

Acams Centre N. Y. 2/25/1912

Dear Miss Tarbell.

We have just been reading with great inter-

est the series of articles in the AMERICAN on the restlessness of Woman.

We consider that you have a master mind. Those articles form really a classic essay.

Now I wish to tell you my ideas and my dreams in regard to our centre here.

In 1827 my grandfather, Elisha Morgan, bought this farm and began to farm here to make his living, and continued his preaching for the redemption of souls, for which he never took a cent.

He and his wife, it was said, could, if every copy of the Bible were destroyed, reproduce it from memory.

He was very conscientious. There are seven day Baptists around here, and in order to convince them that they were in the wrong they looked for Bible texts, from which to preach a sermon, and he found that there was no command to observe the first day of the week, or, in fact, any day of the week, other than the commands given by Moses to the Jews, along with a good many others which Gentiles never think of obeying.

True to his fair and candid nature, he admitted that if either were right, the seventh day people were, but as for him, he never again observed the Sabbath as he formerly had done.

That took moral courage, and those days.

My grandfather on the other side was born about 1801, and was, like my maternal grandfather, a public spirited man.

He had taken his "nip" all his life, but when they came to him and told him that the worthless fellows about would not sign the pledge unless "Squire Eames did" he signed it, in his old age, and never broke it, altho of course the worthless drunkards did. He used to go around and buy up the great hungry

swarm of dogs that the poor people used to feed, saying at the same time that they could not afford a hog.

"I'll buy your dogs" he said. Then do and buy a hog with the money"

They never did, of course, and the next time he went, they had another swarm, but that shows the kind of man he was.

Now I feel that as the granddaughter of those two men, and as the recipient of the gift of the farm which my grandfather Morgan "worked, to make a living, while he preached to save souls," it is up to me to do something here which is

worthy of them.

We were thrown here quite by accident. O, by the by, while thinking of your life having been perhaps influenced by the wrong perpetrated on you as mine has been by the wrongs perpetrated upon me, the remembrance comes to me that George West-
-ters came here last year, and told me that he knew you very well when you were a little girl. He told me some of the wrongs which your family sustained at the hands of Rockefeller. Well, some wrongs were perpetrated on us, and so we were obliged to stay on this farm.

Now I have concluded it may be for the working out of a grand purpose which as yet is but so dimly outlined to my self that I hesitate to mention it to you, but your article called it out.

I have brought up five children in ~~exactly the method which you outlined~~. When my last child was born, every child was looking eagerly for it, and it was the topic of family conversation for months. My sixteen year old daughter was present at my confinement, and the woman doctor (I agree with you on all you said about women in the professions, by the by) showed her the afterbirth and explained everything to her. The daughter administered the chloroform, I think.

Well, now she has children of her own.

One son is an artist. He has illustrations in LIFE and HARPERS. He is also a musician of fully as much talent as in the line of art. How much it is due to my having ~~done as you suggest in~~ giving him his bent, I do not know.

But I always sacrificed everything to education, and I never was anything but ~~fully~~ open and candid, in the smallest details from the time they could talk. I never blinked what I THOUGHT even. I was transparency itself with them, and none of them have ever deceived me.

Now I am here on the farm with a son 27 years old.

He is of a scientific turn of mind, and that being his natural bent, of course he turned that tendency toward research, in the direction of farming scientifically.

He was a slender youth, who had never done a day's work in his life. He has been here seven years.

This place has taken five thousand dollars in that time, and so far, it has not proven profitable.

But he is now a practical, deep thinking, scientific farmer, and a Man. And a man, too of perfect health and strength. Iron muscles, clear eye, and rosy complexion.

Gradually has grown upon me the possibilities for making a centre here of life as it should be lived.

Lacking your gift of succinct expression, I must clumsily try to tell you my hopes.

I think the farm is the only place where one can live naturally.

The farm, to my mind, is the best place to bring up children.

It is, so far as I know, the only profession where the children become an asset early, with equal advantage to themselves and their parents.

It is also the only place where age is not made to feel its decrepitude and its helplessness. There is always something for grandmother and grand father to do, on a farm.

The farm would be a perfect place for any of us to live, if we could have the inspiration which the city affords us. Can we bring a measure of that?

The answer to this problem is what I am trying to work out.

My ideal is to have a Brook Farm, with the loafers left out.

My field from which to choose is terribly restricted by the fact that none but workers need apply.

I am thoroly convinced that sanity and the highest usefulness are best promoted by a fair division of the labor between head and hands.

A philosophical friend of mine has said he thinks there is more saving grace in a garden which will keep a person employed all day long, than in all the religions in the world.

We stand here for simplicity in dress. No corsets, no high heeled shoes no one of Fashion's idiosyncrasies are welcome here.

Our living is of the simplest and most inexpensive.

I have set myself seriously to the problem of providing a perfectly balanced ration, at a minimum cost, and nearly everything in that ration should be raised on this farm.

We grow our wheat and grind it for our bread.

