

The Wilson Advance.

FRIDAY, JUNE 3, 1881.

HOME AND FARM.

Why don't you say a good word in the papers for the boys? asked one of the neighbors boys as he came into the room where I was busy writing.

Boys on the Farm.

'What is the matter now Guy?' I asked.

'Well, it isn't any one thing in particular, it is everything together that makes me so mad. I want to get somebody to write a whole book about the way grown folks treat us boys. I tell you and I want you to put it in the paper—that boys have a hard time on the farm. We are hauled out of bed before sunrise to milk the cows, see the wood and do forty other things that nobody else wants to do. I wouldn't mind the work if we ever got any thanks for what we do, or ever had anything we could even call our own. No matter how much we do, or how well we do it, grown folks are always finding fault. I wonder if they expect us to know how to do everything just right. I guess the men have forgotten that they were boys once. Then the old folks never think that we boys like to have something of our own. There's father now, he is always complaining because I don't take an interest in the farm or anything about it. I never had anything of my own in my life except a pair of rabbits, and the first time they got into the garden they had to go. Last year I wanted some chickens of my own, some pure blooded ones, you know, but he would not hear a word of it. Then I begged him for a little piece of ground where I might raise what I pleased. Do you suppose I got it? Not much. And now to top off with, he wouldn't let me go to school this winter; says I've got enough learning for a farmer, as if I ever expected to be a farmer! I hate the old farm, and I'll not stay on it a day after I am of age! If father wanted to make a farmer out of me he shouldn't quarrel way to do it.'

'Well, well, Guy! that will do for you. Please take these letters to the editor for me, and I'll think over what your father said.'

'Well, I did think the matter over and came to the conclusion that there was more truth than poetry in Guy's speech. I like his father. A good many men take a 'mighty queer' way to make farmers out of their boys. They show the boys only the hardest, most disagreeable, most barren side of farm life and then wonder why it is that their sons leave the farm the first chance they get. If you want your boys to 'stick to the farm,' stick the farm and farming so well that they will have no desire to leave the old home until they leave for homes of their own. You can do this by making home attractive, by taking pains to show them the bright side of farm life, and by showing them that a man can be a farmer and a gentleman too.

Give your boys with good books, magazines, agricultural works and papers, and instead of sitting in the corner during the long winter evenings, and brooding the failure of another next season, and declaring that farming don't pay, and a farmer's life is a life of misery, read with your boys, study with them, play backgammon and checkers with them, and if you should happen to go coasting and skating with them once in a while you would feel all the better for the fun.

Give your boys an interest in the farm. If you are interested in chickens, let him take charge of the poultry, and if another shows a taste for gardening, give him a patch of ground and let him work. Require them to keep thorough and systematic accounts of their work and deal squarely with them. At the end of the year, the boys should show fairly well, do not withhold the praise they have honestly earned; and if they have failed in anything, don't be discouraged, and don't discourage them; point out their errors and let them try again. I might go on and write a whole sermon on this subject, my heart is full of 'good words' for the boys. But I have said enough to open the eyes of men who don't know how to show their boys the way to the farm.

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