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## LACK OF RURAL INDIVIDUALITY.

MR. EDITOR:—It seems that the day will never arrive when we farmers will assert our individuality, but are destined to go on in the same old ding-dong path from the cradle to the grave. What has become of our whilom boasted independence, when it was said that the sons of the soil were the most independent class on earth? We are now about the most dependent class that can be started, and enjoy less of the good things of this life than any other set of people.

The most of us go through life without making any mark or attracting any attention even in the little world of our circumscribed environment; gliding on in the same old grooves, adhering to the same old notions which are as unchangable as the needle that points to the pole. Time with us, indeed, seems to have come to a stand-still. An original idea, much less an original action, never disturbs the monotony of ham-drum existence; we are mere passive agents in the hands of the powers and influences that be, and no such thought as change from the stereotyped order of things ever enters our noddles. Progress, if progress there be, advances without our taking a hand in it, and the benefits we reap from it are solely due to what it contributes to the general welfare by imperceptible, gradual diffusion, and we feel the beneficial effects without knowing its operations, or how, or from whence it originated.

Individuality, that something uncommon in us that looms up out of the dead level of the surrounding medium of sameness and mediocrity is as scarce an article as a gem in the exhausted mine. There is such a strong family likeness that personality is completely swallowed up in the dull, dead sameness that surrounds us. We seem to be relegated to the bondage of a stagnant, unprogressive conventionalty, and become passive nonentities in this cage of driveling inaction, and blind, submissive faith to orthodox, absolute dogmatism. There is such a sameness between us that there is no more dissimilitude existing than there is in a flock of Southdown sheep, and our individuality is such that we can be led by the nose by any crooked horned old ram that takes the first leap. We lead simply a bread-and-butter existence, with no more thought or ambition to emerge therefrom than the Esquimo from his ice-bound snow-bound dreariness. Indeed, a great many of us bring to mind Shirley's description of a similar set of farmers whom he said were the men,

"So near the primitive, they retain  
A sense of nothing but the earth; their brains  
And barren heads standing as much in want  
Of plowing as their ground."

To such as these, life has no aspirations beyond the day's existence, and it is the same old dull drag throughout the year; the same monotonous

round with its never-varying refrain. It matters not whether this beautiful earth is clothed in green or draped in universal drab, life has no poetry for them; it is all prose, and dull at that. His mind is occupied solely with the problem of sheer human, or rather, brutish existence—"What shall I eat and drink, and wherewithal be clothed?" His highest ambition is food and rest; his pleasures alimentary, and his existence as uneventful as an oyster's that never tickled a palate. In short, life with such is nothing but a lapse of time; the only use made of it to subserve the animal cravings and necessities of a sensuous existence. The end of such an eventful career is but the stoppage of a pair of breathing lungs—one mouth less to feed. He is shoveled into his grave to rot and there is his finis. The earth settles over him and there his hash (at last) is settled forever and he is no more missed among the denizens of his kind than the fox that dies in his hole, and the heritage he leaves behind him makes no more impression than the bubble that bursts in mid-ocean.

Yes, brethren, by all that is sacred; by the solemn duties and obligations of our humanity, we should strive to elevate ourselves out of such a bondage.

"Never be it ours  
To see the sun how brightly it will shine,  
And know that noble feelings—manly powers—  
Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine,  
And earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers,  
Fade and participate in man's decline."

We owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our children, to become disenthralled out of this midnight darkness which has well nigh paralyzed every ambition to better our lot.

And what is another phrase of that sad condition? Our wives and children toil and toil and slave from year to year and do not go beyond the smoke of their chimneys except once in awhile to "meeting" as a relief from the intolerable burden of their serf-like lives. One, in pitiful contemplation of such relentless drudgery, is tempted to ask, are such lives, after all, worth living? For what hope have they of a change from the insufferable monotonous sameness that characterizes their existence from year in to year out? And must our children tread in these self-same footsteps? Is there no prospect ahead, of improvement, of elevation; must they remain external figures of ignorance, and their children after them, without an evolution that looks to a resurrection out of this ingrained mental and bodily destitution? When we see the tired dependent, worn-out, overworked look which marks a farmer in a crowd of a thousand; when we behold the pinched features of his little children, into whose budding lives but few joys come, and each burdened with the phantom of unfinished tasks; above

all, when we witness the care-laden brow of her who, in the bright and happy time, now so long gone as to seem but a dream, plighted the faith so loyally and lovingly kept; when we contemplate this, then if the wish that anathema maranatha may not rest on the heads of the human devils who cast such a blighting shadow in our lives does not rise in the heart and gather on the lips, utter soulless must be the creature that realizes not the emotion of righteous wrath, and whose every fibre does not tingle with revengeful indignation.

