

We see that science and intellect have come to our aid in helping us shape and form the commonest tool on the farm. The plow has now become a wonderful tool in the ease and effectiveness with which it does its work. Every improvement it shows should mean so much more freedom for the man who holds it, so much more time set free which he can use for his advancement in the social and mental scale. If we fail in gaining this, something besides the plow needs adjustment, and we may well say, "the times are out of joint."

FARMERS' WIVES.

By JULIET H. SEVERANCE, M. D.

In introducing the theme I have chosen it may be questioned, what can I, a woman occupying one of the professions, know of the subject. Before proceeding, therefore, I will state I was born and reared on a farm; my mother was a farmer's wife, and in my girlhood I was instructed in the duties and mysteries of farm life as it then was, embracing many kinds of labor now done in factories mostly, such as carding, spinning and weaving wool and flax, making butter and cheese.

My sisters are farmers' wives, and my brother, a farmer, has a wife, besides all the patients I have had among the aforementioned class.

Having substantiated my right to speak on the subject I have chosen I shall treat of farmers' wives as they were, and farmers' wives as they should be, and many of the ideas will apply as well to the wives of other men as to farmers.

In looking at the beautiful country on a bright spring morning when the air is redolent with the odors of flowers and joyous with the songs of birds, one involuntarily exclaims, where can be found so much calculated to fill the heart with happiness and the body with joyous bounding health, as in the country, and what woman so blest, so content, so well conditioned as a farmer's wife. But let us

examine into the case and see what are her duties, what their compensation, and what her opportunities for culture and recreation.

I believe of all classes of women the duties of farmers' wives are most tedious, monotonous and wearing. With cooking and cleaning, washing and ironing, making and mending, child bearing and rearing, with little or no opportunity to attend lectures, theatres, or other places of instruction and amusement, it is no wonder that so many are to be found in our insane asylums. With the dull monotony, over-taxation, and lack of the stimuli of just compensation, it is not strange that they become prematurely old, broken down, disheartened. All the golden dreams of youth turned to ashes in their hearts by the everlasting treadmill of domestic drudgery. Yes, drudgery. There may be some so fortunate as to be able to procure help sufficient to relieve them of their tiresome burdens, but such are the exceptions and not the rule.

The husband works from morning till evening in the open air, which is in its influence invigorating; the wife over the cook stove inhaling the odors of all sorts of compounds which she is preparing for the table, to satisfy the abnormal demands of a wrongly educated alimentiveness, very often with a baby in her arms and other little ones incessantly calling for attention, this thing to think of, and that demand to be met, with no possibility of continuous thought upon any subject. It is this constant changing of the mind to various subjects that frets and wears, that weakens and destroys.

The farmer after his day's work is finished reads his paper or chats with his neighbor, while the wife rarely finds time for either, and with teething fretful babies her sleep is often broken and disturbed and she rises in the morning weary and dispirited to repeat day after day the same programme.

What is the compensation for all this toil? Her food, clothes, and the blessed privilege of being supported; for all farmers support their wives of course.

The farmer adds to his acres, is ambitious to raise fine stock and grains, vies with his neighbors in producing thor-

oughbreds, discusses the best methods of breeding and raising them, discovers the most approved manner of feeding his various kinds of stock, and can talk understandingly of the laws of heredity governing the reproduction of animals.

The farm is his, the stock is his, the wife is his, the children are his. He has some reward for his labor, some mental stimuli to keep up his spirits while his wife who works more hours than he does owns nothing, not even herself, her husband or the children. He gives her funds when he thinks it best, with which she may purchase her clothing, or else buys them for her himself, and at times takes pride in showing off his well dressed wife, as he does his fine stepper, but rare indeed is it the case that he situates her so she is equally independent with himself, has money at her command as he has at his.

The farmer does not apply his knowledge of heredity to the propagation of his own species. If he is proposing to raise a thoroughbred colt, he is very careful that the prospective mother has every favorable condition. She must not be overworked or worried and must be carefully groomed and fed, but how little attention he pays to the conditions of the prospective mother of his children. She may toil and worry and bring into existence half gestated children, the majority dying before maturity and yet nothing seems to be thought of it. It is a "visitation of Providence," and that ends the matter.

Would it be counted a visitation of Providence if half of r stock should fail to mature? No. You would call a convention to discuss the reasons for such failure and this state convention would devote a session at least to comparing notes upon the subject with a view to ascertain if possible the causes and how to remove them, in order to avoid such calamities in the future. Even if your apples, potatoes or grapes were afflicted with so fatal a blight, you would be ready to investigate into the causes. No "visitation of Providence" then.

