number of sermons he had preached, the calls he had made, the prayer meetings he had led, the Sunday school sessions attended, the number of conversions and additions to his church membership, the number of families added to his parish roll, the number of people he had baptized, married and buried; the average attendance at all services, the size of his Sunday school, the amount of money raised for church expenses and for benevolences, the sums expended for repairing the property,—for all of which we were asked to praise the Lord. To be sure, it was a rather praiseworthy record, and, on the strength of it, this particular country minister was called to a city church! He will not be any happier there, his salary will not go any farther there, and he will probably have less influence; but he has attained the dignity of a *city* minister, the goal of many a man's ambition. Alas that so many of us seem to forget that the Garden of Eden was strictly rural; and that it was only when mankind was driven out of it that they went off and founded cities!

This case is a typical one. We are still too apt to reckon the success of a church in statistics reported in the denominational Yearbook. The book of Numbers is a poor Gospel. Let us not disparage the importance of adding forty people to the church membership, or doubling the size of the Sunday school, or tripling the benevolences, or increasing the congregations. These things are all splendid, every one of them, and indicate a live church and an active, consecrated minister; but they are not ultimate tests of a church's efficiency.

The Test of Its Efficiency

We must admit that the real business of a Christian Church is not to swell its membership roll or to add to the glory of its particular sect or to raise enough money for its own support and keep its property painted, nor even to get the community into the church. *The business of the church is to get the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ into the community and thence into all the world.* If it is not doing that it is not succeeding. It is succeeding only in proportion as it is accomplishing that; for its business is to Christianize that community.

Dr. Gladden is right when he says that the test of the efficiency of the church must be found in the social conditions of the community to which it ministers. To be sure the church should emphasize evangelism and the need of church membership. Let it add to its strength, in order to become a strong, effective organization. But let it remember that this is but a means to an end. Let it keep in mind the immediate object of its work, to *Christianize its community*.

I would say then, a country church is efficient if it not only gets its people "right with God" but also right with one another; if it not only saves them for the life of heaven, but helps them to begin the heavenly life right now; if it not only furnishes opportunity for the worship of God, in simplicity and truth, but also proves the sincerity of its worship in deeds of Christian service; if it furnishes spiritual vision and power, faith, hope and love, those unseen things that are eternal, but also mints these essentials of religion in the pure gold of brotherly sympathy and kindness.

The Church's Broad Function: Community Service

The efficient church will not only perform the priestly function of mediating between God and men, until in the holy place men feel the hush and peace and power of God's presence. It will also inspire men in a practical way to perform the duties of life. It will not only bring men into the conscious presence of God. It will somehow bring the love of God into the lives of men. It will increase the kindness and brotherliness and sympathy of men and women toward each other. It will stimulate fair-dealing in all business relations and put an end to injustice toward the weak. It will help to reduce poverty, vice and crime. It will encourage pure politics and discourage graft. It will set a high standard for the play life of the community and make amusements purer and more sensible. It will even endeavor to raise the level of practical efficiency on every farm, making men really better farmers because they are real Christians. It will help to make more efficient homes and schools, to give every boy and girl a fair chance for a clean life, a sound body, a trained mind, helpful friendships and a useful career.

The efficient country church will definitely serve its community by leading, when possible, in all worthy efforts at community building, in uniting the people in all cooperative social endeavors for the general welfare, in arousing a real love for country life and loyalty to the country home; and in so enriching the life of its community as to make "country living as attractive for them as city living, and the rural forces as effective as city forces."

Its High Responsibility: Spiritual Leadership

The inaugural program of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 suggests the business of his followers: to minister to the vital necessities of needy men. Broadly speaking, every work for human betterment is "our Father's business," yet the supreme function of the church is spiritual. It stands in a material world for an unseen God and an eternal life. It must constantly furnish spiritual vision and inspiration to weary men and women for the living of their lives. To do this, the church must provide the opportunity for public worship, in sincerity, impressiveness and truth. It must somehow bring the life of God into the lives of men.

Surely the church owes the community a prophetic service also, bringing God's great messages to human lives, throbbing with divine sympathy for all human needs, courageously challenging the man to whom the vision comes, to live the better life, and offering practical and immediate help, the help of Christ, to live that life. The spiritual service of a vital church will include a vivid portrayal of the Christ, his person, his teachings, his radiant character, his saving power, the dynamic for life which flows from him into every life which accepts his comradeship. All this and more.

We should avoid however the dangerous distinction between the sacred and the secular. The superficial exaltation of the spiritual function of the church is sometimes merely a cloak for laziness. Often a well conducted church social has spiritual results and a boys' camp becomes a "means of grace." Unless a man is pure spirit, the work of the church is more than "saving souls." Soul and body are in this life inseparable and interdependent. A saved man must be redeemed soul and body, in mind and spirit, as well as in all his social relations.

A religion which aims merely to save a man's soul, and otherwise neglects him, is superficial, and fails to appeal to a whole man's manhood. The subtle reactions of life warn us that the *soul's environment* must be redeemed, or it stands little chance of permanent salvation. Here is the nexus between individual and social salvation. Christian social service is necessary to conserve the results of evangelism. Unite them, and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

Let the Church Furnish Dynamic and Leadership

But the church should not scatter its energies and "dilute its evangelism" by attempting to do everything as an organization. Let it discharge its responsibility for social welfare *indirectly* when possible, through other organizations or individuals. Its broadest service will ever be, as in the past, to furnish the inspiration and the dynamic for many secondary agencies for social service and human betterment. But the church must either do the needed work or *get it done*.

It should duplicate no social machinery or effort, but should supplement all other local institutions and perfect their service by its own service of the higher life of the community. Let the church be the climax of the social, educational, philanthropic, health-restoring, peace-preserving forces of the community. Ideally it will federate them all in community leadership. Where these forces are lacking, the church should assume these functions, if the community welfare demands it; as actually takes place on many a mission field.

Well might every country church adopt this platform, adapted from the Open Church League: "Inasmuch as the Christ came not to be ministered unto but to minister, this church, moved by his spirit of ministering love, seeks to become the center and source of every beneficent and philanthropic effort, and to take a leading part in every movement which has for its end the alleviation of human sorrow and suffering, the saving of men and the bettering of this township as a part of the great Kingdom of God. Thus we aim to save all men and all of the man, by all just means; abolishing so far as possible the distinction between the religious and the secular, and sanctifying all means to the great end of saving the world for Christ."

II. Some Elements of Serious Weakness.

It is with no lack of sympathy for country ministers or churches that we offer these suggestions as to what is wrong with the country church. Often the conditions of the environment are largely responsible, and sometimes the churches are not to blame. Many of them are facing their difficulties nobly, not a few of them successfully. In fact many country churches are doing better than most city churches. By way of diagnosis the following brief suggestions are offered to account in part for the serious difficulty in the present situation.

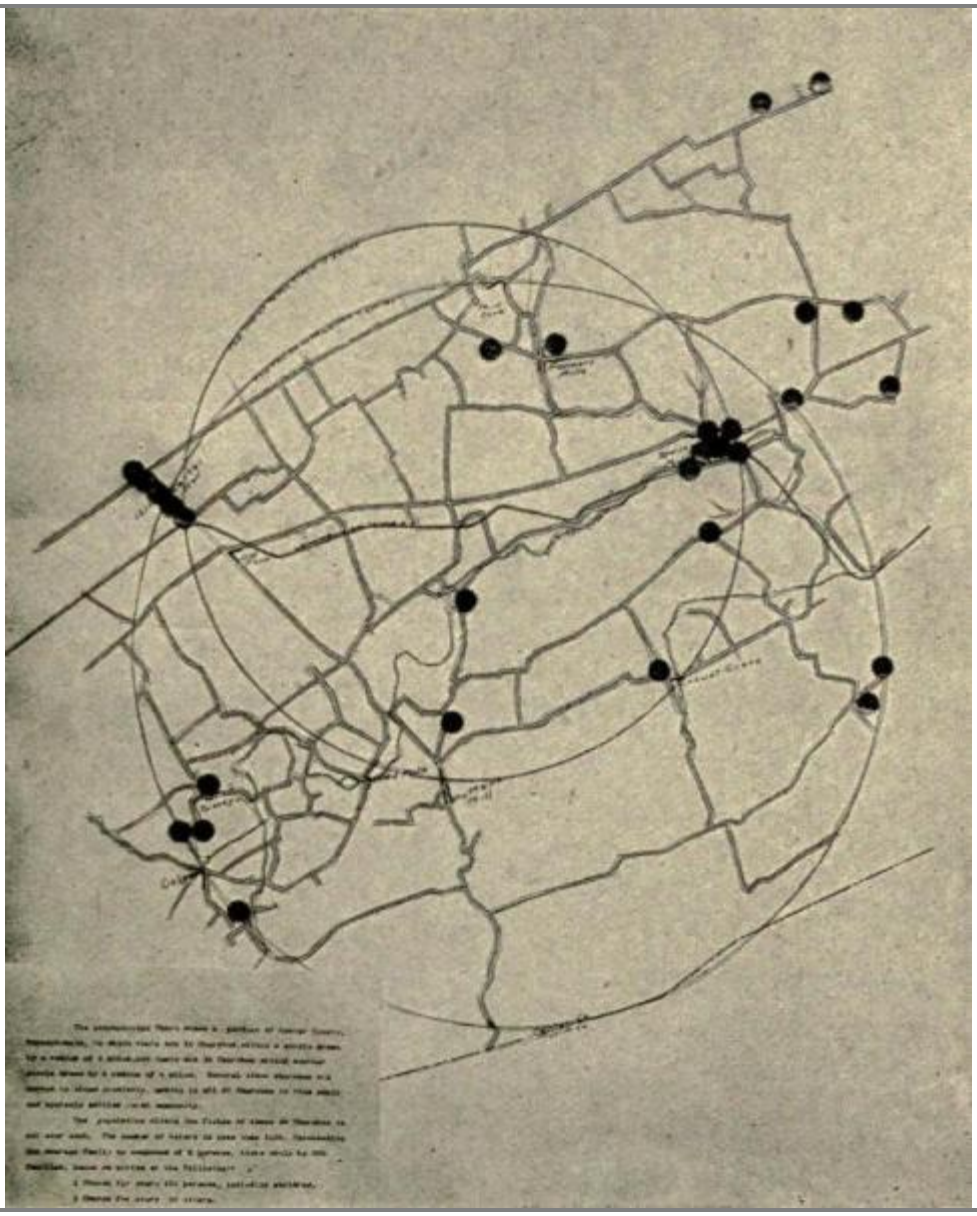
1. *A Depleted Constituency.* The first element in the problem is the *inevitable isolation* in the open country and the depletion of population in thousands of villages. We find often not merely loss of numbers, but impoverished vitality in many of those who remain. This is *weakness in personality*, always an ultimate problem.

2. *Economic Weakness.* Impoverished soil, poor agricultural conditions, and bad farming are found all too frequently. The church immediately suffers. It is no mere coincidence that the best country churches are always found among successful farmers. The church can hardly be more prosperous than its community.

3. *Lack of Social Cooperation.* Extreme individualism is still the curse of the open country. There has been little cooperation yet in industry, recreation, or religion. Consequently the church has been too often merely an occasional congregation of separate individuals with few interests in common; instead of a working body of vitally interested people, organized for the redemption of the community.

4. *Wasteful Competition.* This particular factor is not very serious in the South; but elsewhere there are usually found too many rival churches, selfishly struggling for life, but doing little to serve their community. This condition is the result of excessive individualism, selfishly insisting on its own peculiar sect; or the depletion of a once populous village; or the early blunders of denominational “strategy,” starting a church where it never was needed.

5. *Poor Business Management.* We are seldom likely to find any business system in the country church. As a rule they have no financial policy, no plan for the future, small salaries for the ministers and often in arrears. Their short-sighted method is simply "the short-haul" on the pocket-book, with a subscription paper; planning only for the current year. Inefficiency of course results from such poor business.



This chart shows a portion of Center County, Pennsylvania, in which there are 16 churches

within a circle with a radius of three miles. There are 24 churches within the larger circle
having a radius of four miles. Several other churches are in close proximity, making in all
the 29 churches shown in this sparsely settled community.

