stead of covering the ground evenly; in order to keep out wind, all openings should be filled and the exposed edges of the woodlot kept as dense as possible, especially on the sides exposed to the most trying winds. This may require the leaving of otherwise worthless trees and underbrush, or the planting of more trees on the exposed edges. Norway spruce is a good tree to plant as a windbreak.

“Water is lost by allowing sunlight and wind to get to the ground, not only because of injuries to the mulch, but also because both wind and sun greatly increase the evaporation from the soil. By keeping the ground well shaded and providing windbreaks on the exposed sides, this loss of moisture may be decreased.

“Grass is very undesirable in the woodlot. It uses much water that should be used by the trees if the main object is to raise timber. Grass and a good leaf mulch cannot both exist. When grass comes into the woodlot, the chances are that the timber will grow much more slowly. Grass should be kept out by having the ground well shaded.

**Amount of Light**

“The third important factor that determines how fast a tree will grow is the amount of light it receives. The food materials that are later used to make new wood must be worked over in the leaves and the leaves must have light in order to do this. The more leaves there are on a tree, and the more light they have, the better chance the tree has of making a large amount of new wood. If closely crowded by its neighbors, the tree will not have a well-developed top or set of branches (called the crown); therefore it will not have as many leaves and will not grow so fast as it might otherwise do. By removing a few trees from crowded clumps, relieving the best trees from too great competition, these trees can be made to grow much more rapidly.”

We regret that there is not space here to quote Mr. Mulford’s further remarks on the benefit to the woodlot by improvement cuttings, methods of starting new trees (to fill openings or replace timber to be harvested), by sprouts, by seed falling from neighboring trees, by sowing seed broadcast and by planting trees or seed. Those who are interested, however, can write direct to the college for a copy of the pamphlet itself.

**The Value of the Small Farmer**

If we of the city intend to turn our footsteps to the country, to live and work there, surely this is the season. We are often warned by the over-prudent that the only time to look at country property or to go out on a farm, with a view of buying, is in the winter when it is bleak and desolate and when every disadvantage shows to its utmost. I feel quite differently about it. There are bad times for living in every climate and every season, and if we want to think of the country as a place of home making for ourselves, the time for us to go is when everything is as beautiful as possible, when welcoming hands are held out to us, when the sky is blue and the sod green, when the air is gentle and filled with sweetness and the birds tell their own story of peace and happiness.

Why should we not see at the very best the thing we have longed for as a background for our own lives and for our children? Surely we do not judge our friends when they are in tears, or when they are weak or failing. We hope to find them happy when we go to see them; we like to remember them as in the midst of joy. And so the wise person who has decided to make a homestead for the family should select the place where he will build his nest, or even the nest that he may buy that someone else has built, in the most perfect season of the year, when everything is clean and fresh and new and fragrant.

We do not need to tell the middle-aged or the aged that the country holds rainy autumn days and bleak wintry ones. We have all learned that there is a somber side to life in rural lanes as well as in metropolitan streets. But what we are seeking in the country is the side associated with happiness, the productive side that brings us in touch with the great creative forces of the world, and enables us to do for ourselves rather than to buy from the world what it has reluctantly done for us. Not only do we seek the country for healthier, saner living, for greater peace of mind and bodily health, but we expect to find there a higher and finer spirituality. We hope not only to grow good things in our gardens, but in our souls. We hope that our characters will develop because we know that country life rightly used furnishes an opportunity beyond all others for the com-
THE VALUE OF THE SMALL FARMER

pletely rounded growth of man or woman. For if we are in debt to Nature for our comfort, for our joys, for the house that protects us, for the beauty we long for, we are more than likely to come to some real appreciation of her power and influence. Country life taken at its best and lived to its fullest not only brings about self-reliance and develops physical energy, but it creates in the young as well as the old a sense of justice and of fair play. Men in the country also get to understand the interdependence of human beings. The farmer regards the person who lives next door to him not as an unknown quantity recognized occasionally at the doorstep, but as his neighbor, his helper in the field, his friend in the hour of joy and trouble.

And in all thought of a return to rural life we must bear in mind this spirit of neighborliness,—the farmer needs it in his life. He cannot grow and be content without it. More neighbors is what every farm district in America requires, more people to talk to, more people to work with, more community spirit, more recreation, a greater consciousness of the joys of companionship.

It seems to me that the way to accomplish this is to get the manufacturing interests into the country. Get the factory near the farmer and the home of the factory-worker near the shops, so that a threefold interest is created. Bring action to the country. Let the farmer realize that the world is about him and needs him, and above all make an opportunity for the indoor worker to live in the country near his trade or profession.

