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A LAND OF BOOK FARMERS

XV—LIVING WITH THE DANISH FARMERS

Outside of Copenhagen and the tourist resorts on the ocean fronts, there is no way to live in Denmark without living with the farmers, or none that I have yet discovered. Expensive hotels were written into the Jutland itinerary prepared for me by the English-speaking Danes in the state offices at the capital. But when I get to these hotels, most of them fine and fit as a fiddle even in the little country towns, I find them filled to overflowing with farmers come to market, farm delegates meeting to represent some one or more of the five thousand cooperative societies, and agents of farm enterprises as keenly bent on business as Dicken's bagmen or Duke's tobacco drummers. Twice I have walked a Sabbath-day's journey to find a vacant room, and twice a Landman's Hotel or Hotellet has saved me from sleeping on a park bench. Landman being Danish for farmer.

A Farmer's Hotel

Now a farmer's hotel in America is one thing, but in Denmark it is quite something else. In Viborg, for instance. We've nothing left but a room on the court, said the room clerk, who is also headwaiter, bookkeeper, cashier, and business manager all in one. It will do—anything will do, was the response of a winded traveler. And I am ushered into commodious, immaculate quarters on a second-story back. I find myself in a room outfitted with beech and white marble furniture, a luscious couch that comforts every weary bone, on the floor a rug handsomer than I can afford in my bedroom at home, on the walls photogravures of Danish scenes, electric lights overhead, a dainty restful bed with the usual feather bed-covers, and at the head of my bed a table light and a push button. These, in the back room of a farmer's hotel in Denmark, and all for three kroner a day, which is fifty-four cents in American money! I was in fact so comfortable that I stayed on there three days to study the cooperative creamery and cheese factory, the egg-packing plant, the curb market, the agricultural high school and the Heath Reclamation Society that Dalgas established in the eighteen sixties. Meantime I made little journeys in all directions on trains and in motor cars to see the homes and farms of a region that was held to be worthless and hopeless fifty years ago. Today there is no discoverable sign of anything but prosperity either in Viborg or in its surrounding trade territory.

From My Study Window

Speaking of my back room in the Landman's Hotellet, I may say that my window acquaintances were as interesting as ever James Russel Lowell's were. His were birds, mine were farmers in the court below. And never a Jay among them. Off and on from daylight till the court was cleared around ten at night, I studied these farmers, their wives and children, their dress, their market wagons and loads, and their teams of horses fat and slick as butter balls. A few of the farmers, not many, drove into the courtyard in high state in Ford cars, but most of the vehicles were the regulation market wagons of the heath country. They look for all the world like Ford trucks set high on stout springs with very broad seats and very high backs. Not a few of the seats and backs are cushioned in bright colors and rich materials. The bodies are deep, and the sides have sloping top-pieces hinged to hold expanding loads off the wheels. The weight and rank of the farmer are patently set forth by the number, size, and breed of the horses he drives, by the harness he uses, the seat robes and load covers, and the air of assurance with which he descends, hands the reins to the stable boys, and hurries out to business. The ancestors of these farmers were all peasants seventy-five years ago, without property, vote or voice, little differing from the Saxon churls I used to read about in Ivanhoe in my boyhood days, but now they have something like the port and poise of the few remaining Danish noblemen. And the stable boys were interesting. The three were all old men who

kept busy waiting on the farmers all day long and never a minute of the time without Wouter Van Twiller pipes hanging from their teeth to their equators. They hitch and unhitch horses, tilt up shafts and unhinge wagon tongues to save yard space, button the rain covers over seats and bodies, and sweep the court between times, their pipes bobbing the while against their belts. What they need is four hands each, but they get along with two, in ways that are marvelous to me.

Listening In

The farmers, their wives and their daughters, are just as well dressed as the towns people I see in the streets and stores and office buildings. If you can distinguish the farmers from any other business men in a Danish town, you are rarely endowed with discriminating senses. And while they smoke and drink beer and consume incredible quantities of smear-bread in the hotel eating spaces and around the cafe tables in front, they discuss farming from Peter Rice to Colophon—not merely crops and seasons and livestock, but market prices and foreign exchange rates the world over. Just now the talk is all about exchange rates, and no banker in town knows more than the farmers about the purchasing value of the krone in the countries that sell them margarine materials, seed cakes, coal, gasoline, and fertilizers. I am quoting the local Ford car agent, an English speaking Dane who interprets for me the Babel of voices in the hotel lobby. Their complaint is that the krone is down to nearly six for an American dollar and more than twenty-six to the English pound. Danish money, they say, is not on a gold basis; nobody doubts the ability of Denmark to pay for imports, but in a pinch she could not settle adverse trade balances in gold, and so in this day of crazy currencies in Europe, their own rich country is paying a heavy penalty for the disturbed business faith of the world; Denmark must get on a gold basis; the krone must be boosted, the powers-that-be must get busy. And so on and on.

I have an idea that the powers-that-be will get busy, for the lightest whisper of the farmers sounds like thunder in Denmark.

