

EDUCATION FOR HOME LIFE ON THE FARM

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Country life can advance just as fast as its homes reach their best. Everyone knows that a country home at its best is the finest type of home in the world. And some country homes have reached this ideal these days when modern conveniences and comforts are as available in the country as in the city and they have come into a great heritage of reality and beauty and richness of life and spirit. On such homes as these, the new kind of country community has arisen where the chance that comes to the boys and girls surpasses that to be found anywhere else. Of course, the great majority of country homes have not come into their own and yet the past few years have seen a great wave of progress come in this special line. Naturally, perhaps, the economic side of things about country life interested people first but we soon saw as a farmer expressed it: "It's not much use to grow better corn and live stock to get more money, if we can't use that money to make better homes. And how are we going to have better homes if we don't train the girls for it?" And it is a big step in our development of country life that we have come to recognize the fundamental importance of training for home life in order that we may make our homes all that it is possible for them to be in the country.

THE BETTER EQUIPMENT OF THE MODERN FARM HOME

Not long ago I went to visit some country friends of mine. The man had just put up a new barn and wanted me to see it before dark. I hurried into the house to speak to the lady and saw they had electric lights. Before I had a chance to say anything about them, however, I went on out to see the new barn. It was a very modern, convenient barn. The man stepped inside the door and turned on electric lights all over it, even in the top of the wheat bin. "Well," I said, "this is surely up to date. Electric lights in your barn, too." Then he looked down and laughed and said,

"Yes, you see that is the way we happened to have them up at the house. The contractor said it wouldn't cost but a little extra to run them on up to the house." That is the way our whole country life movement is turning these days. It is "running on up" to the home.

THE COUNTRY SCHOOL AND THE COUNTRY HOME

All live country schools these days are giving training in the art of home making. From the well-equipped laboratories of the consolidated schools and the simple practical teaching of cooking and sewing in one-room country schools, much of which is done in home kitchens, the girls are going out better fitted to do their work in country homes skillfully and efficiently.

The Mendota Beach School, out from Madison, Wisconsin, is a sample of a one-room country school which in the past few years has put in a sewing machine and a simple equipment for teaching cooking and where, with the help of the mothers of the community who come in on Friday afternoons, a helpful and thorough course in home making is being given.

Miss Agnes Samuelson, the county superintendent of Page County, Iowa, has issued a printed course of study in home making, thirty-two lessons, which are followed by the one hundred and thirty country teachers in that county with splendid results.

At the Oak Ridge School, the demonstration rural school of Winthrop Normal, Rock Hill, S. C., taught by Mrs. Hetty Browne, hot lunches are served, the material for which is partly furnished from the school garden. This idea of serving something warm at noon in country schools has become quite general throughout the United States and is one of the most practical ways in which boys and girls are trained for home life.

CORN AND CANNING AND OTHER CLUBS

Side by side with country schools as a great educational agency are the clubs which are promoted through the state and nation and the splendid extension work done from our state universities and colleges of agriculture. Canning and gardening clubs, sewing and cooking clubs, with the instruction and the contests and exhibits that go with them, have done great things to arouse interest and to set standards among country girls in their education for home life. The girl who has cleared a hundred dollars on a tenth of an acre of

land, will not only use the money to get further training, but realizes that she has already mastered much that will help her make a better home and which will help her to decide to make her home in the country. A girl who enters in a bread judging contest gets in her mind a standard about bread which will never leave her satisfied again with sour, soggy bread. The girl who has seen the even stitches and the straight seams on the prize apron will always make her clothing more neatly after that. No one can measure the great educational value of these clubs, contests and exhibits. They should always stand side by side with the schools and be used to the utmost. They hold a great power for reaching and helping in a practical way in our training for home life on the farm.

MUSIC, ART AND LITERATURE IN THE FARM HOME

But there is something more than skill in cooking and sewing and in the science of home making that is needed. Into the home life on the farm there must come the joy and gladness of life; those who live there must see the blue of the sky and hear the song of the birds and share in the beauty around them. They must find there, how they may have a share in all the riches of the world—riches of music and literature and art. And with all this there must come the happy sharing of it all with neighbors. This is coming, too, these days in many country homes and we find every educational agency helping to bring it about. The State Normal of Kansas, at Emporia, sends out by parcels post victrolas and records with an interesting descriptive talk in regard to them to all country schools in the state desiring them. Many country schools have taken advantage of this. Many county libraries are being established now which bring good books within the reach of every country child. Most country schools have small libraries of their own and in almost every state, the state library commission furnishes free traveling libraries. Courses of reading are recommended, including a very good one, which is outlined by the United States Bureau of Education and for the completion of which a certificate is given.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE OPEN COUNTRY

With all these things, we are growing into a new community consciousness and country people are getting together more. Country girls are having camps, country boys are going to short courses

at the agricultural colleges. Some communities have neighborhood dinners in honor of the new renters when they arrive in March. There is coming to be a fine unselfishness which puts the good of the whole community above the good of any one person. Many country people are coming to be like the farmer in the coöperative creamery, who shook his head when his check came, fearing it was too much and saying: "You see it wouldn't be right for me to have too much for it would have to come out of my neighbors." With such a spirit in a community, we may well hope for great things for the country homes there.

"THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD"

Recently at the Eastern Tennessee Farmers' Convention, I heard one of the ten thousand country club girls in Tennessee recite "The House by the Side of the Road." She was a girl who had made a great record in canning. She had listened with intense interest that day as the teacher told how to draft patterns. I am sure she had done good work in her country school. And as she stood there so straight and wholesome, with her eyes shining and a radiant, unselfish look in her face, I knew she had caught this other greater thing, too, and that she would use all she had learned to make the country home she would have some day, "A House by the Side of the Road" that would be of service to her neighborhood and to all who came that way. The education for home life on the farm which is genuine and really worth while will develop in the heart of every girl and boy a wholesome and happy

COUNTRY LIFE CREED

I am glad I live in the country. I love its beauty and its spirit. I rejoice in the things I can do as a country child for my home and my neighborhood.

I believe I can share in the beauty around me—in the fragrance of the orchards in spring, in the bending wheat at harvest time, in the morning song of birds, and in the glow of the sunset on the far horizon. I want to express this beauty in my own life as naturally and happily as the wild rose blooms by the roadside.

I believe I can have a part in the courageous spirit of the country. This spirit has entered into the brook in our pasture. The stones placed in its way call forth its strength and add to its strength a song. It dwells in the tender plants as they burst the seed-cases that imprison them and push through the dark earth to the light. It sounds in the nesting notes of the meadow-lark. With this courageous spirit I too can face the hard things of life with gladness.

I believe there is much I can do in my country home. Through studying the best way to do my every-day work I can find joy in common tasks done well. Through loving comradeship I can help bring into my home the happiness and peace that are always so near us in God's out-of-door world. Through such a home I can help make real to all who pass that way their highest ideal of country life.

I believe my love and loyalty for my country home should reach out in service to that larger home that we call our neighborhood. I would join with the people who live there in true friendliness. I would whole-heartedly give my best to further all that is being done for a better community. I would have all that I think and say and do help to unite country people near and far in that great Kingdom of Love for Neighbors which the Master came to establish—the Master who knew and cared for country ways and country folks.