6. *Moral Ineffectiveness.* Many country churches have lost the respect of their communities and their local support, because of their lack of vital religion which makes character and deeds of spiritual power. They do not prove their genuine brotherliness in an unselfish service of the community. Amid their petty rivalries, they are struggling merely to save themselves rather than the community, forgetting the words of Jesus: "He that would save his life shall lose it."

7. *Narrow Vision of Service.* The country church is seldom progressive and has little idea of the modern social vision. Few churches have yet seen their great chance to serve broadly the interests and needs of the whole community. They flatter themselves upon their faithfulness to spiritual standards; though the fact is, they are neglecting a great opportunity and hence missing the loyal appreciation of their people.

8. *Inadequate Leadership.* The country ministry is too apt to be an untrained ministry, sadly lacking in professional preparation. Lack of a strong personality in pulpit and parsonage makes church success difficult. But the main weakness here is the fact that a majority of the country churches actually have *no pastor at all*. They have a preacher, part of the time; but he lives in the village seven miles away. He supplies the pulpit, marries the living and buries the dead. *The lack of a resident pastor living on the land with his people* is almost a fatal weakness in a country church. The most eloquent preaching never compensates for this loss.

III. Some Factors Which Determine Country Church Efficiency.

Surely this matter of making a country church successful is no simple problem. It is complex enough to be fascinatingly interesting. Its very difficulty is a challenge to strong men. We shall attempt to state the most

important factors which make for efficiency. All are important; some are quite essential. A church is efficient in proportion as it has developed these elements of strength.

1. *A Worthy Constituency*

It is very evident that the first essential factor is folks. The reason some earnest ministers prefer to work in the city is because there are more people there. A congregation to lead in worship and to inspire with ideals for Christian service is quite essential. A minister must have people to whom to minister. Churches can live without bells, organs, pulpits, fine architecture, or even ministers for awhile. We can sing without hymn books or choir; pray without missal, prayer book or surplice; worship comfortably without cushions or carpets; commune without silver plates or golden chalices or individual glasses. The one thing which is the *sine qua non* is a congregation. The church must have people.

This does not mean that success will depend upon great numbers, though depleted numbers cause serious discouragement. A country minister has a splendid chance for a thorough, *intensive* work with individuals and families, which is denied a pastor with a larger flock. Yet the church must have a constituency or it is not needed and of course cannot succeed.

2. *Local Prosperity and Progressive Farming*

Some one may ask, “Why haven’t you mentioned first of all the blessing of God, as the great essential to success?” Surely unless the Lord builds the house he labors in vain that builds it. We are simply assuming this as an axiom. Our work must always be done in partnership with God. Success itself is the evidence of His favor. To win that favor we must take the natural steps to win success.

Our second suggestion is local prosperity and progressive farming. Dr. Wilson calls the country church “the weather vane of community prosperity.” It might be more accurately called the *barometer*, for the church shows promptly the degree of the pressure of economy due to poor crops or bad farming. Impoverished soil, poor agricultural conditions and

bad farming explain the failure of many a country church. You can build a city on a rock (like New York) or even on the sand (like Gary); but you cannot hope to build a prosperous country community or rural church on *poor soil*.

Professor Carver tells us forcibly that "the world will eventually be a Christian or a non-Christian world according as Christians or non-Christians prove themselves more fit to possess it,—according as they are better farmers, better business men, better mechanics, better politicians." It is certainly the wisest kind of policy for the church to help to make its community prosperous. It is not only a fine way to serve the community; it is a prime essential to its own ultimate success. Many a rural church is languishing because of bad economics in the community. Let it face the problem man-fashion and do something besides pray about it. Let it prove the sincerity of its prayers by earnest plans and deeds to make its community prosperous.

This is exactly what was done in a certain Wisconsin village. By the fiat of the railroad, which suddenly changed its plans, half the people moved away in a day, leaving community institutions maimed and everybody discouraged. It was the wise minister who saved the day by organizing the farmers and planning with them a new local industry. He induced a pickle factory to build in the community provided the farmers would raise cucumbers on a large scale. He was even able to turn the village store into a cooperative enterprise which succeeded in running at a profit. This minister saved his church by saving the community.

That prince of country ministers, Johann Friedrich Oberlin, laid the foundation of his sixty years of pastoral success in the Vosges Mountains in the new local prosperity which was developed under his leadership. He was utterly unable to succeed until he had taught his people how to become better farmers, and thus to rise above the low level of incompetence and ignorance which had kept them almost immune to religious appeals and had kept their churches pitiable failures. His astonishing success won for him the official recognition of the Legion of Honor from the King of France. What he was able to do under great difficulties could be done to-day by thousands of rural churches and ministers, if they determined to do it. Let

them first make their community prosperous; then their church will share the prosperity.

3. *Community Socialization*

Prosperous and happy rural communities have outgrown the selfish independence of the pioneer past and have learned how to live together effectively in a socially cooperative way. But a great many rural places are still scourged by grudges and feuds and other evidences of individualism gone to seed. This accounts also for many small churches, the result of church quarrels. Country churches cannot succeed until the people learn how to live together peaceably and effectively, to cooperate in many details of the community life, to utilize the various social means for community welfare. To be sure the church can greatly help in this socializing process. It can lead in making the local life cooperative, educationally, agriculturally, socially, morally; and, if it succeeds, the church will be the first to reap the rewards of a finer comradeship.

4. *A Community-Serving Spirit*

Many a country church is dying from sheer selfishness. The same of course is true in the city. Many people doubtless think the church exists for the benefit of its members only. If this were true, the church would be simply a club. Selfishness is slow suicide for an individual. It is equally so for a church. A self-serving spirit in a church is contrary to the spirit of Jesus and it kills the church life. It is a bad thing for a church to have the reputation for working constantly just to keep its head above water, struggling to keep alive, just to go through the motions of religious activity, yet making no progress. Many a church is dying simply for lack of a good reason for being. Can you not hear the voice of the Master saying, “The church that would save its life shall lose it; but the church that is willing to lose its life, for my sake, the same shall save it”?

Let the church adjust its program to a larger radius. Let it be a *community-wide* program. If there are other churches, it will of course not invade the homes of families under their care. But aside from this, it will plan its work to reach out to all neglected individuals as well as to serve all social and

moral interests of the community as a whole. Let its motto be "We seek not yours but you." The church will not be able to save the community until it proves its willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the community.

5. *A Broad Vision of Service and Program of Usefulness*

This next factor making for efficiency is very closely related to the last. *A useful country church will not die.* A church that is really serving its community in vital ways will so win the appreciation of the people that they will support it because they love it. Some churches and ministers seem too proud to include in their program anything but preaching, praying, hymn-singing, with an occasional funeral, wedding and baked-bean supper to break the monotony. In a social age like this, with multiplying human needs, such a church is on the way to death. The church must recognize its responsibility, as its Master recognized it, to meet all the human needs of its people. Many country communities with meager social equipment, often with manifold human needs absolutely unmet, demand the broadest kind of brotherly service on the part of the church, for their mutual good. The church need not do everything itself as an institution. Its great work will ever be the work of inspiration. But where there are serious gaps in the social structure, the church must somehow fill the gaps. It must do the work or get it done.

It rejoices us to find churches all along the country-side to-day that have welcomed this great opportunity for broad usefulness, and have gained a new vitality and an increasing success by facing all the needs of the community and broadening their vision and program of service accordingly.

6. *United Christian Forces in the Community*

We are confronted now by one of the most serious factors in our problem. The pitiable sub-division of rural Christendom into petty little struggling, competing churches makes religion a laughing-stock and a failure. We are saddened by it. By and by we shall get so ashamed of it that we will stop it! Many men of leadership and influence are working on the problem and we can see improvement in many directions.

Wasteful sectarianism is a sin in the city; but it is a crime in the country. It is a city luxury which may be justified perhaps where there is a wealth of people; but it is as out of place among the farms as sheet asphalt pavements or pink satin dancing pumps. Sectarianism is not religion. It is merely selfishness in religion. A sincere country Christian will be willing to sacrifice his sectarian preference, as a city luxury which the country cannot afford.

The great Puritan movement against conformity to an established church settled forever the great principle that any company of earnest Christians have a right to form a church *when conditions justify it*. But we have seen in this country, as nowhere else in the world, the absurd extremes of this great liberty. Sects have been formed to maintain the wickedness of buttons and the piety of hooks and eyes; and for many another tenet almost as petty. Churches of "Come-Outers," "Heavenly Recruits" and "The Hephzibah Faith" appeal to the fancy of theological epicures. Colonies of "Zionites" and "The Holy Ghost and Us Society" have been established, mainly for the exploiting of some shrewd fanatic and his pious fraud.

With 188 sects now in America, we have come to the point when sensible people have a right to insist that an unnecessary church is a curse to a community. Its influence is sadly divisive. Its maintenance is a needless tax. It embodies, not true piety, but pharisaic selfishness. The community has a right to keep it out for self-protection. The social consciousness has now developed enough to teach us that the right of individuals to form endless churches must be curtailed, for the general welfare, exactly as other individual rights, such as carrying pistols, public expectoration, working young children, and riding bicycles on city sidewalks, have to be surrendered in a social age. Thus social cooperation is displacing individualism and religious cranks should not be immune to the law of progress. To insist upon individual rights to form a new sect or to burden an overchurched community with a needless church is a grave social injustice and a sin against the Kingdom of God.

A small village in South Dakota applied the referendum to the question whether they should have a Methodist or a Congregational church. The plan was proposed by the village Board of Trade. It was entered into by the whole community as a sensible proposition and the losers accepted the

verdict, under pressure of public opinion. The village has but one church today. When denominational leaders agree to force no church upon such a community as this, and to help support no church with home missionary funds where it is neither needed nor wanted, the cause of religion in small communities will be greatly advanced. Fortunately some of the larger churches are frankly accepting this principle and are working with a large measure of comity and denominational reciprocity.

The New Christian Statesmanship

For many years the leading churches in Maine have had an "Interdenominational Comity Commission" which has kept out unnecessary churches, and has reduced the number in overchurched communities by a sort of denominational reciprocity. Other states in New England and the West have adopted the plan, and now the Home Mission Council has recently organized on a national scale, in the interest of all Protestant churches.

The Interdenominational Commission of North Dakota includes the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist Episcopal and Presbyterian churches of the state. This simple statement of their working agreement is an excellent one:

(1) No community in which the concurring denominations have a claim should be entered by any other denomination through its official agencies without conference with the denominations having such claim.

(2) A feeble church should be revived if possible rather than a new one established to become its rival.

(3) The preference of a community should always be regarded in determining what denomination should occupy the field.

Such a plan wins our respect. We may have faith that the next few years will see much progress in reducing the disgrace of unholy competition between Christian churches that ought to be working together.

May denominational reciprocity soon relieve our country communities of their unnecessary churches which are simply a burdensome tax and a hindrance. Local churches often would unite if the outside subsidy were

withdrawn which prolongs their separate existence. Church union is a question, not of mechanics, but of biology. It is a matter of *life*. It is useless to unite churches forcibly which have not been *growing together*. They would fall apart next week! But they are doubly certain to grow together if encouraged from their denominational headquarters.

And by and by, through the new Christian statesmanship of denominational reciprocity, we shall have a Baptist village, and a Methodist village, and a Congregational village, all contiguous, and with united Christian forces in each community. It will be a great boon to the Kingdom of God,—and it will not even disturb the equilibrium of the denominational year books!

Blessed is the rural community that has but one church. But where there are several, let them work together as closely as possible, presenting a united front against the forces of evil in an aggressive campaign for righteousness. Local church federations, and township or county ministers' unions greatly help to develop a spirit of unity and really good results. A local federation of men's church brotherhoods, uniting all the churchmen of a township, is a splendid thing. It affects the whole church and community life. It speedily puts friendliness in the place of suspicion, and enthusiastic cooperation in place of jealous rivalry.

7. *A Broad Christian Gospel, in Place of Sectarian Preaching*

One of the signs of a decadent church is excessive emphasis upon sectarian trifles. When adult Sunday school classes have not studied the lesson for the day they fall back on denominational hobbies! A holy zeal for righteousness costs something. The selfish zeal for one's sect is cheap. There is little of this now in the cities; but the country is scourged by petty sectarian teaching both in the pulpit and in the Sunday school; and the country is very tired of it. Ordinary mortals are simply bored by it and will no longer come to hear it.