Book-Farming the Rule

A common saying is that a Danish farmer would rather do without his breakfast than his morning paper. The saying does not overstate the fact. The Danes are farmers, but even more they are business men, engaged in big distributing businesses of their own, and I am assured that they are easily equal to the bankers and brokers in discussing foreign situations and domestic consequences, trade policies, and economic laws in general. They are book-farmers and newspaper readers, with headpieces. The farmer sitting beside me yesterday on the train gave an hour to the news of the world, the market reports and the financial tables, all the while figuring on his knees with his pencil. This morning I was the guest of a gaarman or middle class farmer, in his nearby country home. His newspaper rack looks like the file of a commercial club in America, and the books on his library shelves are as many as mine in Chapel Hill. I understand, said he, that the farmers of the United States do not think much of book-farming; we have learned better than that in Denmark. My interpreters were two fine young fellows from the offices of the Heath Reclamation Society, and they smiled as they handed me our host's compliment to the farmers of America.

Only Necessary Middlemen

The Danish farmers market their own wares, you see, and they know the distribution game from A to izzard—or from farm to table as they say over here. The middlemen do not get the bulk of the consumer's money, the farmers get it. I find plenty of middlemen in Denmark, but they are the necessary middlemen, and the farmers have sense enough to know that they are necessary. There is no quarrel be-

LIVING A WHOLE LIFE

The criterion of the American state university is not a matter of the vocation, but whether in making the student efficient in his vocation it has focused through his studies its own inner light so as to liberalize him as a member of democratic society.

It is not the function of the university to make a man clever in his profession merely. That is a comparatively easy and negligible university task.

It is also to make vivid to him through his profession his deeper relations—not merely proficiency in making a good living, but productivity in living a whole life.—Edward Kidder Graham, Inaugural Address, 1914.

tween the farm organizations and the middlemen. They work together with mutual advantage. Both are prospering and both are satisfied. Neither dares to treat the other unfairly, for sharp practices spell bankruptcy for the farmers and the dealers alike. As for the superfluous middlemen, they disappeared from Denmark long ago, or most of them, for the farmers beat them at the game, hands down.

A Genial Northern Climate

My travels in Jutland are giving me a chance to see peninsular Denmark from the German frontier to Skagen, which by the way is in the latitude of Greenland's icy mountains. But Denmark has something like the oceanic climate of the British Isles, and, even in the far North, the growing season is around one hundred and fifty days in average years. Which explains, at least in part, the grain crops, the green pastures, the plump dairy cows, beef cattle, and horses I see in the fields all along the way to Frederickskavn and almost to Skagen where Denmark dives into the North Sea.

Agricultural Trade Center

The rest of the explanation lies in the keen wit of the Danes. They have developed an agriculture perfectly adjusted to soils and seasons, and with equal genius they have cashed-in the opportunities of a geographical location. Look at Denmark's place on the map. Copenhagen commands the Baltic on the east, Gedser on a south shore taps the Berlin market, Elsinore looks over into Sweden across a strait that the ferryboats span in twenty-minute trips, in the north Frederickskavn faces Norway, and on the west Esberg reaches London and Manchester with Danish farm products. Denmark is in the center of a trade area of 150 million consumers.

Peasant Farmers As Leaders

What the Danes needed was exportable farm surpluses, adequate harbors and port facilities, rapid-transit train and boat services; and what they needed they set about securing with clear heads and rigid wills. They saw no obstacles, they saw only the opportunities, and when timid statesmen wavered the farmers took charge of the government and organized the state for agriculture on a commercial scale. There was nothing else to do, for Denmark has no forest wealth, no coal, no oil, no iron, and no mineral deposits of any sort except clay, sand, pebbles and marl. The way ahead in Denmark lay in agriculture, not in manufacture. But what the drowsy town dwellers and the placid big-estate owners could not see in two hundred years, the newly freed peasant farmers came to see in less than fifty.

The first thing they did was to lift farming from domestic to commercial levels, the next thing was to take the commerce of Denmark into their own hands, and their last move was to take over the state and organize it for farm prosperity. Which is proper enough in a country that is purely agricultural, as Denmark is. It is another matter in a state that can be agricultural or industrial, or best of all both, if it but have the wisdom to save its farm life from decay and death, while its

mills increase in number and magnitude.

Commercial Agriculture

Now, domestic agriculture is one thing, and commercial agriculture is another. To a Dane, farming on a commercial basis means (1) crops to feed the farm family and the farm animals, (2) livestock to convert crop surpluses into milk and meat products, (3) farm industries to convert these products into fit forms for final consumers—creameries, cheese factories, bacon factories, egg-packing plants and the like, owned and operated by the farmers themselves, or their experts and business agents, (4) sales agencies and financial institutions of their own, on a cooperative basis, and (5) a state whose service agencies are all busy in behalf of agriculture.

Possible Only to Farm Owners

Commercial farming is the last word in farming. It is a kind of farming that is possible to farm owners alone, and to intelligent farm owners—never to farm tenants and never to farm regions cursed with widespread illiteracy. There are no farm tenants in Denmark, or too few to count, less than ten percent in fact. And there are no illiterates except the feeble-minded. Danish illiterates are only two in the thousand of population against 180 per thousand in the country regions of North Carolina in 1910.