When we stop and think how far the average man lives from his source of supplies and in many instances how far from the base of his daily activities, we realize how much time is wasted in merely connecting with life, how much strength is exhausted getting to and from work and how much valuable effort goes for naught in the course of a year. I know a man working in New Jersey who lives in Long Island. In order to reach his place of work he gets up at five in the morning, hurries (underground) to New York, from New York crosses a ferry out to New Jersey. With the return trip this means four hours of activity and productivity gone to naught, and a condition of mental and physical exhaustion induced which renders the work a hardship and life at home empty of real joy.

I feel more and more that not only could the high cost of living be in a measure reduced, but that the happiness and health of the great mass of working people could be vastly increased if the manufacturing interests which now fill so large an area of metropolitan life were forced out into the country districts. If the men and women who work in the factories and the shops lived in pleasant houses, with interesting surroundings, near their work, what an amazing difference in the joy and the satisfaction of living! Suppose that this workman whom I have in mind even continued to get up at five in the morning and put two hours daily in caring for his own garden and chickens and in milking the cow. At night, suppose only a half hour of the time were given to watering his garden and the other hour and a half spent resting on his porch or chatting with his neighbors or to attending some lecture or some concert, or riding or walking about through the country with his wife and family. There is really no argument that I can see to prove that this would not be better for the individual, for the race, for the civic life of the nation. For not only does this gardening add to the health and happiness of a family, every member of it, but it lessens the cost of living to an extent hard to understand until one has tested it.

We are all talking about and suffering from the present high cost of living, and we are blaming the trusts, the middlemen, transportation, the tariff and what not; but how many of us have tried to think the matter out, really to understand what seems to me the fundamental reason,—namely the loss in the United States of the small farmer, his growth into the business farmer with a new standard of weights and measures and a hard and fast system of bookkeeping. Agricultural colleges, systems of intensive farming, Government experiment stations, etc., have opened the farmer’s eyes and taught him the advisability of considering farming and gardening as legitimate business enterprises. On one side of his books the business farmer estimates the money invested in his farm and fittings, the value of his time and that of his family, his taxes, and the wages paid; on the other side of the ledger stand the prices he receives for produce. In other words, the farmer has become his own business manager. He knows what it costs to raise a potato and the expense of bring-
ing up a cabbage. The big farm has got to pay, or the farmer sells it to a rich relative for a "homestead" and goes to town. This economic readjustment of the farmer naturally reacts on the cost of living, for the consumer has to pay for the farmer's good business methods. This is right when farming is regarded as a means of livelihood. There is but one way to meet the difficulty, and that is for the worker in trades or professions also to become the little farmer. With the manufacturing interests held in rural districts, clustered about with little villages, the worker regarding the factory or shop as the essential source of revenue, why should not every house have its own garden, large or small, where vegetables are raised, flowers cultivated, a cow kept, and always chickens?

Equally there is no reason why the man who continues to work in a city should not live thirty minutes, or an hour even, from town, in a house suited to his ideals of home, and work in his garden morning and evening, with his wife to help,—for gardening is better than gymnasium or dancing class for health and beauty. And if there are children a most significant part of their education will be gained in the plowing, the seedtime, the planting and the harvest joys.

Every man who has his little country or suburban place, where his occupation is in the immediate vicinity, or even in the busy metropolis, can become the producing center for his larder, monopolist of his garden produce. No one can raise the price of milk for him or make it impossible for him to have berries in the spring; no one can charge him extra because there is a great demand for new potatoes. He has the comforts and the pleasures of his life in his own hands to develop and make flourish as his capacity for production and his understanding of the value of it increases.

I remember when I was a boy in the West, when the season of work ran low in the factories and in building, there was no sense of panic among the workers, because practically every man had his own little house and garden and when the factory doors closed the garden gate opened, and the man with his family to help him cultivated the soil, fed the chickens, tended the cows and produced about enough from his own few acres to keep his family alive through any period of business inactivity,—not only alive, but flourishing, for the food from the garden was better than any that could be purchased and the health that was gained in producing the food prepared us again for the difficulties of indoor life when a period of commercial prosperity set in. It was wonderful, how much we enjoyed and appreciated these opportunities for gardening. My mother enjoyed and appreciated them as much as I did, and aided me in them. They probably had much to do with the health of our family in after life, when we left home and scattered about over the world to face its cares and difficulties.