People are still hungry for the real gospel. The great affirmations of religion: The priceless value of human life, the reality of God our loving Father, the immortality of the soul, the law of the harvest, the gospel of a Saviour, et cetera, still challenge the attention and win the hearts of men. Let us emphasize the great Christian fundamentals on which most Christian

people heartily agree. Let us add to these high teachings of universal Christianity the simple social teachings of Jesus, his every day practical teachings for human life in mutual relations, and we shall have a winning message for the sensible minds and hearts of country people.

8. *A Loyal Country Ministry, Adequately Trained and Supported*

This is one of the ultimate factors in our problem, perhaps the most difficult of all. Leadership is always of utmost importance in social problems. A splendid leader often brings real success out of serious difficulties. There are hundreds of such splendid leaders in country parsonages to-day, and they deserve all the high appreciation and cordial recognition they have won. But when we consider our 70,000 rural ministers as a body, we find three things to be true: They are miserably paid. They are usually untrained. Their pastorates are too short to be really successful. The churches are of course more to blame for this condition than the ministers.

We must have a permanently loyal country ministry for life. Making the country ministry simply the stepping stone to the city church has been a most unfortunate custom even up to the present day. The country ministry must be recognized as a specialized ministry, fully as honorable as the city ministry, demanding just as fine and strong a man,—possibly even more of a man, for many a minister has succeeded in the city after failing in the country. The country minister must somehow get a vision of his great task as a community builder, like Johann Friedrich Oberlin, that greatest of country pastors. He must find an all-absorbing life-mission claiming all his powers and demanding his consecration as thoroughly and enthusiastically as the call to the foreign mission field. Then let him *go into it for life*, determined to do his part, a whole man's part, in redeeming country life and making it, what it normally is, the best life in all the world to live. Staying year after year in the same parish is the secret of success in the case of most of the conspicuously successful country pastors. Only thus can a man really become the parson of the village, a person of dominant influence in all the affairs of the people.

This ideal suggestion of long country pastorates meets with two objections. Laymen are saying, "How can you expect us to keep a minister after he has

said all he knows?" And some of the ministers will say, "How can you expect us to stay, on less than a living wage?" At present both objections are perfectly valid. Too many ministers are untrained men, and therefore fail to succeed for more than a year or two. And certainly an underpaid minister cannot be blamed for taking his family where he can support them respectably.

As near as can be determined, about 20% of rural ministers the country over (including all denominations) are educated men; though probably not over 10% of them have had a full professional training.[34] They are about as successful as any other professional man can be who lacks his special training for his life work. There is a great demand for *trained* ministers. The writer receives very many more requests from churches in a year than he can furnish with men. Yet the theological seminaries are training few men for the rural churches. Most of the graduates go either to the cities or the villages, where there is a living wage. Dr. Warren H. Wilson figures that a country minister with a wife and three children, in order to educate his family, keep a team and provide $100 annual payment for insurance for his old age, must have at least $1,400 salary. There are ministers who are able to do this on less,—but not very much less. There certainly ought to be a *minimum* wage of $800 and a parsonage, or $1,000 cash, for every minister. A church paying less than this is simply stealing from the minister's family. Churches unable to pay this minimum living wage ought to unite with a neighboring church or close their doors, except for itinerant preaching.[35]

In several denominations the plan of maintaining a minimum salary for their ministers is being attempted. We have space for a single illustration. The East Ohio Conference, Cleveland District, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, under the direction of Rev. N. W. Stroup, as district superintendent, has succeeded in raising the minimum to $750. It was estimated in advance that $2,500 would have to be raised by the stronger churches in the district to accomplish this result; but in the very first year only $1,000 of this sum was actually required. As soon as the movement was made public, many of the weaker churches developed courage and grit enough to raise their own pastor's salary to a respectable figure, and maintained their self-respect. Other churches are expected to do the same next year.

At the writer's urgent suggestion, in a public address last fall, a Michigan church, paying its minister only $350 a year, raised the salary to $800 and secured a bright young college graduate as pastor. They now report that it is just as easy to finance the church on the present self-respecting basis as it was to run a cheap church last year!

9. *A Liberal Financial Policy*

This reminds us very forcibly that one factor essential to country church success is a liberal financial policy. In the smaller country churches we seldom find any business policy, and no plan at all for the future. The most common method is the annual subscription paper, with special subscriptions for repairs or emergencies. The motive is apparently strict economy rather than efficiency. It never pays to run a cheap church, for it cheapens the whole enterprise. More and more the weekly-payment pledge system is coming into use and with it a careful planning of the budget at the beginning of the year, guided by an earnest purpose to keep the church business-like, the minister promptly paid, the property well in repair and the enterprise spiritually successful. Often the new consecration of the pocket-book has been the first symptom of a thorough-going revival.

10. *Adequate Equipment*

A large proportion of country churches are simply one-room buildings. This explains many failures. In order to serve the community at all adequately, the church must have social rooms for a variety of neighborhood purposes, and it must make provision for its Sunday school. About four-fifths of the boys and girls in the Sunday schools of America live in the rural districts. They should be given good rooms. Without an effective building for social and educational purposes,—a parish house or at least a vestry,—the country church is seriously handicapped. With a good equipment the church often becomes the social center for the whole neighborhood.

11. *A Masculine Lay Leadership Developed and Trained*

It takes more than a minister to make a church successful. The King's Business requires MEN. Women are usually active and loyal. The men are often just as *loyal* but less active because of lack of opportunity. The most enthusiastic meetings the writer has attended for months were in a rural county in Michigan, a county without a trolley. The meetings were held for three days under the auspices of the Men and Religion Forward Movement and all the forty-five Protestant churches of the county were represented by ministers and laymen. The laymen outnumbered the ministers about ten to one and they showed the keenest interest in the proposition to make the work of religion in their county a man's job.

Those men caught the vision of service, and every month during the winter, meetings led by laymen were held in every school house of that county, carrying the five-fold message of the great Men and Religion Movement into every rural neighborhood; the messages of personal evangelism, of definite Bible study, of world-wide missions, of social service to better their community, and constructive personal work to save their boys. This is a program of religious work for MEN. Only men can do it; but men *can* do it, with a little training and wise leadership. The results no man can foretell. But it must result in great blessing for the men and for their communities, and new efficiency and appreciation for their country churches.

12. *A Community Survey to Discover Resources and Community Needs*

Without multiplying further these factors which make for efficiency, we mention but one more. Until recently country churches have been conducted on the principle that "human nature is the same everywhere," and "one country village is like all the rest." But scientific agriculture has suggested to us that we should make a scientific approach to our church problem as well as to our soil problem. Country communities are *not* all alike,—far from it. Social, economic, moral, educational, political, personal conditions vary greatly in different localities. Churches miss their aim unless they study minutely these conditions. There is in progress now a religious survey of the entire state of Ohio. Quite a number of counties in Pennsylvania, New York, Missouri, Indiana and elsewhere have been carefully studied for religious purposes. Valuable reports of these studies are available as guides for similar work elsewhere. The best of this work

has been done by the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions under Dr. W. H. Wilson's direction.

The general purpose of the survey hardly needs to be defended. It is simply the application to the work of the church of the modern social method of finding the facts in order to prevent wasted effort, in order to utilize all available resources and minister to all real human needs. It augurs well for the church of the future.

We have every reason to hope that with the progress of the great Country Life Movement the Country Church is coming to a new day of usefulness; with people living under modern conditions, with local prosperity and progressive farming, with their communities well socialized and cooperating, with a community-serving spirit in the church, guided by a broad vision of service and program of usefulness; with united Christian forces and decreasing sectarianism; with a loyal country ministry adequately trained, and sustained by a liberal financial policy; with an adequate equipment making the church a social center; with an enthusiastic masculine lay leadership developed and guided by a community survey to undertake the work which will best serve the needs of their people, the Kingdom of Heaven will surely come. It sounds like the millennium! Perhaps it will be, when it comes! But in many respects we can see it coming, as, one after another, these factors come to stay. May God speed the day of the broadly efficient country church. It will mean the redemption of the country.

IV. Some Worthy Allies of the Country Church.

The Country Sunday school

Foremost among the allies of the country church is the Sunday school. There are few churches that lack this most important auxiliary, and there are tens of thousands of independent schools for Bible study located in the open country where there are no churches or preachers at all. Often the Sunday school, being non-sectarian, unites all the people of the community, and is an institution of large influence.

Three-fourths of the total Sunday schools of the country are in the rural sections (villages under 2,500 population). They are much more representative of the population than are the city schools. They are usually really community institutions. Men of local influence preside as superintendents and many adults attend as regularly as the children. While the preachers come and go, and are usually non-residents anyway, Sunday school officers and teachers remain in the community as the permanent religious leaders. Thus the Sunday school is dignified as not merely a child's institution but one that includes men and women of all ages and ministers to the deepest needs of all.

The Sunday school in the country is far more important relatively than it is in the town. In fact the country people in many places think more of their Sunday school than they do of the church. The Sunday school meets every Sunday of the year. It is a layman's institution. But church services are held only when they can get a preacher; which does not average oftener than every other Sunday. On the average Sunday throughout the year, in two denominations only in the South, there are 17,000 churches without preaching services. But their Sunday schools are doubtless in session regularly. Sometimes the Bible school superintendent does not attend the preaching service even when there is one. His Sunday school is his church.

A careful religious survey of three typical counties in Indiana by field investigators of the Presbyterian church revealed the fact that the Sunday school is far from being a child's institution, there being nearly as many members over 21 as under 14. The total enrollment was found to be divided into almost equal thirds, children under 14, adults over 21, and youth between those ages. There were more men in the Sunday schools than in the churches. 40% of the church membership were males; while of the Sunday-school membership over 14, 45% were males. Two-fifths of the teachers in these country Sunday schools were discovered to be men,—a much larger proportion than in the cities.

Country Sunday-school Teaching

With a vast opportunity, the country Sunday school really succeeds only moderately. There is great room for improvement in its methods.

Occasionally you will find a country school conducted on as modern lines as the best in the city; but usually they are fully as defective as the local public schools, and for similar reasons. The state Sunday-school associations are making real progress in standardizing the schools, introducing semi-graded lessons and something of the modern system. But the teachers are usually untrained, though well-meaning, and teach mostly by rote. Stereotyped question and printed answer are consistently recited by the younger classes, without stirring more than surface interest. The older classes often make the lesson merely a point of departure and soon take to the well-worn fields of theological discussion on trite themes of personal hobbies. Or if the teacher happens to be fluent and the class more patient than talkative, he makes the teaching purely homiletic, and, like the apostles of old, "takes a text and then goes everywhere preaching the gospel!"

About 90% of churches in the open country have only one room. This means utter lack of adequate Sunday-school equipment, and often ten to twenty classes jostling elbows in the same room. There is seldom intentional disorder, but the *noise* is often very distracting, as all the teachers indulge in loud talking simultaneously in order to be heard.

The country Sunday school surely has a great future. It has the field and the loyalty of its people. It is gradually being rescued from the monotony of fruitless routine. The teaching is becoming less a matter of parrot-like reciting and weak moralizing and more a matter of definite instruction. The teachers are here and there being trained for their task, not only in a better knowledge of the Bible but of boy life and girlhood at different stages. Definite courses of study are more and more introduced, planned to run through a series of years, culminating in a graduation at about the age of seventeen, with annual examinations for promotion; making due allowance for graduate classes and teacher training groups. So thorough is the work, in some places practically the entire population of a rural community is connected with the Sunday school.

Bible Study in the Country

It is an unfortunate fact that most Sunday-school quarterlies and lesson studies are produced in the city; yet the Bible itself is a book of rural life,

with the exception of some of the writings of Paul. No wonder country folks appreciate it. As Dr. Franklin McElfresh well says, "The Bible sprang from the agonies of a shepherd's soul, from the triumph of a herdsman's faith, and the glory of a fisherman's love. Its religion keeps close to the ground, and interprets the daily life of sincere men who live near to nature. One of the great days in the history of religion and liberty is on record when a vine-dresser named Amos stood up before the king of Israel to speak the burden of his soul. 'Prophet,' said he; 'I am no prophet, only a plain farmer, but I came by God's call to tell you the truth.' This was the day-dawn of Hebrew prophecy.

