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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FARMERS' COOPERATIVE COTTON  
DEMONSTRATION WORK.

Our Colleges of Agriculture.

The organic law establishing Agricultural and Mechanical Colleges contemplated the founding of institutions that <sup>would fit men for the vocations</sup> ~~should instruct in the sciences and arts of agriculture~~ <sup>husbandry</sup> just as they were intended to prepare men for constructing railroads and building bridges. In establishing these national institutions, it was expected they would give thorough instructions in the sciences which underlie agriculture, and also impart a knowledge of <sup>its</sup> ~~this~~ practical application to an extent that every graduate <sup>would</sup> ~~should~~ be master of the science and arts of agriculture, and be able to profitably apply them. <sup>So</sup> that ultimately in every precinct of our great commonwealth there <sup>would</sup> ~~should~~ be practical farmers who would be leaders of agricultural thought and captains of the <sup>husbandry</sup> ~~industry of agricul-~~ ~~ture.~~ It was recognized that a great leadership in rural affairs was necessary to cope with the gigantic forces which centralized wealth would bring to the aid of cities, and therefore a wise public policy would aim to station numbers of trained men throughout the country. It will not be claimed by the most ardent friends of these colleges ( of which I am one) that this has been accomplished except in a limited way. Possibly all has been accomplished that should have been expected. It takes time to found and develop great institutions of learning, especially along untested lines.

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P A fair investigation of the accomplishments of these colleges in agriculture will show that a large numbers of stalwart young men from the country have been influenced to seek higher education by the low expenses, the labor conditions and the democratic spirit of these colleges, added to the fact that they could pursue lines of study of immediate value in the fields of toil. ~~It is true that only a small per cent of this great body of youth graduated and it has been disappointing~~ that so few of the graduates chose the vocation of agriculture, and accepted the life of a farmer, but it must be remembered <sup>that</sup> a large per cent of such as did not graduate returned to the farm and were in a degree uplifted by their college contact, until in the course of years a great body of American yeomen have been helped to do better work.

Some of the agricultural colleges have established short courses in agriculture, open to men from the farms for practical instruction a few weeks each year. These have been exceedingly helpful. At such times the college has furnished valuable object lessons as well as imparted direct instruction.

The Farmers Institutes, which aimed to carry the volume of agricultural knowledge to the scattered homes in the country and deliver it orally, are an outgrowth of these colleges, and most of the instruction and inspiration of <sup>that</sup> this work should be placed to their credit.

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*Agricultural Colleges*

In the main they have stood for the nobility of labor and the necessity of keeping the muscle as well as the brain in training for the industries. They have demonstrated that there is <sup>as</sup> much vigor and discipline <sup>are</sup> derived from useful and profitable toil as from exertion that has no end but physical training. They have matched useful labor against leisure and against <sup>physical</sup> effort that has no motive but exercise. They have fostered investigations along agricultural lines and kept the necessity of more knowledge of the farm as a live issue before the people, and hence have been <sup>a</sup> potent force in agriculture progress.

The legislation that established our state experiment stations was mainly influenced by the agricultural colleges.. The bulletins of these stations are of great practical and scientific value. They constitute with those of the U. S. Dep't of Agriculture, the main sources of exact information about American Agriculture.

A few of our Agricultural colleges are broadening their courses of study and will soon <sup>create</sup> have a practical University of Agriculture. They have established schools of agronomy, of poultry, of swine, of the dairy, of horse and cattle breeding and management, with demonstrating farms for each, so that students may become experts in these lines. This evolution of the college of agriculture appears to have followed the right lines to the end of accomplishing the greatest good

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for the masses. As they have progressed they have been met with greater popular sympathy and support. Some of these colleges now in a large degree occupy that commanding position of influence, patronage and support, which it was expected all would reach at an early period from their founding.

Now that we see somewhat clearly the true and the great work of <sup>the</sup> ~~an~~ agricultural colleges, it may be wise to recall some of the difficulties encountered in attaining their present high position. These colleges had a national endowment and the struggling state universities of that period eagerly sought them as adjuncts; not always selfishly; <sup>be</sup> Many supposed at that time that they could be affiliated to the advantage of both. Possibly the two might have been united under one board of trustees if they had been segregated in every other respect; but to affiliate them and expect that one would derive advantage from the other was extreme unwisdom; for the following reasons:

Only a limited portion of a general university course is applicable to students in agriculture, who must complete their vocation studies within four years, and even these few branches are not taught in a way best adapted to students in agriculture.

At the present time the aggregate of knowledge is so great in every course of study, that many important lines must be abbreviated to admit of the investigation of other subjects necessary to a preparation for life's work. It is readily comprehended that instruction in botany, chemistry and physics for a class in agriculture should differ materially

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from that given students preparing for, teachers of science.

In the university there is an unavoidable conflict between the hours of recitation, fixed for the advantage of the general body, and the hours in which labor upon the farm should be performed; consequently student labor in agriculture is fragmentary, uneconomical and mainly not educational under such conditions. An appeal to the faculty does not result in remedy, because it is the body of general instructors against the one professor of agriculture. The greatest objection lies, however, in a university sentiment, not exactly hostile to agriculture, but intensely set in other directions.

This public opinion in colleges and universities is a great and necessary power in moulding students, but it is so potent that segregation of the agricultural college, if attached to a university, would appear essential to the education of youth for farmers. To these impediments should be added limited <sup>or</sup> endorsement and incomplete equipment during quite a period, and a general misapprehension of their mission by the masses. They were considered Farmer's High Schools; schools for the training of country teachers; schools of technology; schools of science, and were the centres of political antagonism.

In view of these obstacles even a moderate success of the agricultural colleges <sup>is</sup> ~~would be~~ a marvel.