

Editorial Note

It is not strange that observant youth looking on the costs of land taming in this country should shirk the task, seek labor less toilsome, more social, more quickly responsive. Nor is it particularly becoming in us who have before them run away from the land to urge them back to it, warn them of what we see clearly enough that their desertion is weakening the tap-root of things - forcing it to feed too many parasites.

What they need is to look at demonstrations like that described in the article in this issue "Hugh MacRae's Follies." The principles there set down are not limited in their application to "dirt farmers" and ten acres; indeed in their founder's mind they have already logically flowered into a larger thing - his latest "folly" - and his most beautiful one - he calls it a Farm City.

On a tract of 10,000 acres of North Carolina savannahs and long leaved pines, near the colonies described in the article, he has laid out from two to three hundred 20acre farms, to be sold to selected people - country-minded men and women of some money and cultivation, weary of office or desk or the school room and anxious to make themselves an independent farm home, but not willing to cut themselves off from society of their kind. They are people who want not only certified land but

certified neighbors.

Adjoining these farms he proposes that there shall be established industries directly related to farming - creameries, canneries, machine repair shops, basket and crate making factories, pine distilleries (you can get enough resin from the pine stumps on the land you clear to pay for uprooting the stumps!), storage houses, grading houses for vegetables and fruits; that is, the Farm City would be equipped to take care of what it grew and to supply many of its own essential wants.

One of the creations of the enterprise is to be a training farm; another, an agricultural station for local coöperative experiments; another, a community centre with a pleasant inn, shops, a library, schools, places of amusement. The plan is to be financed and managed from the start for the benefit of the settlers. The profit of those who provide the initial capital, which of course must be considerable, will be strictly limited, and democratic principles of management will be applied as rapidly as the settlement gets on its feet.

While Hugh MacRae has dreamed for years over this plan, every step towards its realization has been taken with the same care that he spent in developing his pastures. He has been heard to say that he has no interest in a vision which he "could not button to a fact;" and he never so loves his vision that he is

not willing to call in experts to examine and criticize it. Or perhaps it should be put the other way: he so loves his vision that he wants science to help him all she can!

He has tested the Farm City with the knowledge and experience of the best men we have: Dr. F. H. Newell, the former chief of the United States Reclamation Service; John Nolen, the leader of the movement for city and rural planning; Thomas Adams, the advisor of the Dominion of Canada in its town planning; Dr. J. A. Bonsteel, the soil expert - they have all given time on the ground to an examination of the undertaking and have committed themselves to it.

One can imagine it, with its intensive farms, a Moraine Park School for children and an Antioch plan for advanced students, with factories which through scientific management and wise direction of the human relationship have been made not merely instruments of produce but of education, stimulus, growth - a library, serving the community. One can imagine it cooperating with the nearby agricultural station in its far reaching experiments, with Wilmington in its cultural enterprises, with the nearby colonies whose life is, as theirs will be, based on the soil.

There might - probably will - develop from such a plan carried out with the MacRae patience and intelligence, a city which will fulfill the vision of Samuel Ransck, the wise and far-seeing librarian of Grand Rapids, Michigan:

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"The ideal city of the future will be the city where every man will be willing to have every other man in the city as his next door neighbor - willing because every other man will be worthy - worthy in intelligence, in healthfulness, in cleanliness, and in character."

Certainly the Farm City and the colonies out of which it grows, are one of the paths out of the unbalanced situation in which we find ourselves, so large a part of our population occupied in making things that in a people more cultivated, keener for quality, would never be made - another disproportionate number caught in our foolishly intricate system of distribution, trading, speculation, unsatisfactory and demoralizing occupations, the corollary of which is unsatisfactory and demoralizing social life and development. You cannot make poor goods, sell them, use your talents in speculation and exploitation without taking on something of the cheapness and futility of your occupations.

For the man and woman, the youth and girl that senses this and sighs for self-reliant, independent living, making a job instead of taking one, producing instead of manipulating production - the colonies, the Farm City, built on the MacRae plan, offer a new world of opportunity.