

## COUNTRY LIFE.

### A Paper of Peculiar Interest to All Who Live in the Country.

By Mrs. Emily Hoppin.

**T**HE exodus of people from the farm has been made a subject of investigation by both state and national commissions, and has resulted in recommendations concerning education, moral influences, sanitation and economic conditions.

The abstract idea of many concerning country people can be epitomized in the words of Edwin Markham:

Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans  
Upon his hoe, and gazes on the ground;  
The emptiness of ages in his face,  
And on his back the burden of the world.

\* \* \*

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!  
Slave of the wheel of labor; what to him  
Are Plato and the swing of Pegasus?  
What the long reaches of the peaks of song;  
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?

Then in the words of John Vance Cheney, in a poem that has found its way to ex-President Eliot's five-foot shelf of books:  
Need was, need is, and need will ever be  
For him, and such as he;

Cast for the gap, with gnarled arm and limb!  
The mother molded him,—

\* \* \*

And aye she gives him, mindful of her own,  
Peace of the plant, the stone.

The truth is that the farming of to-day is a science; not even as a common laborer is there a place for the man with "the emptiness of ages in his face," "the peace of the plant, the stone."

The country life needs alert men and women with minds trained to grasp, not only the possibilities of the soil; but the needs and possibilities of their own lives.

**Country Life From Viewpoints**—In this paper, I shall speak of country life only as observed in our own little corner of the country, though no doubt conditions are very much alike in most, if not all of the state; and I shall speak

that have to be quickly and cheaply carried to market. The good roads should be primarily for the use of the farmer, and not the pleasure-seeking automobilist.

#### Schools Should Help Country Life—

The schools can enter largely into both the economic and aesthetic conditions of country life. The school gardens and school agriculture can help not only the development of nature study, but can help character building. They can teach not only industry, but other secrets of ethics. The planting of the flower seed, the bulbs and tree seeds in the school plots of grounds, may in later years send the city boy to the country, and hold the country boy in his home, for the care necessary for the growing things, unconsciously brings a love for them, and as they develop day by day, they gradually seem a part of one's life.

#### Farm Loans Would Help—

Another incentive to country life is a reasonable interest on money to move the crops quickly, and to invest in land. Few purchasers of farms have enough capital to fully pay for them. Sowing alfalfa and putting out orchards cost a great deal; stock is high priced; the farmer has to borrow, and then wait (as in the case of fruit) several years before he realizes from his investment. He goes to the bank and borrows the money at from 6 1-2 to 8 per cent. He could easily pay the loan under ordinary conditions; but alas! The Lord does not always send his rains on the just; he is very likely to send the north wind instead; sometimes, even without old age, the grasshopper is a burden. All these things are not moneymakers, and our farmer is harassed by debt before he realizes. The government loans money for 2 per cent to the same bank that loans it to the farmer for 8 per cent. If the farmer could borrow directly of the government at, say 3 per cent, pay every year on the amortization plan, say 6 per cent, half of which should go on the interest, and half on the principal, it would do more than anything else to help out the back-to-the-farm movement.

The currency bill, now before congress, while it helps the farmer somewhat, does not reach the man who has

helping bona fide settlers, and of taking from the city some of the trouble-making element. It is the men of the cities who brew the witches' cauldron of discontent, and envy, and anarchism. Take these men from the city, let them acquire a competence, and their radicalism quickly changes to conservatism.

Another help to the back-to-the-country movement, would be the going there of some of the philanthropists, who sitting in their easy chairs, plead with all their brothers to go back to the land—go back to the land; yet who do not lead the way. The country has fine possibilities for the man of wealth. Machinery has the cost of production down to its minimum; the electric roads are already beginning to interlace the country, bringing the city within a short ride; money could have the beautiful home, the complete water and lighting systems; the comfortable automobile, all the advantages of the city with the advantages of the country without the disadvantages of either.

**The Country Church a Factor**—The country church could have a large influence on country life. As it is now, it has very little. The country as well as the city needs men of ability. The young men and women of the country are not only high and normal school graduates, but our colleges and universities have a generous percentage among them. It is a mistake to send men of mediocre ability to the country church.

The social life is a very important factor in a happy country life. The clubs are in the vanguard of those who have helped to make it count for happiness. Clubs are scattered now through most country communities; not only the purely social club, but those that help to form the literary tastes of the country people. The county libraries, the farmers' institutes, the university farm, and the university extension through its correspondence courses are doing a wonderful work in helping to raise the economic life of the farm to a more productive plane, and at the same time, create higher ideals for the social and intellectual life.

**The Inner Life Most Important**—It is