When Charles I resorted to monopolies to replenish his exchequers, the exactions became so oppressive that Colepepper said in the Long Parliament: "They sup in our cup, they dip in our dish, they sit by our fire; we find them in the dye-fat, the wash-bowls, the powdering tub. They share with the cutter in his box. They have marked and sealed us from head to foot." And as it was in Charles' day, whose cupidity cost him his head, so it is now with these monopoly combines who have even formed a trust on coffins, thus levying a tax on our very dead, and pursuing us to the very grave. They have indeed marked and sealed us from a head to foot. Yes, fight these rapacious, insatiate combines with a vindictive hatred, for say what you will it is the basest hypocrisy to pretend that we retain any other sentiment towards them, and he who would temporize in speech or thought with regard to them would flatter, praise and frown upon with a cat-like parr and blarney the devil himself. We will prove apostates to ourselves, traitors to our families, renegades to nature, recreants to everything we should cherish and hold sacred on earth, if we fail to strain every nerve and energy of mind and body, to circumvent the the most devilish outlaws in the shape of an enemy that ever leveled pistol at mortal breast demanding your money or your life. In such a case, against such an enemy, it is suicidal to think of rose-water, kid gloves or boiled shirt tactics in our strategy to strike them in flank and rear. The God of love will surely bless and further such a righteous warfare, and "thrice is he armed who has his quarrel just." Unless we prosecute this holy warfare with Spartan determination, ours will be the lot of the moral drawn by the poet after depicting in the most pathetic strain, a deserted Irish village, "Shrinking from the spoiler's hand, far, far away, thy children leave the land."

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ill a prey,  
When wealth accumulates, and men decay;  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

Upton B. Gwynn,  
In *Progressive Farmer*.

## Lesson of the London strike. (The Irish World.)

The power to which the obstinate dock companies find it expedient to yield after a month's resistance was the moral force of discipline, self-control and moderation presented by the army of 150,000 men restraining their indignation, though goaded by the most pressing want, and appealing to the conscience of the community and the verdict of public opinion for the adjustment of the issue between them and their employers. For week after week the dock companies held out—offering small concessions so as not to entirely forfeit their status before the public—it being an open secret that their great hope of winning was that the men would be goaded into acts of violence which would forfeit public sympathy and call for the interference of the police or military. To the credit of the men be it said, they disappointed the companies in this expectation, and their triumph has been won without anything having been done to forfeit public sympathy or prevent the restoration of amicable relations with their employers.

In this respect the strike of the London dockmen and its results, compared with previous demonstrations differently conducted, presents a lesson worthy of the earnest study of labor organizations and their leaders everywhere. They show, if experience proves anything, that the best interests of the wage-workers, as of all others desiring to improve their condition, lie not in raising the standard of violence or revolution, or standing apart as a distinct and exclusive class, but in entering cordially and unreservedly into the spirit of the common weal, recognizing in the justice of their cause its true strength and title to public recognition, and accepting the popular verdict in the adjustment of current disputes. On these lines walk Honor, Harmony and Progress hand in hand. All other paths are beset by danger and defeat.

Idle capital and idle labor are frequently classed as equal forces, and it is not uncommon to hear the assertion made that money capital can not endure idleness any better than labor can.

The fact is that the ability of money capital to remain idle depends upon the stability of the gross volume in circulation. If the volume be rapidly diminishing as a result of "contraction" the money capital is rapidly enhancing in value even though idle, and it generally is gaining more, even though hoarded in idleness, than could earn if no contraction were in process. Under such condition is a premium on its idleness, for can not cope with it.—J—