Harking back to the days when the Smith-Lever Act was in the making, most of us will recall the eloquence and emphasis with which statesmen and scholars proclaimed the existence of vast accumulations of agricultural information at the various state agricultural colleges.

We were assured—as we assured ourselves and others—that the wielder of test-tube, scalpel and microscope had wrought mightily and well. Meanwhile agriculture—referring specifically to that of the open country, rather than the laboratory—languished. The hideous specter of a mal-adjusted cropping system, a depleted soil and a Nation crying for bread, stalked silently tho menacingly abroad in the land. Some means must be provided without delay to bring permanent relief to this developing situation by carrying to the farm this stored-up knowledge now in the possession of the colleges.

The Smith-Lever Act came to the rescue. It became the law of the land. Over it the United States Department of Agriculture waved its fairy wand of authority and, presto!—there arose in each state an agricultural extension service. Hard fares it now with the hideous specter of agricultural impoverishment. No longer does he roam the countryside alone. Close on his heels presses an untriring foe—half man, half fliwer. He is called “county agent.” To him is assigned the happy task of personally delivering to each farmer his proper share of the undivided surplus of agricultural knowledge which has accumulated thru the years at the agricultural college.

1Paper read as a part of the symposium on “Extension Work in Agronomy,” at the meeting of the Society held in Chicago, Ill., November 13, 1923.
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