

## CHAPTER IX

### FARMING AS A FINE ART

The colony should be conducted as a great experimental farm. Dairying and household economics should be taught. Government experts would direct the farmers in raising cattle, the diversification of crops, dairying, etc. Pedigreed cattle, hogs, chickens, and sheep should be bred; competitions should be stimulated within the community and with other colonies. Wherever this has been tried the farmers have introduced better breeds; they have increased the value and volume of crop-production; they have been led to compete in friendly rivalry with one another. An *esprit de corps* has been stimulated through such methods and a new kind of agriculture developed.

This happened almost spontaneously upon the opening of the California State-land settlement at Durham, in that state, the first colony of its kind in this country. The farmers organized a co-operative breeding association. They raised money for the purchase of pedigreed cattle and hogs. They agreed to stand-

ardize their cattle by raising only Holstein herds. In Wisconsin, where scientific agriculture has been promoted by the State University, the same results have followed. Certain counties have become famous for one breed of cattle, other counties for another. Scrub horses and cattle have been weeded out. The farmers have purchased blooded stallions and bulls. By co-operative effort and moral suasion they have introduced better grades, not only for breeding but for dairying purposes as well. Purchasers now come to these counties from all over the United States for the purpose of buying cattle. They have acquired a reputation of their own.

Through similar efforts the farmers of Wisconsin have cultivated pedigreed corn, wheat, and oats. They have selected seeds, and by so doing have greatly increased the production per acre. Some farmers devote their entire attention to the raising of pedigreed seeds, which are sent all over the world.

#### **New Zealand.**

The same thing happened in New Zealand, where the farm colony is a demonstrated

success. The allotments are small enough for a single man to cultivate without the aid of hired labor. The farmers in consequence have brought the entire acreage under cultivation. They have improved their live stock. Production has been so largely increased that the farmers have been able to repay the loans to the State in a much shorter time than was expected. The Canadian commission which investigated the subject says of the New Zealand experiment:

“Throughout the country a higher and better civilization is gradually being evolved. The young men and women who are growing up are happy and contented to remain at home on the farm, and find ample time and opportunity for recreation and entertainment of a kind more wholesome and elevating than can be obtained in the city.”

The gain from expert guidance is cultural as well as economic. It dignifies agriculture. It arouses an interest in subjects heretofore dull and uninteresting. It awakens the farmer to the fine points of cattle, dairying, and fruit-culture. A new interest is given to farming, an interest that extends into other fields.

The experts should have control over the planting, rotation of crops, and other details until the colony is safely established. This should be one of the conditions of occupancy. For many of the colonists will have no knowledge of agriculture; while those who have been farmers will be unfamiliar with modern methods, intensive cultivation, and the new ways and ideas which have been developed in this and other countries.

**Danish Experience.**

In Denmark one finds over the stall of almost every cow a specification chart stating her average yield of milk, the amount of food consumed daily, the dates of calving, and other information required by the inspectors of the Scientific Control Association, of which the farmer is a member. The milking is mostly done by machines, the operation being completed by hand. The farmer knows precisely how much his cow yields. He can compare her with the stock of his neighbors. Hogs and chickens are studied in the same way. Animal husbandry becomes an art of consuming interest under such competitive stimulants.

The retired business man, the "gentleman" farmer, appreciates the enjoyment of this kind of farming. He spends on such enthusiasms as other men spend on private yachts, the collection of art treasures, or rare books. And in Denmark the peasants have united the scientific possibilities of farming with their daily work. Partly as a result of this the Dane has become the best-educated person in Europe. "In England you find factories, in Germany barracks, in Denmark schools," is a Danish saying. With the Dane education is a life-long pursuit. It is part of his every-day life. It is connected with his co-operative societies, with his breeding associations, with scientific methods of cultivation, with his political activities. Denmark more than any other country has discovered the cultural possibilities of farming, and in the process Denmark became an agricultural experiment station for the world.

If we would fix our imagination on agriculture as we have on other political and economic questions, we could eliminate much of the distasteful work of the farm and make it an attractive profession. The necessary work on

such farms as described could be performed in six or seven months in the year; for the other months the farmer could be free to go and come as he wills. In the case of dairying, hog and chicken raising, the work is continuous, but this too should be specialized and possibly carried on under some kind of corporate organization so as to economize in capital and labor.

There is no reason why entire colonies should not be devoted to one kind of farming, to dairying, fruit-culture, bee-raising, truck-gardening, and the like. This is already being done by corporations which supply milk, butter, bacon, sausage, jams, and canned goods. All of the features of community organization have been worked out in this country. Only it has been done by individuals and corporations rather than by the community. Community organization by a large number of people is possible only with the aid and direction of the government, and the use of some kind of control to maintain the standards and methods which are recognized as essential to the well-being of the whole.