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EDITORIAL

THE HAPPY FARMER.

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A FRIEND who spent his vacation in a New Jersey farming community waxes indignant over the fact that he found farmers' wives "competing with the workers in the city sweatshops." It seems that in the rural communities one person will get from a city manufacturer a consignment of raw material to be worked up into various articles of women's wear. This consignment is then parcelled out among the farmers' wives and women of the village. The prices paid them are very low, thirty cents a day being made by those able to devote the most time to the work.

Long since it was pointed out by the S.L.P. that the term, "land poor," signified that a deep and significant change had come over the boasted independent position of the farmer. In further corroboration of his changed status was the cry that went up over the children leaving the farm. Then came tales of "abandoned farms." Now the absolute decline of the Eastern farmer is evidenced in the fact that the farm women, and the women of rural communities are forced to compete with the workers in the city sweatshops, very often their own children, who "left the farm."

The rise, in country towns, of human material that can be sweated will be welcomed by the city contractors. There will be no need for shops; no danger from strikes, which the massing of the workers stimulates; grinding down of prices can go on indefinitely among the isolated workers in the country. This in turn is sure to react upon the city workers.

Under the capitalist system city and country are rapidly becoming one thing. Country towns are gradually becoming nothing but sweatshops. Hidden away from the cities the evil is not so discernible, but a walk through such towns will show that want pinches there as well as on the East Side.

The rural communities, wedded to the idea of private property in the holdings

that they do not own, look askance at Socialism as that which would take away “their property rights.” With their farms mortgaged to the top notch, and their women forced to undergo factory sweating, the small farmers must, however, undergo a mental revolution.

Bonanza farmers may be riding in automobiles, as the papers state, but for the small farmer the only salvation is in the end of capitalism. Economic development will yet bring him to see it in that light.

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