We grow our own potatoes and all vegetable, fruits large and small, and have our own eggs, chickens, pork, beef, milk cream, etc.

I have bought a steam canning outfit, and with it I can put up, in tin cans everything imaginable, at first cost, direct from the field or the stable or the henhouse.

I have canned pumpkin, corn, peas, beans, tomatoes, all kinds of fruits canned chicken and beef, -- the trusts have no terrors for us.

We put up our own ice. We cut our own wood in our own wood lot, and raise our own rye and buckwheat if we want it, and make our own maple syrup.

Now all this is not to make money,. We want to make a living, it is true but we want most of all, to be able to open our doors to any and every person who has our ideals, and who wants to come here and work them out, and help us to work them out.

The first hindrance to congenial working together, is, of course, always the question of the expense of maintenance. For that reason, I am directing all my force toward simplifying and cheapening living, so that we may be hospitable. The house is here, and it costs no more whether one bed or ten are used.

The land, the grass and the trees and birds are here and it costs nothing.

that others have the benefit of them.

I want to have my life work go on surrounded by those whose society is an inspiration and an education, and at the same time, I wish to have among us those who need the example of this kind of life.

My religion is summed up in the following

"He who would lose his life shall save it, and he who would save his life shall lose it" and "It is more blessed to give than to receive"

I want to teach all those who may come here, that Happiness is found right here on earth if we will fulfil the Law.

And the law is, Work, Study, and Love.

Our motto is

"Then away with Longing, and Ho! for Labor
And Ho! for Love, each one for his neighbor.
For a life of Study, and Labor and Love
Is the life that fits for the joy above"

There are three of us now. ~~My son, a young lady, who came here a nervous wreck,~~ and myself, who was also nearly an invalid
Among other great things which this life on the farm has taught me, is how to get well and stay well.

I would not be afraid to take almost anyone and ~~to~~ cure them now, if they would do as I said.

There is a fourth person coming to join us in March. He is a young man from New York, who wishes to give up city life and become a farmer because he thinks that is the only life where one can be his true self.

As I look about me at the farmer's wives here, I am certainly agreeably surprised. They are a most superior set of women.

There seems never to arise here any of those questions which beset the city woman. Trouble from jealousy either does not exist or I do not hear from it. The women are recognized as equals and there never are any indications whatever, so far as I have ever been able to discern, of restlessness or dissatisfaction, or the money question among the women.

Sometimes a man drinks too much, and then his wife and daughters take a hand and pummel him. In one such case the man reformed and is now a fine citizen. The wife and the girls were not concerned, either.

~~But our women settle these questions without going to law.~~

They go out and milk, and help their husbands, sometimes with overalls on. Yet they look just as ladylike as need be, at their grange meetings.

They have one club here which has existed for many years, without any schism. One woman here would attract attention in any New York drawing room as a queenly creature. She never saw New York till a few weeks ago was brought up on a farm, goes out and milks, and does all kind of hard work yet takes the finest magazines, and has sent her sons to college.

That is what I call American Womanhood

Yet, of course, not one of⁴ these people understand me or my ideals.
We are a laughing stock around here.

But they are a fine set, just the same.

I want to tell you all this, because I believe you will wish us well in what I know you will think a good course.

I want to show the world a practical demonstration of what I want to believe and prove to be true----- that is, that a life where we all love and trust each other and work for the good of all is practical.

One demonstration will mean more than tons of talk.

Again, I hope, in learning how to feed people to their advantage physically on about one fourth of what they now spend^{hour} attained something which I hope to be able to teach others.

I suppose that in all this country there is but a negligible portion of the population that does not eat from one third to one half more than they should, and what they do eat, is not the most nourishing food.

I have made some experiments on canning a balanced ration, consisting of rice cooked with tomato, bacon, and onions, this forming in one small can a perfect meal, without the addition of any thing whatever.

Another thing which fills the same want, is a cream tomato soup, with eggs and thickening. There is a balanced ration also.

But I do not know whether the cream and the eggs will keep. Must try it.

A can of either one of these would feed the working girl in her hall bedroom. She would only need to put it, the can, in hot water a few minutes

I would love to teach a few children. Also I should love to teach scientific farming to earnest men who wanted to avoid the terrible expensive mistakes we made.

I want some day, to have old gentlemen who know every plant and every bird to walk with, and teach the little ones. I want bees, so they can study them. The wonderful creatures! And I want the finest musicians, so we may again have what we have once had, with two Germans who drifted here, music enough to make you think you were in Heaven.

If we keep our hearts pure, and our habits simple, I trust that we may realize all these dreams. I want those who may join us, to take, each

one, something, and do it for his income, and then work the rest of the time for the hive. There are bees, and chickens, and pigs, and strawberries, and onions, and we have an automatic loom where we can weave the most

ly things---- all these waiting for the right people!

Well, dear Miss Tarbell, and rest assured that the latch string

- You!

Yours truly

Ellen Carter DeGraff.