

The Agricultural College.

The middle of the nineteenth century marks the awakening of the people to a realization of the most important and at the same time the most neglected vocation known to man. This era is marked by the establishment of the agricultural college. Quite a number were located in the leading European nations and the British Isles. They are purely agricultural, teaching mechanical operations merely, and pay scarcely any attention to the student's intellectual development.

About the same time, 1862, the "Morrill bill" was passed by the United States Congress, providing that each state should be granted, from the public domain, 30,000 acres for each senator

and representative in congress, by the apportionment of 1860, for the establishment of colleges in agriculture and mechanic arts.

In 1887 congress passed the "Hatch act" which appropriated \$15,000 annually for the organization of agricultural experiment stations in connection with the agricultural colleges.

"The college aid bill" was passed in 1890 appropriating \$15,000 to each agricultural college for that year. This sum was to be increased \$1,000 annually, until the appropriation became \$25,000 per annum.

Besides these appropriations by the federal government the states have donated liberally to the agricultural colleges.

The state of Michigan having established such a college in

1857, was the first to reap the benefit of the "Morrill act" of 1862. Closely following were many other states and at present almost every state in the union has an agricultural college of some kind.

We need not leave the great Sunflower State to find a model school of this class. The unparalleled advancement of the Kansas State Agricultural college is in no small degree due to the very efficient services of the men who have held the executive reigns since it started in the race for doing a glorious work. These are the men who have written an answer in deeds to the contemptuous question of a quarter of a century ago, "Who would attend an agricultural college"? The objects and results of this col-

lege are no longer theoretical and expectant but practical and realized. While the course of instruction gives a good general knowledge such as every citizen of a free nation should have, the discipline, putting the thought in the act and cultivating the disposition to act, is really what makes such a college the place for the sons and daughters of a progressive state. The admirable combination of work and study is the one great union that has produced the unprecedented results of the agricultural college. It involves a principle that is vital to the ultimate success or failure of any system of schooling in giving a nation a large percent of her educated people the industrious inclination and ability, instead of a theoretical throng of lilli-

putian aristocrats. Think of it! How could a young person be expected, after a four or five years course at a purely scientific or classical institution, without taking more than recreative exercise, although he had been raised on the farm and acquired habits of industry, to return to his home with anything like his former disposition and ability to do manual labor, or become an industrial producer. Nor should the dim eyed granger look over his glasses with an air of disappointed surprise at the sleek haired, sickly, soft handed, bleached dude that his son may have developed into within four or five years at such a college.

The difference between the agricultural college and the university or other classical school is that the former makes the best

products possible of all her material, while the latter sifts out the best material for her products and the balance flies off like chaff.

If a large percent of agricultural college graduates follow some other profession than farming, do not think for a moment that it is entirely a matter of choice. Remember that the great majority are young men whose fortunes lie in their head and in reach of their hands. They follow some other occupation than farming because it requires no capital to start with. If every one of them had a piece of land and working necessities at his disposal, ninety five out of every hundred would be numbered with the peaceful happy tillers of the soil. But let the agricultural college graduate work at what so ever he will, there will

always be a genuine interest in and fraternal feeling for the farming and industrial classes. This is the very sentiment that will bridge the chasm of uninterestedness, ^{which} exists between the capitalist and laborer - a result worthy the support and applause of a nation.

The agricultural college gives farming a dignity which it could possibly have gained in no other way. The student learns by a comparison of the various vocations that in farming there is by far the greatest independence; by his own deductions that farming of the first class requires ability of the most varied order; and, other things being equal, that a farmer's income will vary in proportion to his keenness of observation and accuracy of judgment. That a good farmer may draw a larger income

than a good lawyer and live a quiet happy life without the fret, worry, and nervous derangement that accompanies the continual hard mental mental worker.

The student also learns that farming is not necessarily a life of drudgery, as many make it; that much of the hard labor done by farmers can be reduced or entirely obviated by a little intelligent foresight and ingenuity. And thus we see eradicated deeply rooted prejudices which have driven thousands of youth from the farm.

That the agricultural colleges are doing a great and noble work can not be doubted. They are a comparatively new class of institutions. Time must be given them to inscribe their character upon our nations supporting fabric - her in-

telligent working working men and women. What our Republic needs is more of such schools. Every county should have a high school in which a course of agriculture, horticulture, floriculture and their associated sciences could be given. Such a course would stimulate thousands of young people in our own state alone, to attend school at least six months of the year for several years longer than they do under the present system. In fact such changes should be made with special considerations for the farmers sons and daughters, since they so largely preponderate over the young people of other classes.

The branches pursued in such a course would prove much more interesting than Latin, literature, and higher-mathematics. First because

it would involve the natural sciences instead of abstract studies; and second, because the element of utility, the direct application of knowledge to every day affairs, would be introduced. The experiments that would be carried out by each student during the summer on the home farm and the observations that might be required would introduce a living interest and create a zeal for farming that would quite completely stop the tide of young men continually rolling from the country to the cities. The cry is sent up every where about the young man leaving the farm, and the old folk at home pray "Tommy don't you go" and yet what is there to stay for? A young man does not mind work if he can put his spirit into it. But the most of farm work degenerates

into mere drudgery - work that stimulates no interest more than a meager remuneration.

Give the boy of sixteen or seventeen, just as he has completed the common school branches, such a course of training and the wail for the young man leaving the farm will die away to a whisper. And the youth at maturity will be an active interested enterprising farmer. And again such a course would sift out such as have not the taste or ability to become successful agriculturists, and thus lessen the ratio of failures. When our nation is farmed by such farmers then will the golden harvests and luxuriently cheerful homes fill our land with peace and contentment, while our glorious Republic marches on to greater perfections and grander purposes.

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