Are your children of less account than your animal or vegetable products because they have no money value set

upon them? No, that is not the reason, but it is, because you have not been taught to view this subject in a proper light. In the coming civilization it will be a disgrace for any family to produce sickly or mentally and morally deformed children, and death will only result from old age or accidents.

The farmer's wife is as much a factor in the success of farm life as is the farmer himself. If she is a careful, intelligent, cultured, executive woman, she could better conduct the home and farm without him than could he without her, for no matter how industrious and provident a man may be, his means is soon squandered by want of prudent, intelligent management in the household, whereby waste and sickness with its attendant suffering and expense, is often the greatest cause of financial failure.

A farmer's wife should, first of all, be a mutual partner in financial affairs, instead of "an upper servant without wages;" the husband having management of the outside business; she of the family and household. And, like other business co-partnerships, each have equal rights to the finances, and to be consulted in regard to all expenditures.

What would a member of a partnership think of the man, who, because of being cashier of the firm and receiving the money, should treat him as though he had no right to draw upon the treasury, but, assuming the roll of a master, should deal out to him a pittance, as to a dependant? And yet this is the way the great majority of farmers treat their wives; as though *they* were the sole rightful owners of all the money coming into their possessions, when, could the wives have the wages of common servants, their wants would be supplied.

A case in point came to my notice in a recent newspaper report of a suit in the courts of Massachusetts. A man died intestate, leaving a small property. The wife in that state has the use of one-third of the property during life. The other heirs put in a plea of some irregularity in the marriage, in order to disinherit her. She admitted the plea, and sued for the wages of a common housekeeper, and received in cash for her services, more than one-third of which

as his wife, she would only have had the use. And here let me suggest, that so long as our laws are so one-sided and unjust in property matters, every man should make his will, placing his wife in case of his death, in the same financial condition he would be, legally, in case of hers. This is no more than just, until the laws can be so amended as to recognize them as having equal rights, thus removing the indignity put upon woman, of being a mendicant in her own household.

Farmers' wives should be versed in the proper methods of rearing, feeding and generally treating children. It is no more a part of nature's plans that children should be sick than should colts and calves, and I'll venture if they were as sensibly cared for, they would be no more frequently, as soon as the race had time to overcome the effects of heredity in this direction.

The basis of all improvement in the race, is the best beginning of life. Are we fit to reproduce? This is the question. How many fathers and mothers ever think of, much less seriously consider this question, upon which so much depends. They see puny, sickly, half made up children, born to them, living a short, miserable existence, and then with streaming eyes and lacerated hearts they lay those little forms, around which cluster so many tender memories and loving associations, beneath the sod, leaving such desolation in the heart and home. It should be understood that all such children had better never been born. Aye more, those that live to grow up, filled with disease and pain, a burden to themselves and all around them, should never have been born, and would never, had their parents been instructed in the grand laws of parentage. All such lives are but contributions to human misery.

Nor are moral evils, less the result of improper parentage, than physical and mental.

Vital statistics show that crime is an inheritance as is disease. Indeed crime is a moral disease. The liar, slanderer, thief and murderer, is sick morally as he who has scrofula is sick physically. He is born with the capacity to commit the crime, under circumstances that could not

induce another to it, simply because of difference of organization. This organization was furnished him, he did not create it. The stronger faculties must of necessity control the weaker, as in physical combat the stronger man must the weaker one. A person born with a large development of the intellectual and moral faculties, will have no trouble in controlling the passions and propensities, while where the reverse is the case, crime and immorality is the result, unless the relative strength is changed by cultivation, which can, to an extent, modify but never overcome entirely the effects of anti-natal influences. And it is quite time the responsibility for all these evils were put where they legitimately belong, *upon parental ignorance*. If there were none but proper children born, and if these were reared in the best possible manner, long life with health and happiness would be the natural condition of mankind.

There are also fundamental laws underlying the rearing of children relating to food, clothing and general habits, that can be ascertained with as much certainty as those relating to that of any of the lower animals; and the lack of this knowledge, and the observation of these laws, causes life-long suffering to many individuals.

One of the greatest causes of lack of strength and muscular development, of imperfect and early decaying teeth, and constipation with its train of sequences, is the almost universal practice of separating the outer portion of the wheat from the fine flour which we use as a principal article of diet.