Home life in the rural parts of France at the present time, I fancy, does not vary much from the life I led in the West as a boy. I am told that the one great industry in France today is the hen, for practically every French peasant or small business woman in country or town has her own little chicken yard which not only helps to supply the family table, but which sooner or later becomes the nest egg for the family fortune. As I have already indicated, the great reason for this immense wealth from the chicken raising of France is because it is done not as a big business enterprise, entailing vast cost, but as a side issue by the individual, so that there is no charge account in the family ledger against the keeping of the chickens. The production is practically without cost, and the gain is very near one hundred per cent. And it is far more valuable to the state that thousands of families should have small gardens and a few chickens, which means the capacity for production, than that a few men should have hundreds of acres with thousands of chickens, the outgrowth of a big business proposition, which must of necessity and legitimately greatly increase the cost of living.

I sometimes wonder if we realize how high a price we really pay for life in the city, not merely in the actual cost of house and food and clothes, but in the separation of family interests, in the lack of opportunity to live and work and play together. Possibly the greatest value that the little garden or that the little farm holds is the chance it furnishes for family life to cement its interests, for it is quite impossible that husband and wife and children should work intelligently together for their own mutual benefit without gaining in mutual understanding and happiness; when the father

352
THE VALUE OF THE SMALL FARMER

is away at his daily labor the boy must help with the farm work and must develop through the helping, while in the morning and in the evening toiling side by side the father and the son get really to know each other. The wife gets a truer understanding of her husband’s strength and patience and love of his family, and the man must surely gain a wider reach of sympathy and affection in the early hours out of doors working with those nearest and dearest.

It seems as though there were some intimate relation between the development of humanity and its capacity to produce the essentials of life. And once we have learned the value of producing the essentials, we will quickly grow to realize how necessary it is to create our pleasures and happinesses. For every complete life must have joy and recreation as well as its problems and difficulties. One of the saddest things we contemplate in modern American life is our tendency to buy everything—our houses, our gardens, our food, our clothes and all our pleasures. Instead of planning and evolving our homes and home life, we pay men to plan our houses, men to build them, men and women to adorn them and men and women to amuse us in them. This certainly will lead to a very sterile condition, mentally and spiritually, if it is allowed to progress to its ultimate end. And a step away from it, a step surely in the right direction is toward the country in the springtime, when we see all the beauty that may be ours with a right understanding of life, with a willingness to face complications and difficulties.

In addition to reducing the cost of living and to acquiring a wider mutual understanding and sympathy in family life, we shall learn through our gardens one of the great lessons that Nature has to teach us. In other words, that we cannot have a complete enjoyment of existence and a real growth in it without directly producing for ourselves rather than buying. It is impossible in the world as it stands, always to be the recipient of necessities and pleasures and at the same time to attain our real development, mental and spiritual. Nature in her way is something of a tyrant, and she demands from us that we grow to understand her by working with her. Those of us who neglect to profit by the opportunities she gives us for laboring under her direction, will find in the long run that we have not received the fullest of her bounty.

However negligent the human parent may be in insisting upon a mutual relation in life, the great parent and master of all, Nature, has no such sentimentiality in the more subtle relation which she has established with her human children. If we release ourselves from any obligation to her, we will find sooner or later that the opportunities which she offered us are no longer open for our advancement and our happiness.

And it is in the springtime that Nature woos us most ardentely and reveals to us most lavishly all that she has to give in return for our willingness to work in her garden. So do not let anyone deter you this spring from going to seek your own homestead, from planning your life far in the country or even at the edge of the city. Go on the brightest day to the sunniestest spot; drink in all the beauty that the freshness of Nature can give you, and make up your mind then and there to become a part of it, to live close to it, to find out and benefit from the miracle that Nature works for those that choose her for a lifelong companion.

WHAT A GREEK GENERAL THOUGHT ABOUT WORK

URING the old days of Theban supremacy, Epaminondas, one of the ablest of the Grecian generals, replied to the enemies who had tried to disgrace him by electing him public scavenger:

“If the office will not reflect honor upon me, I will reflect honor upon it.”

More than two thousand years have passed since the words were spoken, and they are no less significant today, for they embody a philosophy of life and an ideal of labor which, with all our culture and civilization, we have not wholly attained.

It is not the work itself so much as our own attitude toward it that counts. That is what Epaminondas realized; that is what he meant when he spoke of reflecting honor upon his office. We forget that in the use of our hands lies one of the greatest channels of self-expression, and that the humblest kind of physical work, if rightly done, may be a source of invaluable training, a field for the development of manual dexterity, wise judgment, alertness, intelligence, thus serving as a firm basis for future material and intellectual achievements.

When New York and Brooklyn put their