"The Bible can best be interpreted in the country. It sprang from a pastoral people. It is full of the figures of the soil and the flock and the field. Its richest images are from the plain face of nature and the homely life of humble cottages." Country Sunday schools need a lesson literature which can interpret to them the wonderful messages of the Book of books in terms of rural life; but meanwhile they are doing their best to discover these messages of life themselves.

The Rural Young Men's Christian Association

A most valuable ally of the country church, in many parts of the country, is the Rural Young Men's Christian Association, or the County Work, as it is usually called, because it is organized on the county basis. It is serving the interests of the young men and boys of the village and open country in a most effective way. It is successfully supplementing the work of the country churches where they are making their worst failures, and it is often uniting rival churches in a common cause, to save the boys; which results in a new sympathy and an ultimately united religious community.

It is developing young manhood in body, mind and spirit, furnishing wholesome social activities and recreation, conducting clean athletics, encouraging clean sport and pure fun, stimulating true ambition and intelligent, constructive life plans for the discontented farm boy, cleaning him up morally and opening his eyes to see new religious ideals.

Through well-directed groups for Bible study and through quiet personal work, the country boys are led to the discovery that religion is "a man's

job" and that it is essential to a well-rounded life; and they come to a frank and normal religious experience which profoundly changes their outlook on life and gives them a new life efficiency.

This Association work is no experiment. For years it has been widely successful in many states and is promoted by the State and International Committees on scientifically sound principles, based on a close study of rural sociology and tried out by years of patient endeavor by well-trained men who are specialists in their field. It is one of the most promising just now of all the various lines of Young Men's Christian Association work; and it is certainly as much needed as any branch of their work in the cities.

Working Principles

The County Work aims to save the country boy and develop him for Christian citizenship, not by the use of costly equipment, but by personality, trained, consecrated leadership; not by institutions but by friendship; not by highly-paid local secretaries, but by enlisting and training volunteer service; not by patronage and coddling but by arousing and directing the boy's own active interests; always remembering that by the grace of God the redemptive forces in each community must be the resident forces.

It is good policy to make the county the geographical unit of this effective work. The county is the social unit politically, industrially, commercially; it should also be the unit of religious endeavor, particularly in rural sections. A county-wide campaign for righteousness under the direction of a trained Association Secretary, usually a college trained man and an expert in rural life, is a great thing for any county. Every rural county in the land ought to be organized speedily to get the benefit of this business-like modern plan of Christian service. The difficulty is to discover, enlist and train the necessary leaders.

A Campaign of Rural Leadership

It is doubtful if there is any organization working for the betterment of rural life which has a better chance to serve the interests of the whole countryside to-day than the Rural Young Men's Christian Association. It represents a

united Christendom, being representative of all the churches and their right arm in social service. In a county where there may be twenty-nine varieties of churches, few of them strong enough for any aggressive work, and most of them mutually jealous and suspicious, the Rural Association Secretary comes in as a neutral, is soon welcome in churches of every name and gradually gains great influence. He is possibly a better trained man than most pastors in the county, and as he quietly develops his work they discover that he is a man who knows rural life, keeps abreast of the best agricultural science, is an expert in rural sociology and in the psychology of adolescence. He rapidly gathers the facts about the history and the present needs of the different townships in the county and constructs a policy for developing a finer local life, not only among the boys but the entire community.

If he stays long enough in the place, and is a man of the right sort, he speedily grows into a position of recognized leadership, gaining the confidence of the working farmers as a man of good sense, and of the professional men because he understands scientifically the underlying needs of the locality. Quite likely he is able to bring the ministers together in a county ministerial union of which he is apt to be made secretary or executive; and in some places he is able to federate most of the churches of many sects into a working federation for the religious and moral welfare of the county. Because he is a neutral, not working for the aggrandizement of any special church, though vitally interested in all and consecrated to the larger interests of the whole Kingdom of God, this man has the best possible leverage on the country church situation. He can advise weak churches about their difficulties; and when two or more local churches ought to be gradually united, he can often tactfully and successfully bring them together, as no other individual or group of individuals could possibly do. He can with the grace of God develop the spirit of cooperation among the people without which any hasty or mechanical plan for union of diverse churches would be but a temporary experiment.

Under the direction of his County Committee, which includes some fifteen to twenty of the most influential Christian men of the county, this Association Secretary is often able to set scores of local leaders at work and train them for the special service to which they are best adapted; thus

utilizing local leadership which has been largely going to waste through modest self-depreciation.

Gradually the office of the rural secretary becomes a sort of clearing house for all the popular interests and organizations in the county,—churches, schools, granges, farmers' institutes, boards of trade, medical societies, Sunday schools, boys' clubs of every sort, athletic clubs, civic associations and village improvement societies. Thus these various agencies are brought together for cooperative service of the countryside, learning to work together harmoniously with modern methods of efficiency.[36]

The County Work of the Young Women's Christian Association

So successful has been the work of the Rural Young Men's Christian Association, it has encouraged the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association to begin Christian work among women and girls in the country villages. There is unquestionably a wide field and a great usefulness for this branch of the Young Women's Association work. It ought to be rapidly promoted and doubtless will be as fast as consecrated young women can be trained for it and their challenge met by people of wealth to consecrate their money for this purpose. Efficiency would be gained by working in practical union with the rural Young Men's Christian Associations.

The Primacy of the Church in the Country

In all these activities it must be borne in mind that the Young Men's and the Young Women's Christian Associations are but auxiliaries of the church. The secretary is frankly a servant of the church, of all the churches. The main reason for emphasizing these agencies for rural redemption is the present divided condition of religious forces in the country. Where the churches are well united and cooperative; or better, where the community has but one church, a strong, influential organization, there is no valid reason why the church itself may not rightly assume the position of leadership in all matters of community welfare. Community building is the great work of the church after all; developing and strengthening the vital issues of life in order that the community may become an efficient part of

the great Kingdom of God. As rural Christendom becomes better united and better socialized, the church will come to its own again, as in the old days when it was the only outstanding institution in the community and rightly assumed the effective leadership in all matters vitally affecting the welfare of the people.

Here again, the problem is mainly one of personality. Given adequate leadership, the church can accomplish wonders as a genuine community builder. But a gun must be a hundred times heavier than the projectile it fires; else it will burst the gun. Small, petty personalities cannot hope for large results in real community leadership. The church needs masterful men, men of power and vision, ministers thoroughly trained for the work of their profession and men whose hearts are kept tender and humble by the spirit of the indwelling God.

V. Types of Rural Church Success.

Some Real Community Builders

With so many faithful men in country parsonages to-day who have seen the vision of broader service and permanent success, it would be invidious to suggest a list of names. It will be fully as safe to suggest something of their program. These prophets of the new day for the rural church are doing two distinct types of work. Some are making the village church the center of outreaching endeavor for the redemption of the surrounding country; others are vitalizing the church in the open country as a center of vital religion and broad service.

In Cazenovia, New York, for instance, we find a splendid instance of the effectiveness of the village church in overcoming its handicap with the people outside the village. In most places there is a two-mile dead-line for religion. Outside that limit the church's influence is seldom felt. But here we find a pastor who has by friendly evangelism in school houses miles from his church, supported by social methods for enriching the daily life of the people, won scores of people to his Lord and Master, and greatly enlarged his church membership and its usefulness. There are many places where similar success is won by the same kind of earnest, efficient work by

pastors and their laymen. Unquestionably the village church has a regal opportunity, as great as ever in the past.

The Church in the Open Country

There are many people, however, who doubt the possible success of the church in the open country. Some are advising concentrating efforts in the villages and centralizing church work there on the plan of the centralization of the public schools. In some places this may be wise; but to deny that a church in the open country can be successful is to fly in the face of the facts.

Given an adequate equipment for service, and a well-trained, tactful pastor who knows and loves country folks and lives with his people, splendid results may be expected. A church on the open prairie at Plainfield, Illinois, six miles from a railroad, has become famous in recent years as an illustration of real success in community building. City people would say there is no community, for there is none in sight. But the people for miles around are bound vitally to that church as to their home, for it not only has served their many needs and won their personal appreciation and love, but it has set many of them at work in a worth-while cooperative service.

Ten years ago that community had an unsuccessful church of the old type, gathering a small congregation from week to week but with little influence outside. No one had joined the church for five years. The last minister had resigned in discouragement, with six months' arrears in salary. The "New Era Club," a mile away, was wooing all the young people away from the church to its frequent dancing parties; while the church offered no substitute, and helplessly grew weaker year by year.

But in the past ten years a fine modern church building has been built, with fourteen rooms for all purposes, and paid for in cash; the manse has been remodeled; the pastor's salary nearly doubled; about as much given to benevolences as in the half-century preceding; the Sunday school has grown to 300 members; the people from miles away flock to the preaching services, the lectures, concerts and socials; large numbers have been added to the church; while the "New Era Club" has been crumbling into ruin, simply starved out by religious competition! There has not been a dance there for eight or nine years, though the pastor has never preached against it.

This all began with an old-fashioned singing school which gathered together the young people socially at the church; and from this simple beginning, other plans developed which met the needs of the people and won their loyalty. Though the pastor modestly disclaims special merit or ability, the man who cannot only keep his preaching services at a high standard of success and keep up a system of cottage prayer meetings throughout his parish as centers of the spiritual life, and also gather over 2,000 people for the annual community plowing contest (more than double the population of the whole township) must be a personality to be reckoned with! There is, however, nothing in the situation or in the program of successful achievement which could not be duplicated elsewhere in thousands of purely rural communities, given the same kind of intelligent leadership and consecrated cooperation.

Oberlin: The Prince of Country Ministers

With all the resources of our modern church life, it is doubtful if there has ever been a country pastor more strikingly efficient or broadly influential than Johann Friedrich Oberlin, who died nearly a century ago. He was pastor of four rural parishes in the Vosges Mountains for over sixty years and became the most beloved and influential person in the entire section. He was a graduate of Strassburg University and declined a city pulpit in order to accept the most needy and difficult field of service which he could find. The people of Ban-de-la-Roche to whom he came were a rude mountain folk isolated from civilization; but since Oberlin's work of transformation they have been a prosperous, happy people with many of the marks of culture.

Seven years before his death, Pastor Oberlin received the gold medal of the Legion of Honor from the King of France, "for services which he has rendered in his pastorate during fifty-three years, employing constant efforts for the amelioration of the people, for zeal in the establishment of schools and their methods of instruction, and the many branches of industry and the advancement of agriculture and the improvement of roads, which have made that district flourishing and happy." The National Agricultural Society gave him a gold medal for "prodigies accomplished in silence in this almost

unknown corner of the Vosges,... in a district before his arrival almost savage," and into which he had brought "the best methods of agriculture and the purest lights of civilization."

In the early stages of his remarkable career his narrow-minded people opposed every step he took in the direction of community progress. They resented his doing anything but preaching. When he proposed that they build a passable road over the mountains to civilization they jeered at the idea. But he shouldered his pick and began the task, and ere long they joined him. Together they built the first real highway and bridged the mountain stream. Out of a salary of $200 a year he paid most of the expense of two new schoolhouses, because the people refused to help. The other villages, however, saw the improvement and built their own. He gradually revolutionized the educational methods, and even in the course of years, succeeded in supplanting the mountain dialect with Parisian French. He studied and then taught agriculture, and horticulture, introducing new crops, new vegetables (including the potato), and new fruits; even reclaiming the impoverished soil by scientific methods which gradually won the respect of even the dullest of his people.

In all his reforms he kept his religious aim and purpose foremost and his church never suffered but constantly grew in influence and popular appreciation. Gradually he became the honored pastor, the "Protestant saint," of the whole mountainside. Lutherans, Catholics and Calvinists attended his services. They would even partake of the sacrament together and he furnished them with three kinds of bread, to suit their diverse customs, wafers for the Romanists and bread leavened for the Calvinists and unleavened for the Lutherans; and thus they lived together in peace!