Any Dane of character can own a home or a farm. The state is expending in the present three-year period twenty-two million kroner, or nearly four million dollars in American money, to help tenants and farm laborers into the full ownership of homes and farms. Danish tenants are few, but Denmark means to have none at all if it is humanly possible to put every man into a home of his own.

Education an Essential

And any child can have any kind of education it wants and in any amount. Education is as free as the air in Denmark. For instance, I find 600 scholarship students in the University of Copenhagen. A scholarship student pays nothing for his room and meals, and he wins scholarship by merit in the schools below.

Commonwealth Building

I have long held and I still hold that the fundamental social ills of North Carolina are excessive tenancy and overweening illiteracy. The future of the state depends on the universal diffusion of intelligence and the universal ownership of homes and farms. The Commonwealth must be built on character, culture, and home ownership or it will be built in vain.—E. C. Branson, Frederickskavn, July 31, 1923.

OUR CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

Ceramic Industries

Few people ever stop to wonder where the articles or materials with which they come in daily contact are produced. Take, for instance, the building blocks, the common bricks, the ornamental terra cotta, the crockery or even the china ware. It is interesting to know when you are using a product of Carolina clays made in our native state.

The general procedure involved in ceramic ware manufacture is as follows. A clay or mixture of clays suitable for ceramic ware is aged, thoroughly mixed, worked, moulded into the shape desired and then slowly dried in the open air under roof or in tunnels heated by the waste gases from the kilns or ovens. The dried articles are then carefully packed in the kilns and fired at the proper temperature until they are thoroughly burned. Such material is porous and is known as biscuit or bisque; as such it is not available for use unless the biscuit is a brick, a common tile or similar article. The finishing treatment consists in applying certain chemicals to the biscuit which will produce a glaze on heat treatment. When the article is moulded like a plate and a pretty design painted on it with the chemicals, a plate results. The shape into which the article is moulded determines the shape of the finished product.

But any kind of clay will not make any or all kinds of ceramic ware, nor will some clays be available at all.

Some clays can be made more valuable as ceramic clays by the addition of certain other soils or chemicals. Only an analysis of the soil or clay can give the information as to their applicability as a raw material or what other materials are needed to give a certain type of ceramic ware. Due to the multitude of glazes and coloring substances used in the industry, control of their application must be in the hands of one versed in the knowledge of their composition and properties.

Our State Industry

In North Carolina at the present time there are 103 ceramic plants 92 of which make brick and tile, four make stone-ware, two crockery, and the other five make pottery in addition to crockery. Four of the brick yards make sewer and drain tile, clay roofing and terra cotta in addition to brick. A crockery plant making a very small output was started as early as 1867 in Monroe, Union County. The first large plant to be incorporated was the Pomona Terra Cotta Company of Pomona, in 1885, which is now one of the largest in the state. The number of plants increased from five in 1890 to twelve in 1900, to twenty-five in 1910, to forty-seven in 1918 and to one hundred three in 1920. That the state is recognizing the possibility of this industry is evident from these figures.

The total amount of capital invested in ceramic plants in North Carolina is close to \$1,760,000; the plant valuation is \$1,500,000, and the yearly output is valued at about \$6,975,000. One thousand and forty workmen received \$1,410,000 in wages in 1920 in this industry alone. The ceramic plants in the state are small, only eleven having an investment, plant valuation, or production value above \$50,000. Ample opportunities exist in the pottery and crockery industry. In 1920 there were only eleven pottery and crockery plants in the state. They had a combined capital of only \$10,000, employed 17 men and turned out \$16,000 worth of products. Suitable clays are available in abundance in North Carolina. Our need is for trained men who can turn our raw products into valuable finished wares. F. C. Vilbrandt, Professor of Industrial Chemistry, University of North Carolina.

INFANT DEATHS FEWER

North Carolina is a safer state to be born in than she was a few years ago. The chance of living through the first year following birth in 1921 was 25 percent better than in 1917. The first year of life is a hazardous one. In 1917 out of every 1,000 children born 100 died during the first twelve months. In 1919 the mortality rate was eighty-four, while in 1921 it had been reduced to seventy-five. Both races have shown marked decreases in infant mortality.

The mortality rate for white babies under one year of age has decreased from eighty-five per one thousand births in 1917 to sixty-six in 1921.

The mortality rate for negro infants under one year of age has decreased from one hundred thirty-three to ninety-five per one thousand births. Our infant death rate is now considerably lower than the average for the United States, for both races.

We think that this large reduction in infant mortality rates for both races is due to the splendid work of our state and county health officers. North Carolina has a state health department unsurpassed in the United States. It is teaching our people the principles of sanitation and how to prevent sickness. It is reducing our death rate and preventing an untold amount of sickness and suffering. Other states and many foreign countries have sent delegations here to study our health department. A delegation of eminent doctors representing several countries belonging to the League of Nations is now in North Carolina making an intensive study of her state and county health work. All praise to our health officers and their health service.