

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

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Make the Farm a Place Where the Young People Will Wish to Stay.

WE get a great many letters about "how to keep the young folks on the farm," also a great many letters setting forth the advantages the country has over the town and telling why young people as well as older ones should choose the farm rather than the city as a place to live. Some of these letters are interesting and contain valuable suggestions, but we can say frankly that the slogan, "Keep the boys on the farm" appeals to us just about as little as the cry of "Back to the land."

The big problem, it seems to us, is not how to keep the boys and girls on the farm, but how to make the farm a place where the boys and girls will wish to stay. The fact that a boy is born on the farm, is no reason for his staying there. Indeed, the proportion of farmers to total population will continue to grow smaller all the time, and this means that farm boys and girls will continuously be going to the city. And there is no reason why this should not be the case. There is every reason, however, why things should not be so adjusted that the brightest and most ambitious young people will go to the city and leave those of less energy or with less education on the farm. This has too often been the case in the past, and how to correct this tendency is one of the great problems of our time.

We are told that the way to keep the young people on the farm is to make the home surroundings attractive, to have books and pictures and music in the home, to give the boy or girl an interest in something on the farm, to teach agriculture in the public schools. All these are good suggestions, but might it not be worth while to inquire why there are so many unattractive farm homes, with bare yards and uninspiring interiors, why the country boy and girl so often have practically no money of their own, why country schools are often so poorly adapted to the pupils' needs? Is it because country people do not care for convenience and beauty? Is it because they do not believe in education? Or is it because they get such small profits from their labors that they do not feel that they can afford to spend money for beauty and culture?

There can be no question that long years of struggle, and mistaken ideas of what is really worth while, have deprived many farm folk of a proper appreciation of the value of things which have not a money value; it is unquestionable that many farmers and many farm communities do not fully realize the added power and the added zest in life a good education gives; but, for all this, we are convinced that the greatest trouble with country life of today is that the average farmer does not make enough money to live as well as he should or to give his children the advantages they should have.

Boys and girls leave the farm for the simple reason that they be-

lieve they can do better elsewhere. The way to keep the young people on the farm is to make farming a more profitable occupation—to give the young people who engage in it a better chance to make money, to live comfortably, to acquire reputation and to influence the lives and thoughts of others. How this is to be done, is the great question, and one not fully to be answered by anyone. Certain it is that the man who makes his land poorer is not helping to keep the boys and girls on the farm. Nor is the man who raises poor crops, nor the one who keeps poor livestock, nor the one who makes farm work unnecessarily hard, nor the one who neglects the social life of his community, nor the one who imagines that the boy who is to be a farmer and the girl who is to be a farmer's wife can get along with less education than other folks.

Better farming so as to give the farmer larger profits, and better training so as to enable him to do better work and to deal more effectively with other men, are all that will make farming a sufficiently desirable life-work to be-

come the choice of those country-bred boys and girls who, by reason of their ability and enterprise, are especially needed by the farming community.

Look after the farm, see that it is a good home for the boy and that it pays well enough to appeal to him as a desirable business. Then with the proper training for life and its work he will not be in a hurry to leave the farm; and if he does leave, he is not likely to be one of those who leave only to fail.



GOOD FARM BUILDINGS LIKE THESE INDICATE PROSPERITY.

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