The Force of Oberlin's Example

Few modern ministers perhaps will need to follow in detail the example of Johann Friedrich Oberlin, but the sacrificial spirit and working principles of his life ministry are as necessary as ever. As President K. L. Butterfield states so well, "Rural parishes in America that present the woeful conditions of the Ban-de-la-Roche in 1767 may not be common, though of that let us not be too sure. The same underground work that Oberlin did

may not need doing by every rural clergyman. Schools are busy in every parish. Forces of socialization and cooperation are at work. The means of agricultural training are at hand. Yet the underlying philosophy of Oberlin's life work must be the fundamental principle of the great country parish work of the future. Oberlin believed in the unity of life, the marriage of labor and learning. He knew that social justice, intelligent toil, happy environment are bound up with the growth of the spirit. They act and react upon one another.

More than a century ago this great man labored for a lifetime as a country minister. He knew all the souls in his charge to their core. He loved them passionately. He refused to leave them for greater reward and easier work. He studied their problems. He toiled for his people incessantly. He transformed their industry and he regenerated their lives. He built a new and permanent rural civilization that endures to this day unspoiled. The parishes about the little village of Waldersbach thus became a laboratory in which the call of the country parish met a deep answer of success and peace."[37]

Test Questions on Chapter VII

1.—How important do you consider the country church as an agency for rural betterment?

2.—How important might it become if it lived up to its opportunity?

3.—What four stages do you find in the development of the rural church in America? Describe this evolution.

4.—Contrast the old and the new ideals in country church work.

5.—What is the main business of a church in the country community and what do you regard as the real test of its efficiency?

6.—Describe what you think is the broad function of the church in serving the rural community.

7.—If the church meets its opportunity in this broad way what will it gain by it?

8.—What do you think about the church's responsibility for spiritual leadership?

9.—Take some country church of your own acquaintance and tell what you think it ought to be doing to build up its community.

10.—Name the chief reasons why many rural churches are so weak and ineffective.

11.—Make a list of factors which would help to make these churches successful.

12.—If local prosperity is at low ebb or the farmers are unsuccessful, what can the church people do about it? Illustrate what has been done.

13.—Why should the church not merely serve its own membership but the whole community?

14.—Why is sectarian competition particularly bad for the country sections?

15.—How can a country village get rid of its surplus churches?

16.—What can a church federation accomplish in a community? In a county? In a state?

17.—Why is a permanent resident pastor so necessary to country church success? What must be done to make this to any extent possible?

18.—What should be the "minimum wage" for a country pastor and how can this be secured? Illustrate how this has been accomplished near Cleveland.

19.—Should denominational home mission boards help pay the salary of their ministers in over-churched communities? What can be done about this?

20.—Draw a rough practical plan of a modern church building costing not over $10,000, and suited to rural needs.

21.—Suggest a practical plan of work for laymen in the country church.

22.—Discuss the religious usefulness of a community social survey. What local facts would you try to gather?

23.—What do you think of the opportunity and importance of Sunday-school work in the country?

24.—Why is the Bible particularly well adapted to people living in the country?

25.—Why are rural Sunday schools often so unsuccessful?

26.—Discuss possible improvements and suggest how you would accomplish them.

27.—What do you think of the general plan of the Rural Young Men's Christian Association work?

28.—Tell how it is helping the country boy.

29.—Discuss the working principles of this "County Work."

30.—Describe the broad opportunities for community Christian service which come to the County Work secretary.

31.—What Christian work in country villages needs to be done by the Young Women's Christian Association?

32.—Why do you find so often to-day a "two-mile dead line for religion"?

33.—What work in the surrounding country can be in a prairie church at Plainfield, Illinois.

34.—Do you believe in the permanent usefulness of the church in the open country?

35.—Tell the story of modern country church success in a prairie church at Plainfield, Illinois.

36.—What were the secrets of the success of that particular church in the open country? Is there any reason why 10,000 other rural churches cannot learn to do the same?

37.—Who was Johann Friedrich Oberlin?

38.—Discuss his remarkable life work as a country pastor. What do you think of his rural church program?

39.—Make a list of the successful country churches and ministers you have known and the chief reasons for their success.

40.—Describe the ideal country church of the future.

COUNTRY LIFE LEADERSHIP

A. A CHALLENGE TO COLLEGE MEN

I. The Relation of the Colleges to This Problem.

A New Interest and Sense of Responsibility

It has been plain from the start that this book is a book with a purpose. Its object was frankly stated in the preface and the author at least has not forgotten it in a single chapter. These seven preceding chapters have condensed the facts of country life in its strength and weakness and have voiced the modern call for rural leadership. Every call for trained leadership must come ultimately to the college man. Both the need and the worthiness of rural life, its social and religious crisis and its strategic signs of promise, bring the challenge of the country to the man in college.

For two or three years past there have been groups of men in various universities meeting weekly to discuss this problem. In comparing the needs of various fields of service and weighing their own fitness for various tasks, they wished to study the opportunities in rural life for consecrated leadership. These groups are certain to multiply. Alert college men even in city colleges have discovered that we have to-day not only a complicated country *problem* but a great rural life *opportunity*; a problem intricate enough to challenge earnest investigation by thoughtful students, and an opportunity for a life mission worthy of strong men.

General College Neglect of the Rural Call

The writer firmly believes that the city has been claiming too large a proportion of college graduates in recent years and that the needs of country life are not receiving due consideration. A large majority of students in

most colleges come from the country. Has not the country a right to claim its fair share of these young men and women after they have been trained for a useful life? If only 15% of the students at Princeton come from the country we cannot complain if practically all of them after graduation go to the city; but when nearly all the students at Marietta College (Ohio) come from the country and 65% of them go to the city, we wonder why. Likewise 70% of the students at Stanford University (Calif.) were country bred, but only 25% return to country life after college days. At Williams (Mass.), a city boys' college, only 24% come from the country and about 15% return; but at Pacific University (Ore.) 95% come from the country (80% from very small communities) yet only 45% resist the city's call. Bowdoin (Maine) gets but 47% of its students from the city, but returns 70%; The University of Kansas receives but 44% of its students from cities, yet contributes to cities three-fourths of its graduates; while Whitman (Wn.) receives but 40% from the city yet returns 80%. Hillsdale (Mich.), a country college with a fine spirit of service, does better; receiving 95% of its students from small towns and villages, it returns all but 26%. "Practically all" the students at Adelbert College (Ohio) enter city work on graduation, though 30% of them are country bred.

It is entirely natural in institutions like the University of Illinois, Ohio State University and Cornell, where there are strong agricultural colleges, that there should be the keenest interest in the welfare and needs of country life; but is it not time that other institutions faced more frankly the responsibility of training more of their students for country life leadership? Certainly, with the splendid signs of promise in country life to-day and the opportunities for a life mission there, no thoughtful man can refuse to consider it.

The Stake of the City in Rural Welfare

It was quite natural that the rapidly growing city should attract a large proportion of college men preparing for business and professional life and various kinds of religious and social service. Not only have larger opportunities for earning money usually been found there, but the city has certainly needed the men. The call of the city in its dire need of Christian idealism and consecrated leadership has been as urgent and definite a call to service as ever a crusader heard. Dr. Strong's eloquent appeal to earnest

young people in his "Challenge of the City" is by no means extravagant. His facts are facts and his logic is convincing. He is quite right in saying, "We must save the city in order to save the nation. We must Christianize the city or see our civilization paganized." But even if "in a generation the city will dominate the nation," *where are the men who will then dominate the city? Most of them are now in the country towns and villages getting ready for their task*, developing physical, mental and moral power in the pure atmosphere and sunlight of a normal life. To work on the city problem is a great life chance; but *to train rural leadership is to help solve the city problem at its source*.

Thus, the bigger and more urgent the city problem becomes, the more necessary it will be to solve the rural problem, for the city must continue to draw much of its best blood and its best leadership from the country. Professor M. T. Scudder explains in a sentence why this is a continuing fact: "The fully developed rural mind, the product of its environment, is more original, more versatile, more accurate, more philosophical, more practical, more persevering than the urban mind; it is a larger, freer mind and dominates tremendously. It is because of this type of farm-bred mind that our leaders have largely come from rural life."[38] City leaders, of course, ought to be *trained in the city*, and they usually are, even though born and bred in the country.

Rural Progress Waiting for Trained Leadership

Leadership is the ultimate factor in every life problem. No movement can rise above the level of its leadership. In many fields to-day, progress is lagging because of inadequate leadership. This is acutely true in all phases of rural life. Rural progress is halting for the lack of trained leadership. The colleges must be held responsible for furnishing it.

The agricultural colleges are rising magnificently to their opportunity and are striving to keep pace with the demands made upon them for technically-trained rural leaders. But though some of them double their enrolment every three or four years they cannot supply graduates fast enough for the various agricultural professions, quite aside from other kinds of country life leaders.

All schools of higher education must share the task of training and furnishing rural leadership. The broadening of country life, and its rising standards, puts increasing demands upon its untrained leaders which they are unable to meet. Rural institutions can no longer serve their communities effectively under the leadership of men lacking in the very essentials of leadership. Many country communities are demanding now as high-grade personality and training in their leaders as the cities demand, and they refuse to respond to crude or untrained leadership. Well-trained doctors, ministers, teachers, et cetera, have a great chance to-day in the country, because their *training* finds unique appreciation for its very rarity and efficiency; while every profession is foolishly overcrowded in all cities.

As soon as adequate leadership, well trained and developed, is furnished our country communities, they will develop a rural efficiency which will make the rural problem largely a thing of the past. But until then, progress halts. Leadership is costly. Trained, efficient personality, ready for expert service is rare and beyond price. The colleges are lavishly sending it to the cities. The country deserves its share and patiently presents its claims.

II. Rural Opportunities for Community Builders.

The Call for Country Educators

There is little need of emphasizing to college students the opportunities of the teaching profession. Since 1900 teaching has claimed more graduates than any other life work. Taking 27 representative colleges as typical, more than one-fourth of all college graduates become teachers, the percentage having doubled since 1875. Of the class of 1911 in Oberlin College (both men and women), 60% have been teaching during their first year out; while of the men in the ten classes 1896-1905, 27% are still engaged in teaching, presumably as their permanent work.

Unfortunately the smaller salaries paid rural teachers has made the country school seem unattractive, and when accepted by young collegians by necessity rather than choice, it has been regarded often merely as an apprenticeship for buying experience, a stepping-stone to a city position. Country salaries of course must be increased, and they certainly will be, with the new development of rural life and the steady improvement in

schools; especially with increased state aid which is more and more generously given.

With a living wage already possible in centralized schools, and the great personal rewards which far transcend the material benefits, the life of the country teacher is one of true privilege and deep satisfaction. College men should regard it as a genuine *calling* and discover whether its call is for them. If a man has no real love for country life, let him not blight the country school by his subtle urbanizing influence. Most rural discontent is caused by such as he. But if his heart is open to the sky and the woods and the miracles of the soil; if he loves sincerity in human nature and appreciates the sturdy qualities and vast possibilities for development in country boys and girls, he will revel in the breadth and freedom and boundless outreach of his work.

If he is a man of vision and of power, the country school principal has greater local influence and social standing than he would have in the city. He has the finest chance to make his personality count in the great Country Life Movement, sharing his visions of a richer, redirected rural life not only with his pupils but every citizen and gradually leavening the whole community with a new ambition for progress. The responsibility for training the local leaders of the future devolves upon the teacher. It is he who can best teach a wholesome love for country life and help to stem the townward tide. He can organize around the school the main interests of his boys and girls and develop the impulse for cooperation which in time will displace the old competitive individualism and make social life congenial and satisfying. Through organized play, inter-community athletics, community festivals, old-home week, lyceums or debating clubs in the winter, with occasional neighborhood entertainments utilizing home talent, contests in cooking and various other phases of home economics, in corn-raising and other agricultural interests,—the possibilities are endless for making the school the vital social center of the rural community. It will all take time and energy and ingenuity. It will cost vitality, as all life-sharing does. But though it costs, the sharing of life is the greatest joy, and it is the teacher’s privilege in large measure. It is the measure of his true success as well as his happiness. Investing one’s life in a group of boys will yield far greater results in the country than in the city where their lives are already so full they would little appreciate it.