Wheat contains every element required to build up the human system, and more nearly in the relative proportion required than any other product. A grain of wheat consists of an outer covering, an embryo or germ, and a central mass of farinaceous matter. The outer husk is composed of several layers of ligneous tissue. This, when separated, forms the bran proper. The inner portion of the covering is softer, and contains an active nitrogeous substance, called *cerealin*, and is besides, rich in fats and salts. This portion is rejected in what is called shorts.

The center is whiter, and is deficient in much that is

necessary to build up the tissues and maintain a condition of health.

The bone, nerve and muscle forming material is thrown away, or rather fed to your stock. A dog fed on white bread alone, only lives about two weeks, starving to death with all he can eat, while one fed on bread made of unbolted wheat, shows no signs of starvation. This experiment has been tried in both Europe and our own country, and the results reported in our medical journals.

If farmers' wives were posted on this subject, they would insist upon having the whole wheat ground, which they would prepare for the table, without subjecting it to the process of fermentation which destroys some of the constituent elements; in fact is a rotting process, changing nutritive qualities into alcohol, which is always a poison. The most wholesome bread is made of two ingredients only, wheaten meal and cold water; and when these are properly combined and baked, we have a light, sweet, delicious bread, which, with ripe fruit and milk, should constitute the principal diet of children; and we are always children, only of larger growth.

It is a common idea and especially believed by farmers, that flesh should form a large part of human food. That it is a fallacy and a dangerous one too, I propose to show.

Beef, the best of all flesh, contains but 25 per cent. of nutriment. Potatoes even, contain 28 per cent., while peas, beans, wheat, oats, barley, rye, corn, rice and sago, contain from 82 to 92 per cent. of nutriment.

An average person to subsist on wheat, would require one and one-half pounds daily. To obtain the same nutriment from beef, six pounds would be required. Nine bushels of wheat (550 lbs.) would feed a man a year. At twenty-seven bushels per acre, one third of an acre produces this quantity. To obtain the same nutriment from beef, 2190 pounds would be required, and to produce this about twelve acres are necessary. Therefore, in respect to land, beef at the same price per pound, is thirty-five times more costly than wheat; but while beef costs from ten to thirty-five cents per pound, wheat can be obtained for two, or six times less than beef.

which raises the difference in its costliness, 216 times. If the comparison was with potatoes, it would rise 648 times. That is to say what would feed one person on beef a year, would feed 216 persons on wheat, or 648 on potatoes.

There are three general divisions of elements required by the human system; the nitrates, that form flesh; the carbonates, that form fat and heat; and the phosphates, that supply the waste of nerve and bone. Twenty-five per cent. of the first, sixty-two per cent. of the second and three per cent. of the last are required.

Now the twenty-five per cent. of nutriment in the beef is wholly flesh forming. The carbonates and phosphates, that constitute nearly three-fourths of the requisite nutriment, are wanting. Beef supplies no heat, no fat, no nerve, but one pound of wheat not only contains as much flesh forming matter as a pound of beef, but has also sixty-two per cent. of heat and fat forming principles, and three per cent. of nutriment to build up nerve and bone; and the same is true approximately of all the cereals.

The nitrates and phosphates of the food of cattle, are used by them for the same purpose for which they are required by man. How then can he expect to supply his bones and brain from animal food? It is not possible. The source from which to get these elements, as well as all others needed, is from the vegetable kingdom, and like everything else is not so good when taken second hand, or mixed as it is in the animal, with the broken down tissue always present, which is poisonous.

The blood from a meat eater will pass into a putrescent condition very much more rapidly than from a person subsisting upon vegetable food, as experiments have proven, and this accounts for the fact that Indians succumb to any malignant disease so readily. Children using meat as a considerable part of their diet, are much more liable to small pox, diphtheria, scarletina and other diseases, than those who subsist on a vegetable diet. Meat eating also has a tendency to develop the animal propensities too largely; it tends to arouse an appetite for stimulants, such as tea, coffee, tobacco, and ultimately, alcoholic stimulants. This

every mother should understand. She would then be able, by a scientifically selected dietary, to do more to insure temperate habits in her children than can be possibly accomplished by any or all other methods combined.

Charles Napier, an English scientist of experience in the treatment of inebriety, prescribes a vegetable diet as a cure for drunkenness. The relinquishment of meat for six or seven months, he asserts, will destroy the desire for alcohol in the most aggravated cases.

