

The Farm Boy's Chances.

Nowhere Are Greater Opportunities Offered the Boy who Loves Farm Life and is Willing to Prepare Himself for His Work Than on the Farm.

By A. L. French.

THE EDITOR has handed me one of the greatest compliments I have ever received, in asking me to contribute a short article to the "Young Folks' Special." It very nearly causes me to forget my gray hair and the thirty years that have passed along since I began as a boy of ten to try to do a boy's work on the farm.

What is a boy's work on the farm anyway? Why, just everything, of course, for have we ever seen a boy on the farm who didn't have a little of everything to do? It is from early morn until after the shades of night have fallen that the boy hears the call: "Son, do this, please"; or, "Just slip out yonder and attend to that little matter, won't you?"

And the boy goes—of course, he does, no matter if he is tired and his legs ache. But he has his reward; for don't father and mother love the earnest, active, helpful boy who is trying to do his duty? And the boy doesn't realize it now, but will later on, that this handling in a cheerful, whole-souled manner, of the many duties that come his way is building for himself a character the value of which cannot be estimated in dollars. He is building for a strong, courageous, manhood that will enable him to take hold of the heaviest tasks that come to him in later life with a will that cannot be shaken. All hail to the courageous farm boy!

But what inducements does the business of farming in the South hold out to this strong, ambitious boy? Why, just about everything. Do people talk about the greater opportunities of twenty years ago for the young man who would make a success in agriculture? Just laugh at them, for there was never such an opportunity in the history of the ages as stands beckoning to the young man on the farm today. We have just begun to study the science of agriculture—are just beginning to find out that ours is a business that requires brains to handle, and the young man of today is training his brain in the line of his business. What this brain force means to the agriculture of the South we will begin to realize within ten years.

I tell you, boys, I wish for no greater pleasure than to be privileged to go along with you for the next few years and see the things that applied science will bring about on your farms, for it is going to be something worth while. We are going to see our ten-bushel wheat crops increased to twenty and from twenty to thirty. Our twelve- and fifteen-bushel corn crops are going to fifty,

and some of you are not going to be content with less than one hundred bushels per acre; and our third-of-a-bale crops of cotton are going right up to a bale per acre, and then to two bales. Then, methinks I hear some of the leaders among you declaring: "I am hitting it for three bales."

Our beautiful Southern country will be cleared of brush and briars, her soils filled full to bursting with humus. The galls and gullies will be a thing to look back to with shame for we will have learned (what men ought to have learned years ago) that grass is the great soil builder and binder.

The scrub animal we will do away with as we are to learn that we must feed good feed to animals that have been bred to utilize it in a profitable manner.

Talk about openings for the young man of ambition and brains on the farm! The openings are big enough to fall into right now. And, boys, don't think you must wait until you go to the agricultural college before you begin to study agriculture. You can learn something right on the farm every day. When going about the farm with father, ask him the why of things, and if he doesn't know, it may stir him up to deeper thinking, and if he is the man I think he is, he will soon find out the why of it so he may tell you. Ask him why a soil filled with humus, well drained, deeply broken, and finely pulverized and seeded with good, well-selected seed, will produce better crops than soils not so handled. Ask him how plants are bred to increase their productiveness, and why the seed should be grown in a patch by itself, or at least, in a corner of the field that is given special attention. Ask him why the meat-producing animal should be blocky, with a broad head and back, and a broad and deep hind-quarter. Ask him why he works one horse when he could so well drive two, three, or four. Ask him why he milks two cows to secure the milk or butter that one well bred animal could produce.

If he gets mad when you have asked him these questions, wait until he gets cooled off, and then ask him some more. If he does not know about these things, ask mother, I'll bet she will know.

Go out into the field with father, pull up some plants like the cowpea, crimson clover, soy bean, Japan clover, etc., and ask him the meaning of those little bulbs that you see clinging to the roots of the plants. If he doesn't know this, ask him why land on which these plants grow is getting richer all the time.

You had better ask these questions and find out about these things, for sister is asking them and if you don't look out, she will be a better farmer than you some day. And why shouldn't she be just as good a farmer, anyway? Girls, you answer that. Some of the best farmers I have ever known were women. Why shouldn't you be one of them?

The habit of reading worthless books is not a virtue but a vice. The habit of skimming over good books is a vice of scarcely less magnitude. The man to be prized by friend and dreaded by foe is the man who reads few books, but those of the best, and he reads them so that he not merely knows all they contain, but catches their spirit.—Dr. Henry Wallace.

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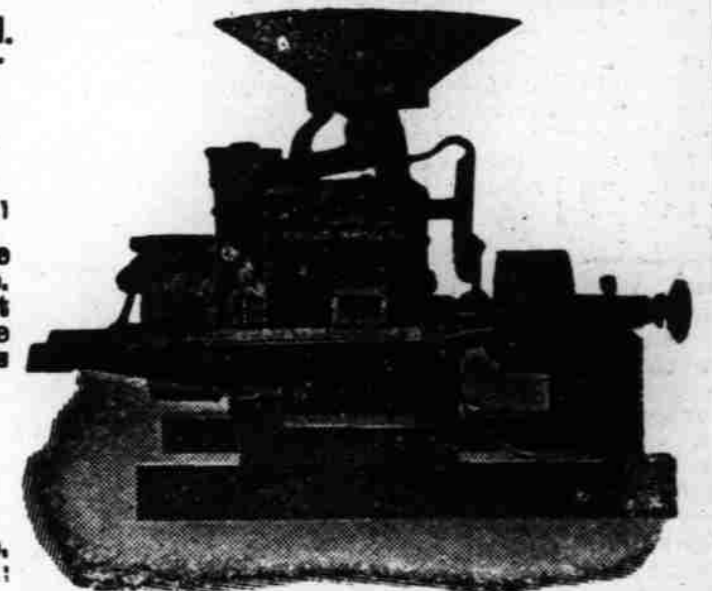
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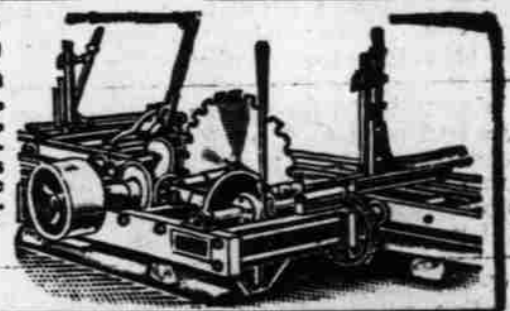
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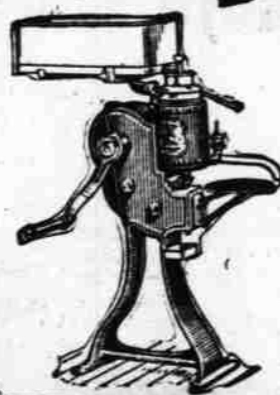
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