Professor H. W. Foght says three things are now required of the teacher of a rural school. "(1) he must be strong enough to establish himself as a leader in the community where he lives and labors; (2) he must have a good grasp on the organization and management of the new kind of farm school; and (3) he must show expert ability in dealing with the redirected school curriculum."[39] In short, if he lives up to his opportunity as a rural leader, he will train his boys and girls distinctly for rural life, giving them not only the rudiments of agricultural training, but an enthusiasm for farming from the scientific side as the most complex of all professions; utilizing the vast resources the country affords for teaching objectively, not merely through hooks, and thus bridge the gap between the school and life.

The Call of the Country Church

The modern college man is not attracted to the ministry of the country churches which are conducted along old lines. If that ministry is to consist merely in preaching once or twice a week to half a hundred people, conducting a mid-week service for one-fifth of that number and doing the marrying and the burying and the parish calling for a fraction of a rural community divided among three struggling churches, then the college man refuses to be interested. Consequently we find most of such churches are manned by untrained men. They usually receive the wages of an unskilled laborer. Trained ministers usually receive a living wage. The college man demands at least a man's job; a chance to invest his life where his whole personality will count and where his energy and perseverance will be allowed to work out his problems to a successful issue.

Let us grant at the start that churches which have no real field, in a community that is over-churched, need not expect to get our college men for pastors. If they have only a fraction of a field, let them have half a man. Likewise the church which is too selfish to offer the minimum living wage in return for faithful service must not expect a self-respecting, educated minister to serve it and at starvation rates. Even a martyr has no license to starve his wife and children to gain his starry crown. The church which gives no liberty to its pastor, but treats him like a hired man, and dictates his professional policy and perhaps even his pulpit messages, will of course not hold, if it ever should gain, a man of ability and initiative. And, lastly, the

church which lacks the modern spirit, is hopelessly behind the times in its dogmatic teaching, rails at modern science as ungodly, and denies the social gospel of Jesus and the prophets, such a church will neither deserve nor desire the services of a college-trained man. His reverence for truth as well as loyalty to his own ideals would forbid his serving them.

Large Tasks Awaiting Real Leadership

While there are some small men with little training serving churches under the above conditions, there are also thousands of other churches striving to do God's will in the service of men, many of them with earnest, able pastors. These men usually win the respect and confidence of their community and are given great opportunity as community builders when their leadership proves equal to the task. As the new rural civilization has developed, the title Country Minister has become once more a title of honor, just as the term Country Gentleman has again come to its own. In the readjustment of country life to the new agriculture and the new social ideals of cooperation, a new and brighter day has dawned for the country church. It is a day of new prosperity and of widening service.

This means a new opportunity for the right sort of a country minister sufficient to claim the life service of strong men. In fact, the task of readjustment is too difficult for any but strong men. Broken-down ministers, or men who have failed in the city, must not look to the country parsonage to-day as a refuge from toil or a temporary harbor for repairs. The insistent needs of the Kingdom of God in the country to-day demand strong, efficient men, specifically trained for country service and thoroughly acquainted with country folks and their life needs. *We must have a permanently loyal country ministry for life, men who plan to devote their lives to rural redemption.*

The Modern Type of Country Minister

College men of earnest spirit, who have determined to consecrate their lives to any life mission to which they believe God has called them, must listen to the call of the country church. The very difficulty of the task will challenge their interest and their courage. Would they know exactly the type

of leadership the country church to-day requires? Let them study word by word this splendid description by Dr. Butterfield, unequalled in its clear analysis:

"The country church wants men of vision, who see through the incidental, the small and the transient, to the fundamental, the large, the abiding issues that the countryman must face and conquer.

"She wants practical men who seek the mountain top by the obscure and steep paths of daily toil and real living, men who can bring things to pass, secure tangible results.

"She wants original men, who can enter a human field, poorly tilled, much grown to brush, some of it of diminished fertility, and by new methods can again secure a harvest that will gladden the heart of the Great Husbandman.

"She wants aggressive men, who do not hesitate to break with tradition, who fear God more than prejudice, who regard institutions as but a means to an end, who grow frequent crops of new ideas and dare to winnow them with the flails of practical trial.

"She wants trained men who come to their work with knowledge and with power, who have thought long and deeply upon the problems of rural life, who have hammered out a plan for an active campaign for the rural church.

"She wants men with enthusiasm, whose energy can withstand the frosts of sloth, of habit, of pettiness, of envy, of back-biting, and whose spirit is not quenched by the waters of adversity, of unrealized hopes, of tottering schemes.

"She wants persistent men, who will stand by their task amid the mysterious calls from undiscovered lands, the siren voices of ambition and ease, the withering storms of winters of discontent.

"She wants constructive men, who can transmute visions into wood and stone, dreams into live institutions, hopes into fruitage.

"She wants heroic men, men who possess a 'tart cathartic virtue,' men who love adventure and difficulty, men who can work alone with God and suffer no sense of loneliness.

"The critical need just now is for a few strong men of large power to get hold of this country church question in a virile way. It is the time for leadership. We need a score of Oberlins to point the way by actually working out the problem on the field. We need a few men to achieve great results in the rural parish, to reestablish the leadership of the church. No organization can do it. No layman can do it. No educational institution can do it. A preacher must do it,—do it in spite of small salary, isolation, conservatism, restricted field, overchurching, or any other devil that shows its face. The call is imperative. Shall we be denied the men?"[40]

Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Ill.

Student Recruits for the Home Ministry

The Student Volunteer Bands in most of our colleges unite in a stimulating comradeship the young men and women who have pledged their lives to foreign missionary service. It is well worth while for our college men who have heard this call of the country church for this specialized service of Christ and humanity to organize local groups of Student Recruits for the Home Ministry, as has been done in various centers on the Pacific coast and at Oberlin College, Grinnell and elsewhere, under various names. At Oberlin this strong body of choice young men, in the college of arts and sciences, meets regularly through the year with a vitally helpful program which stimulates their intelligent interest in and loyalty to the ministry as the greatest of all professions. At the close of the year the members of this Theta Club, as it is called, are tendered a banquet by the students of Oberlin Theological Seminary, with a message from some successful pastor. It is counted one of the most significant events of the college year.

The Call for Christian Physicians

There have been many followers of the Good Physician who have never been ordained except by the grace of God, whose consecrated devotion to the needs of sick humanity has been a genuine ministry. Often the Christian physician is the best friend of the family. Certainly he has countless opportunities to serve more than the bodily needs of men; and no man in the community is rendering more sacrificial service. He is ever at the call of human need, day or night. He heeds the call of the poorest as quickly as the wealthiest, and does from 5% to 30% of his work without remuneration. He is one of the most necessary factors in every community; yet for many rural communities the nearest up-to-date physician is many miles away.

In these days of specialists, “general practice” is relatively less attractive. There is some danger also that the fine idealism which has long characterized this splendid profession may yield to the growing commercialism which to-day threatens all professions like a canker. When surgeons operate for dollars instead of for a cure; and physicians make the art of healing strictly business instead of scientific kindness, it will be a sad day for humanity.

The work of the physician is not properly a business; it should be classed as *social service* of the highest order. In spite of the higher standards of medical schools recently[41] with an emphasis on a general college preparation, fewer college men are going into medicine. The percentage has steadily decreased since 1850, and in the past twelve years there has been a sharp decline. The proportion at Harvard College has declined one-half in thirty years, though meanwhile Harvard Medical School has become a strictly graduate department.

It is evident that luxury-loving collegians are avoiding the medical profession to-day just as they are dodging the ministry. If they have capital of their own, business offers them a larger income and makes little demand upon their sympathies in personal service. *Selfish men avoid the costs of life-sharing* which a life in close personal associations compels, as is true of teaching, the ministry and the medical profession. But this is no handicap but greater opportunity, for men of real earnestness.

The Special Need of Country Doctors

The profession is seriously overcrowded in the cities, but people in the rural districts are literally dying for trained physicians. Some medical faculties are advising their graduates not to stay in the city but to settle in country villages where they are most needed, and where quite possibly they would find greatest success. “There are many towns in this state,” writes a medical professor, “with only 500 to 1,000 people, where a young physician could do well and where he is needed.”

Although, according to the best data obtainable, most medical graduates settle in cities,—the proportion at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, being as high as 90%,—there is a rapidly increasing demand for them in the suburban and rural sections in the East because of the strong city-to-country movement. The secretary of the Harvard Medical faculty notes this: “With the advent of automobiles and the desire of people to live in the country, serious problems in medicine are frequently presented to the country practitioners.”

The need of educated physicians in country communities is well stated by Dr. Means of the Ohio Medical School: “The condition of medical practice

in many of our country communities is deplorable. I can recall any number of places where there are two, three, four and five physicians and not one of them has had any post-graduate work from date of graduation, and none of them known to attend medical societies. Their professional work is on a par, no better, no worse, than that of their ancestors. I always feel that such communities sorely need an up-to-date physician who has been educated along the lines of modern sanitation and general medicine. The demand for a medical education has grown to such proportions in the last ten years that graduates, after having spent so much time and money, do not care to go into country practice. The five years or more that they spend in city environments while completing their medical education almost unfits them for country life. The result is that our cities are filling up with young physicians who can scarcely make a living. These are men of character and proficiency who would give tone to any country community and supply a public want."

The Unique Rewards of Country Practice

There are, to be sure, certain serious disadvantages under which the country physician labors, such as distance from hospitals and nurses; but these are overbalanced by the manifest need and greater opportunity. The situation is acute. For earnest college men, willing to invest their lives in rural leadership, this constitutes a real call to a life of service which may be God's own call to them. No one who has ever read Ian Maclaren's story of Dr. MacLure, "A Doctor of the Old School," can fail to appreciate the peculiar devotion of country people to their trusted physician "who for nearly half a century had been their help in sickness, and had beaten back death time after time from their door."

After the funeral of the good old doctor who had so long sacrificed his comfort for the people of Drumtochty, Lord Kilspindie from Muirtown Castle voiced at the grave this tribute to the faithful physician of country folk: "Friends of Drumtochty, it would not be right that we should part in silence and no man say what is in every heart. We have buried the remains of one that served this Glen with a devotion that has known no reserve, and a kindliness that never failed, for more than forty years. I have seen many brave men in my day, but no man in the trenches of Sebastopol carried

himself more knightly than William MacLure. You will never have heard from his lips what I may tell you to-day, that my father secured for him a valuable post in his younger days; but he preferred to work among his own people. I wished to do many things for him when he was old, but he would have nothing for himself. He will never be forgotten while one of us lives, and I pray that all doctors everywhere may share his spirit." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The Rural Call to the Legal Profession

Though the legal profession is greatly overcrowded in the city, trained lawyers are scarce in the country. "My impression is," says a law school dean, "very few of the country lawyers are professionally trained men, especially in the South and some of our western states." Another dean estimates the number of trained country lawyers as about one-fourth. The older lawyers in the small places are apt to be the best trained, according to the judgment of Dean Irvine at Cornell Law School; though that rule is often reversed in the cities. "Rarely does a law school graduate settle down in a town of less than 5,000 people," says the dean at Boston University. The great majority of Columbia law graduates remain in New York City. Eighty to ninety per cent. of Cornell lawyers settle in cities above 10,000 people.

The secretary of the law faculty of the University of Michigan believes "there is a need of one or more trained lawyers in every community of a thousand people. Such a lawyer would, of course, serve the surrounding country as well as the town in which he lives." Dean Harlan F. Stone of Columbia writes: "I believe that there will be in the future exceptional opportunities for the well-trained lawyer in the smaller communities. He will probably not make as much money as with a large city practice, but if he possesses good general qualifications and *integrity* it is inevitable that he should be an influential man in his community, and live a useful and, from the broad point of view, successful life. His chances of entering politics or going on the bench in the right way are probably better than in the large cities."

Here, as in the other professions, the choice seems to be between larger earnings in the city and larger rewards in the country; greater fees, with less relative appreciation, or the finer rewards of gratitude for personal services and neighborly kindness and the broad opportunity for influence and leadership in a place where both are greatly needed. The call to college men with the legal mind and a passion for justice, to practice law in the country, is a true call for Christian consecration. It probably will involve some financial sacrifice, but it will mean a life of great satisfaction. The true man who heeds this call will become the trusted adviser of the widow, the protector of the defenseless and the innocent, the righter of many wrongs, the peacemaker in needless feuds, the incorporator of cooperative business projects which will fraternalize old competitions, the public spirited leader in all new movements for the betterment of rural life; and, if God wills and the people choose, a career in straight politics, which nowhere needs highminded leadership more than in some rural counties where the ballot is a mere chattel and public office a private graft.