Regularity should also be observed in feeding children from their birth. Nothing can be more ruinous to the digestive system than the habit so common with many, of feeding children at all times, forgetting that the stomach, as well as any other organ of the body, needs time to rest after digestion before being again called into activity, and that the habit of piecing between meals very often lays the foundation for the dyspeptic conditions of which so many are complaining.

I must briefly touch upon the subject of dress in passing; the clothing of our children. There are two principles to be observed, or disease and suffering are sure to result. First, even distribution of the clothing over the entire body; and, second, that the garments do not interfere with the free action of every organ and part. If these principles are observed, you may embellish, beautify and exhibit any taste you please, but if they are ignored nature will rebel, and pains and penalties must result. If you have a taste that leads you to desire to see your children arrayed in corsets, stays, etc., be sure and satisfy that taste by thus dressing your boys instead of your girls. It will not injure them nearly so much, and the effects will not be visited upon the next generation to the same extent. Give your girls the same opportunities for physical and mental culture as you give your boys, instill into the minds of both that whatever is coarse, vulgar, unbecoming or immoral in one, is equally so in both, and that whatever traits are noble or beautiful in one person, is equally so in another, irrespective of sex, and thus lay the foundation for a more rational education in ethics, as well as physics.

Farmers' wives have better opportunities for incorporating the more advanced ideas into the character of their children, than do mothers living in cities, for fashionable society with its falsities and foibles, its castes and false standards, neutralizes to a great extent the effect of any sensible ideas upon practical living, if they are sought to be instilled into the minds of our youth. In the country there is an opportunity for breadth of thought, where the confines of brick walls are not felt; a chance if the opportunity is utilized, to develop out of old ruts into new channels of thought. But it requires constant care, or sooner than they are aware, farmers' families settle down into a humdrum sort of life, without exalted aims or aspirations. Farmers' wives could, if well posted, make their homes a paradise. With health and strength, the result of rightful living, which would embrace a dietary that would not require much effort to prepare, they would have time for self-culture, home adornment and for the training of their children in those little graces which add so much to the happiness of home life.

The healthful meals would be served tastefully; luscious fruits in their season would take the place of pastry, which is a tax upon the time and strength of the cook, as well as upon the digestive ability of the consumer.

Flowers would add their refining influence, and the children, with happy, sunny faces, the result of welcome maternity, more beautiful than any flower that ever blossomed, respectful in their manners, would recognize the mother, as queen regal in the realm of home.

The husband and father with courteous mien, and cheerful habit, his presence bringing sunshine instead of shadow, would always manifest a spirit of tender affection and respectful consideration towards his wife, whom he holds to be his equal in rights, privileges and responsibilities. The house might be small, the meal frugal, but with such conditions of refinement and love, happiness could but exist.

Farmers' wives in every neighborhood, should form clubs and hold meetings to compare notes, investigate the latest discoveries in the problems of practical life—inviting

their husbands when they could come — and thus broaden their characters and develop the depths of their natures.

As a man's greatest glory is, not to be a good husband only, but a grand, noble, generous, royal-souled man, so a woman should remember that something more than to be a good wife is required. She should strive to develop individual worth, grandeur of character, nobility of mind and heart as paramount to all else.

Individual culture fits a woman for any position or relation in life she may be called to fill.

To the women of the nation, enfranchised, educated, elevated, do I look for salvation from the evils that fill our penitentiaries, our asylums, our dram-shops and brothels. Not by legislation, but by and through an enlightened motherhood, in which she will refuse to propagate children unless of a healthy, intelligent, moral paternity. From pure, exalted fountains no improper streams can flow. Finally as Fenelon said to Louis XIV., "The truth must be spoken. Woe to those who comprehend and speak it not, and woe to you if you are not worthy of hearing."

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF FARMERS' SONS — IN SCHOOL AND OUT.

By R. F. ROBERTS.

A philosophical observer says: "Education commences with the earliest dawn of existence." If the infant, when it cries because of some discomfort, is taken in arms and attended to, it quickly learns to cry uninterruptedly until it is gratified. But if the child be well cared for, it can be taught to be contented and pleasant until the regular times the mother has set to take it in arms and supply its wants. Long before school age, the boy will naturally take an interest in the farm animals, the garden and the fruits. By proper training, the habits of industry, carefulness, promptness, truthfulness, kindness and honesty, can be fixed in the farmer's son by the time he ought to go to school. Perhaps we do not realize as keenly as we ought, that success in life