Life Opportunities in Agricultural Professions

College men are apt to overlook the fact that, after all, the fundamental professions in the country are those directly connected with agriculture. The scientific agriculturist, who tills the soil as accurately as the engineer constructs a bridge and with possibly higher scientific requirements, will naturally be the prime agent in rural progress. It is good to see the enthusiasm of students in agriculture after they have caught this vision. “I like farming,” writes a student at the State College of Washington, “and believe there is as much room for scientific work in agriculture as any other line of work.” Another writes, “I think there are great opportunities open for agriculture in this Northwest. At first I thought I never would like the farm because I could see nothing but work; but I have become acquainted with some of the possibilities and find there is something besides drudgery.”

The city person of average intelligence who thinks farming is “just farming” would be amazed to discover the breadth and variety of agricultural professions. Besides scientific husbandry in general, there is animal husbandry and the breeding of blooded stock, dairying, farm management, horticulture, agricultural engineering and technology,

particularly in irrigation, forestry, veterinary surgery and medicine, fruit-growing, entomology specializing, parasitology, plant pathology, agronomy and cereal breeding, agricultural chemistry, landscape architecture, agricultural editing, agricultural teaching, from elementary grades to university, institute lecturing, weather bureau service, scientific investigating at government experiment stations, and public service in great variety under state and national departments of agriculture. In all of these there is a chance for college men to invest their lives and reap the rewards of real influence.

Some Special Rural Opportunities

In answer to the question "What special opportunities are there in country life to-day which should appeal to college students to invest their lives in the country?" Secretary Mann of the Cornell faculty summarized as follows: "Successful farming; teaching or supervising the teaching of agriculture; scientific investigations at home or in government stations; rural landscape improvement; agricultural experts as county agents or officers; local agricultural experts on individual responsibility; agricultural police duty, including inspectors of all sorts in state and national departments of agriculture; organizing of cooperative societies; agricultural advisers in the employ of railroads, chambers of commerce and the like; representatives of commercial organizations that desire to extend their operations into the open country, as for farm machinery concerns, manufacturers of packages, dairy supply houses, canning industries and the like; social betterment; rural Y. M. C. A. work; supervisors of rural playgrounds; and rural civic improvement." The list is surely a varied one, broad enough to fit any variety of talent, when a man has a real love for rural life and wishes to find his life usefulness in the country.

A most pertinent suggestion comes from Dean Meyer of the Agricultural Department of the University of Missouri which college students may well consider: "The greatest need of the rural community to-day is cooperation; but no plan of cooperation can ever be successful among farmers in the absence of some one, or a very few men who have all the qualifications of *outstanding leadership*. There is a real call for our college trained men to go into the country, study local conditions, and then promote a plan of business

cooperation. If this is successful he may then expect with equal success to carry on a plan for social cooperation which will lead to a betterment of the home, the church and the school." Again we are reminded that the ultimate problem is leadership, the costliest thing in the world; but the very commodity of personality which college men ought to have ready for wise investment. It is the call for *community builders* all along the country-side which forces itself upon the strongest men of brave initiative, of courage, tact and ability. This call, a modern call of new insistence and vast significance, should challenge the college man like a call to battle.

The Call of the County Work Secretary

Among the many calls to a life of service which challenge the college man, one of the most urgent is the call to rural leadership in the Young Men's Christian Association. It is peculiarly a college man's task. Possibly one country lawyer in four is professionally trained. The percentage of educated country ministers is smaller still. Country doctors, though usually medical graduates, are very seldom college men. But the rural secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association is usually college trained. With wise foresight, the Association is sending many of its best men into the country field where the need of leadership is so acute. No other branch of Association work has so large a proportion of college trained men except the work with college students themselves; this is the right perspective.

The man who aspires to this interesting and strategic work with the boys and young manhood of the country must be a man of large capacity for leadership and with a broad knowledge of human nature. He must be a keen lover of country life and must understand country people and their great interests. The more he knows of scientific agriculture the better; but he must above all be a man of devout Christian spirit and a thorough knowledge of the Bible; with a fine friendliness for all sorts of people, and a great longing to help the country boy to develop into useful Christian manhood.

In most other lines of rural service a man's influence is ordinarily limited to the single community in which he lives. The County Work Secretary's field is an entire county. He is not working merely with a single group of people but with similar groups in a score of townships and usually the finest people

in each village, whom he selects for their local Christian influence and their devotion to community welfare. Through these local leaders our Secretary multiplies his own life, as he shares with them his visions and his hopes, as he enlists them for specific tasks and trains them for the service; giving them the benefit of his expert knowledge of country life, of rural sociology and of boy life, of teaching method and the modern interpretation of the Bible.

While his primary task is the discovery and training of local leadership as a Christian community builder, he also makes his office a convenient clearing house of ideas and practical plans for community betterment. As he quietly goes about his work it soon becomes evident that he is a "man who knows"; and his expert knowledge, his cooperation and advice are sought by parents and teachers, churches and Sunday schools, pastors and superintendents, school supervisors, women's clubs, farmers' institutes and Granges, and he must be a man of large ability to prove equal to his opportunity. As a trusted neutral among the churches, he of all men has the best chance to overcome church rivalries and bring together jealous churches in a working federation or a real unity. He must be at once a man of prayer and an athletic specialist who can through his local leaders organize wholesome sports among his boys; he must not only have a genius for cooperation and securing the cooperation of others in worth-while tasks, but he must be able to take the single farmer, single-handed, and in a quiet, friendly but masterful way get that farmer to give his growing boy a fair chance.

The call to the rural secretaryship is as genuine a call to a life of ministering love as is the call to the ministry. As a matter of fact, a few of the most successful rural secretaries are ordained ministers and find their theological training and pastoral experience of great value in their work. These secretaries are not using their present position as a stepping-stone to the city field. Few of them would accept any city opportunity, as experience has proved. They have devoted their lives to the work of rural redemption, especially saving the country boy. They have fitted themselves to be experts in rural work, the work they love, and few of them ever care to leave it. This complete consecration accounts largely for their success. Let a man not attempt to share their work unless he can bear their cross. It is a call to heroic service, but it is irksome only to the man who has missed the joy of complete consecration to the country field and to the Man of Galilee.

B. A CHALLENGE TO COLLEGE WOMEN

I. Some Responsibilities Shared with Men

A Necessary Partnership, and its Increasing Burden

Men can never solve the rural problem without the help of women.

In the primitive days of early barbarism, it was woman that domesticated the farm animals,—while men were away, at war and the chase,—and thus made possible agriculture and the arts of rural life. We may well expect educated modern womanhood to contribute its share even in the development of scientific agriculture; but in all the social problems of the new rural civilization the help of women is indispensable.

The rural home, school, church and grange and every other institution for the social, educational and religious welfare of country folks depend very greatly upon the cooperation and leadership of trained women. To a degree this has always been true; but in several aspects this responsibility is destined in the future to fall more heavily than ever upon women.

Responsibility for Rural Education

For various reasons men are rapidly retiring from the ranks of country school teachers. In a single generation the proportion of male teachers in American schools has diminished 50%. In the North Atlantic states 86% of all teachers are women; while even in the western states over 80% are women, against 55% in 1870.

It appears to be quite a safe statement, even judging by incomplete statistics, that there are more women teachers in the United States and Canada than in all the rest of the world combined. Whereas only 15% of the teachers of Germany are women, and 36% in Switzerland, 47% in France and 64% in Italy, the proportion in the United States the same year (1906) is found to be 76.4%.

While from the viewpoint of the needs of adolescent boys there may be reasons to deplore this increase of women teachers, it is certainly

accelerating. The educational burdens of the country are falling more and more upon women. College girls should study rural education as a real vocation and realize the vast opportunity for unselfish social service which is involved in it.

The college settlement in the city slum has aroused not merely a romantic interest but the consecration of many earnest college girls. Let more of them feel the same call to altruistic service in the rural school, accepting it with a genuine love for country boys and girls and for country life,—then the problems of rural education will lose much of their seriousness. With increasing centralization of rural schools and ever rising standards, worth-while opportunities in country teaching will rapidly develop. Nor will the need be merely for teachers in the grades and in high school work. Capable women are everywhere needed in educational leadership. Country life specialists are now needed in state and country normal schools, agricultural high schools, and county high schools, as well as the country colleges.

Responsibility for Rural Health and Sanitation

Probably the chief reason for the slow progress of modern sanitation in rural districts is the lack of training of country doctors in the modern aspects of their profession. In the country, sanitation is largely a household matter, and women have most at stake and the greatest influence here. In a few months or years one trained nurse or woman physician could raise the ideals of sanitation and hygiene in the country homes of a large area.

Old-fashioned rural neighborliness and large families have combined in the past to keep trained nurses in the city. The country people have managed to get along without them usually. But both these causes have been diminishing and there is serious need in most country sections for the expert services of trained nurses. The “district nurse association” plan has already gained acceptance in country places and its rapid spread would prevent much hardship. Combined with community ownership of sick-room appliances, this would greatly help to make country life comfortable for people accustomed to city conveniences.

Rural frugality hates to pay a woman nurse a man’s wages! But gradually efficiency will win and the higher life standards prevail, and this will give

countless young women splendid opportunities for broad service, with which the petty office positions in the city cannot compare.

Conservative country folks are slow to recognize the professional authority of the woman physician; but the prejudice will soon pass. Certainly a capable woman with a modern medical equipment would not need many months to prove her superiority to the average low-grade country doctor; and she would soon find a great life work. While college men are more and more shirking this great healing profession, let the college women give it large consideration. It offers wonderful scope for serving the deepest needs of humanity as well as their bodily ills; and the college girls who dream of medical missions need not go so far from home as India to realize their visions.

Opportunities for Religious Leadership

The burdens of the country pastorate, like the burden of the ballot, ought not to fall upon the women; but the time seems to have come when there are not enough good intelligent men to maintain either.

It is impossible at present to furnish one-half of the rural churches in the United States with *trained men* to be their pastors. Canada imports hundreds of clergymen annually from England. Thousands of rural pulpits in the States are vacant. Tens of thousands of rural churches have merely untrained preachers. Very few have resident pastors. Dr. Wilson of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions is authority for the statement that of the 192 country Presbyterian ministers in Missouri, *only two* of them are living with their people in the open country.

We find the chief reason for country church decay the lack of a trained, resident pastor. Under present conditions it is impossible to meet this need from the supply of college men entering Christian work. To be sure, thousands of these unmanned churches are surplus churches. They have no real field; perhaps never had. And Providence is allowing them to die, for the glory of God! It is far better when they graciously unite with some neighboring church,—but the necessary grace is often lacking.

Very many churches with a real field need ministers and can get only untrained men. Hundreds of such churches write in vain to the seminaries every year, as the writer can testify. There seem to be plenty of untrained ministers, in most states; but it is an open question whether such leadership does more good than harm. Would not a well-trained woman, with a genuine Christian purpose, gifts of real leadership, and a complete college and theological training, be likely to do better service in the pastorate of such a church than an untrained man? It seems strange that we even consider it a subject for debate!

The number of women ministers seems to be increasing in several denominations, though not rapidly yet. Sometimes they are untrained, but when well equipped they render efficient service. Occasionally you find a woman with the true pastor's spirit gaining surprising success in a difficult country church after a series of men have conspicuously failed. It might be well to try this experiment oftener.

We are now developing in America the second[42] generation of college women. If eugenics teaches us anything, it gives us the right to expect from these college-bred daughters of college-trained mothers an increased efficiency and a new type of leadership. With every decade, a higher type of American womanhood, the peers of the ablest women of history, is being developed in the land. At last we are obliged to remove all our traditional barriers and to offer them unlimited scope for their life usefulness. Every profession is now open to them, wholly on the basis of merit.

Among these opportunities for the right sort of trained woman is the country pastorate. It requires possibly a rare type of womanhood, and probably a small percentage would succeed. But mere prejudice against the woman minister should not deprive the country churches of her sympathetic service if she is a woman of the right sort. Let fitness, training and worth decide, not mere traditions and prejudices. Sometimes a man and his wife, both ordained ministers, can together serve two churches acceptably and successfully. In fact, a case can be cited where in a western state the important work of church supervision is done conjointly by the state superintendent of home missions and his equally capable wife, both being trained, ordained ministers.

It is needless to emphasize the fact that womanly sympathy, intuition and tact are needed in the rural pastorate and that the consecration of the right type of college woman's finest powers can perhaps find no better field, or receive deeper appreciation, than in the service of the rural churches. The question is sometimes asked, If a college woman wished to study for the ministry, how could she secure her training? Would the theological seminaries admit her as a student? The best answer to this question is the fact that there were 467 women enrolled as theological students in 46 of the 193 theological schools of the United States during the last college year, according to the annual report just issued by the National Bureau of Education. Several are non-sectarian schools; the rest represent twenty different denominations.[43]

Quite likely a large proportion of these young women are studying to be foreign missionaries, teachers of the Bible in college, or deaconesses. Not only in the United States, but also in the Presbyterian and Methodist churches of Canada, hundreds of young women are finding splendid scope for consecrated talents in this deaconess work. As yet, however, this branch of Christian service is wholly confined to cities, not necessarily because of greater need there, but because the city has the necessary means to pay for the work. Ordained or not ordained, the rural churches sadly need the inspiring capable leadership of our college women.

II. Some Unique Opportunities for Rural Social Service

The Opportunity of the Village Librarian

As the country grows older the number of rural public libraries increases. Not only are Carnegie libraries rather frequently seen in the smaller towns, but neat little stone structures, erected by some former resident who loved his old country home, are occasionally found even in small communities. It is one of the finest ways to honor one's family name and to serve the social needs of one's early home. No family monument could be more sensible or serviceable.

Usually the rural library is more than a mere reading room with book-storage attachment. It is always a center of social interest, and when built on generous lines becomes a real "neighborhood house." As such institutions

multiply,—and they certain will,—many young women of social gifts, as well as technical library training, will be needed to make the library or neighborhood house a center of social power, the value of which will be limited only by the personal resources of the librarian. Without the nerve strain of teaching, it closely parallels the teacher's opportunity with the boys and girls, and has a growing chance to stimulate the mental life of men and women. As women's clubs increase in the country, more farm women are cultivating the reading habit. Every year the bulletins of the agricultural colleges with their "Reading Courses for Farmers' Wives" are getting more popular.

The Specialist in Household Economics

Perhaps the sorest spot in the rural problem is the lot of the neglected farm wife and mother. Even where agricultural prosperity is indicated by great barns filled with plenty, often a dilapidated little farmhouse near by, devoid of beauty, comfort or conveniences, measures the utter disregard for the housewife's lot.

Money is freely spent when new machinery is needed on the farm, or another fifty-acre piece is added after a prosperous season; but seldom a thought of the needs of the kitchen. While the men of the family ride the sulky plow and riding harrow of the twentieth century, the women have neither a washing machine nor an indoors pump,—to say nothing of running water, sanitary plumbing or a bathtub![44] Sometimes the drudgery of the farm kitchen is endured by the mother uncomplainingly, or even contentedly; but the daughters recoil from it with growing discontent.

The life conditions of farm women are rapidly improving; but the gospel of better homes and convenient kitchens needs thousands of gentle apostles, equipped with modern methods of household economy, hygiene, cooking and every domestic art and science. It necessitates rare tact, and it is doubtless most effective when least professional, when its benevolence is simply veiled by neighborliness, joined perhaps with the daily routine of the teacher or librarian. But the purpose involved is a splendidly worthy one, to raise the standards of housekeeping in a whole community of homes and

bring in a new comfort and efficiency for both men and women. To do this is to enrich and sweeten country life at its source.

Demonstration Centers of Rural Culture

In the cities a very effective social service is done in the settlements as demonstration centers of refinement and Christian living. We need the same quietly effective plan in thousands of rural communities where life is still crude rather than simple and where the finer life-values are too little appreciated.

As the new rural civilization develops and the higher education becomes more diffused, this gentle but powerful leavening of country life is bound to follow. In very many communities it is already in process. It ought to follow as a matter of course that wherever a college-bred woman returns to a country home, or founds a new one, there is developed a real demonstration center of rural culture. The down-drag of environment sometimes proves too strong for weaker natures and higher ideals are gradually forgotten. Sometimes, too, a tactless condescension reveals to sensitive neighbors that fatal sense of superiority which is deadly to all good influence, for rural democracy is passing proud.

But with the right spirit of neighborly helpfulness and an effort to overcome the barrier which is always raised at first by superior advantages, the woman of true unaffected culture has a great chance for fine influence in a rural community.

In such a community not many miles from Buffalo there is such a gentlewoman. She is blessing the whole neighborhood to-day in scores of simple ways. According to her own modest statement, she is just “idling” now, for ill-health interrupted her cherished plans as a successful teacher in a mission school in China.

In keen disappointment but fine cheerfulness she settled in this little village, and soon found ample scope for quiet, happy usefulness. The old house she had bought for a home was remodeled modestly but with rare effectiveness, with verandas, fireplaces, cosy corners and a convenient kitchen. With a distinctly rural note in it all, the house was furnished in inexpensive, elegant

simplicity, with a charming effect which became quite the wonder of the community.

Neighborly relations were easily established and the “running in” habit was ere long encouraged. Soon the cheerful living room, so unlike the urbanized parlors of the neighborhood, became a social center for the young folks, and music and good pictures and the joyous life developed undreamed of social resources in the community, hitherto latent but unexpressed. It is a genuine demonstration center of rural culture, but unspoiled by any professional taint. It is just neighborly friendliness, with a well-guarded passion for helpfulness; and it is bringing that true human appreciation which all genuine life-sharing wins. May a thousand other college-bred women see the same vision and earn the same joy.

Womanly Leadership in Church and Club

The college woman who “buries herself” in a rural community has only herself to blame if she finds no opportunity worthy of her talents. There may be no “career” of spectacular success awaiting her, but homespun chances to serve, and be loved for her helpfulness, meet her at every turn.

If she stands off a year or so, in self-pity, bemoaning the meagerness of her environment, she may work for a decade thereafter to regain lost confidence and live down a reputation for snobbishness. But if she shows herself friendly at once; if she leads only when invited, and earns the opportunity by a genuine modesty, ere long her talents, and whatever leadership capacity her college life has given her, will find plenty of exercise.

A single college graduate of the right sort can do wonders in a little country church or grange or club. The rural churches are suffering for trained laymen to make them effective institutions; but the need is sometimes just as acute for the right sort of womanly leadership, trained, tactful, enthusiastic and effective. The same is true of the social clubs and all local institutions which are open to women. With the rising standards in rural life we shall look more and more to such women of culture to bear the burdens of redirecting and vitalizing the work of rural institutions. It is a worthy work and brings its own true rewards if generously and wisely done.

The Rural Association Secretary

Far more is now being done for the country boy than for the country girl in many communities, and a few college women are discovering in this fact a great call to social and religious service.

In a few colleges, through their outside religious work, the girls have become a little acquainted with the life of the younger girls in the surrounding country. Sympathy leads them to try to help broaden the outlook of these younger sisters, and to bring them the religious ideals and the wholesome fun, both of which their lives often lack.

The Young Women's Christian Association for a few years past has conducted community work in country towns on lines somewhat similar to the county work of the Young Men's Christian Association. A few young women are working as county secretaries, and they are women with a vision, and a splendid earnestness. The work, however, is still quite new. It needs development and extension into the smaller villages which need it most. Doubtless this will be done as fast as college women of the right sort, with a real consecration to the needs of the country girl, present themselves as volunteers for this service.

College men are finding a splendid chance for life investment today in the rural secretaryship,—as has been described earlier in this chapter. There is no reason why their success with the country boys cannot be duplicated by successful women secretaries with the country girls and women.

It is idle to claim that the average country homes are doing all that needs doing for the country girls, or that the church life and school life are effectively safeguarding them. Moral conditions in too many villages, tardily perceived but often staggering when discovered, belie this false optimism. We must face the fact that country girls need a more wholesome recreational life than most villages afford, and higher ideals of true womanliness than they often gain at home or church or school.

College young women of the right sort, with a winsome personality and some talent for leadership, with social grace and power, with something of athletic skill and a knowledge of organized play, and above all with a wholesome Christian earnestness interpreting religion in practical modern terms, have a great field of service among these country girls with all their social hungers unsatisfied and their latent capacities unawakened. The urgent need of such work in numerous rural counties can hardly be questioned. Its vast possibilities can be discovered only by actual experiment in any community.

In very many ways today the rural problem, so fascinatingly varied and increasingly urgent, challenges the personal interest of the young women of our colleges. They are only beginning to study it. Their eyes have been all too narrowly set on the city and the town. But their rapidly increasing numbers as well as the broadening every year of their outlook upon life gives us reason for the faith that this challenge will not be unheeded. Self-sacrificing womanhood is the salvation of every civilization, urban or rural. It needs only to demonstrate the need; then consecrated womanhood will heed the call. The coming decade should see them by the hundred investing their lives in rural social service and community betterment, that the kingdom of heaven may sooner come.

Nothing could better voice, to the young men and women of America, the heroic appeal of country life leadership and service than Professor Carver's manly challenge printed on the next page. Though not written exclusively for the country, it fits rural life most admirably.

The Productive Life Fellowship

"It offers to young men days of toil and nights of study. It offers frugal fare and plain clothes. It offers lean bodies, hard muscles, horny hands, or furrowed brows. It offers wholesome recreation to the extent necessary to maintain the highest efficiency. It offers the burdens of bringing up large families and training them in the productive life. It offers the obligation of using all wealth as tools and not as means of self-gratification. It does not offer the insult of

a life of ease, or æsthetic enjoyment, or graceful consumption, or emotional ecstasy. It offers, instead, the joy of productive achievement, of participating in the building of the Kingdom of God.

To young women also it offers toil, study, frugal fare, and plain clothes, such as befit those who are honored with a great and difficult task. It offers also the pains, the burdens and responsibilities of motherhood. It offers also the obligation and perpetuating in succeeding generations the principles of the productive life made manifest in themselves. It does not offer the insult of a life of pride and vanity. It offers the joys of achievement, of self-expression, not alone in dead marble and canvas, but also in the plastic lives of children to be shaped and moulded into those ideal forms of mind and heart which their dreams have pictured. In these ways it offers to them also the joys of participating in the building of the Kingdom of God."[45]

Test Questions on Chapter VIII.

1.—Why are college students discovering a new interest in studying the rural problem?

2.—What proportion of your college enrollment came from country communities, and what percentage of your alumni have invested their lives in the country? Compare this with other colleges mentioned in this chapter.

3.—Show how the vital interests of the city are deeply involved in the problem of rural leadership.

4.—When adequate support is secured, what special opportunities for service do you see in the work of a country teacher?

5.—What elements in the call for trained ministers for country churches appeal to you as most urgent?

6.—Show how the modern minister, equal to his task, has as big an opportunity to-day as ever in the past.

7.—What elements of heroism in the modern ministry make equally high demands on the earnest college man, whether he stays in America or goes to the foreign field?

8.—Why are college graduates avoiding the medical profession to-day more than formerly?

9.—What do you think of the special opportunity and need of trained country physicians?

10.—How do you estimate the chance a trained country lawyer has to-day for Christian influence and service?

11.—Among the various professions connected with modern agriculture, which offers the best opportunity for the investment of a life in worth-while service?

12.—What do you think of the County Work secretaryship as a chance for real rural leadership and community building?

13.—Compare the proportion of women teachers in the United States and in the rest of the world. What does this indicate?

14.—Discuss the opportunities in the country for trained nurses and physicians.

15.—What is the modern opportunity for women in rural religious leadership, and what sort of a woman could succeed as a country pastor?

16.—What do you think of the opening for village librarians and "neighborhood house" workers?

17.—In what details do country homes need expert leadership in household economics and domestic science?

18.—Compare the demonstration centers of rural culture which you have known with the illustration described in this chapter.

19.—What do you think of the work of the County Work secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association?

20.—What other opportunities for service in rural communities come to college women in country homes?