College Training in Preparation for Farming

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The next half century will be an exciting time in which to live. The population of the United States probably will have doubled by the end of that period. Crop surpluses will have disappeared. Many large farms will have grown larger and will be much more efficiently managed. Many small farms will be operating on an integrated contract basis.

We shall be moving great masses of soil to fill in gullies, improve the contour, and level the land. We shall be reclaiming large volumes of fresh water from the sea. We shall probably be synthesizing sugar in factories and producing proteins from this sugar by microbial processes. We shall know whether or not there is life on Mars. We shall be making roundtrips to the moon. And we shall be developing push-button energy from nuclear fusion.

In preparation for these and many other changes in our ways of thinking and doing, there will be ever greater need for more of the better-educated types of men and women. Young people of promise should be encouraged to go as far with their formal education as their mental capacities and financial resources will permit. This applies not only to those who hope to be engaged in scientific research, the learned professions, the large industrial and banking organizations, or the fields of politics and statesmanship, but also to those who expect to operate substantial farming enterprises as well.

Countless opportunities to participate in the continuing development of this great land of ours and of the people in it will be available to capable young men and women. But these young folks must be able to think their way through the intricate maze of fact and fancy to dependable conclusions that command respect.

Colleges and universities are destined to play increasingly important parts in preparing our young people for the lives they are to live and the parts they are to play. The hope is that these institutions will be staffed more and more by men and women who are able to distil the wisdom of the centuries in their respective fields of endeavor and to transfer their concepts to the minds of those students who are prepared by natural ability and by desire to absorb them.

The primary purpose of going to college is not that of developing mechanical skills, however useful many of these may be. It is not that of storing away in one's mental files a wide assortment of facts. In reality, there are no facts. What we take temporarily to be facts are merely convenient concepts that are essential to the learning process. Many so-called facts of one's earlier days are later found to be completely erroneous. But education remains. It is what is left over after most of the details absorbed in the process of learning have been forgotten.

it may not. He has need for abundant mental energy. He will stand him in good stead no matter what educational or positional rewards for his services. And this applies as much or more to his wife as to the active portion of his life.

For the most part truly educated men are of several generations of educated men and women. They have much specific knowledge about their particular endeavors. But they also have broad mental knowledge much of which came to them from the family circle and the family friends and from books they read. They have been introduced to some of the better concepts of life that otherwise have escaped them. They have been given an appreciation of the many things that go into the making of the educated mind—science, literature, music, the arts, ethics, religion, and many intangibles.

The several-generation-educated man can understand the significance of the geological processes which have gone on from the prehistoric ages of the Earth to the present day. He will realize more fully the implications of the highly developed present. And he will be prepared to interpret the many and not yet understood things that will pass in the near and distant future.

All of this not only adds to the stature of a man. It is surprisingly useful in attaining to the useful goals of life. These he may have earlier set for himself. But whether he did or not, they will be essentially forced upon him by those who realize his potential.

The young man or woman who has not gone to college is handicapped but not necessarily miserable. Even so, one is impressed by what many such persons have been able to do in the course of one lifetime. Large numbers of gifted young people from homes of little learning have risen to great heights of accomplishment and have often without even the benefit of anything other than grade or high school education. They may have been more successful or more useful than if they had gone to college. But self-educated or self-taught persons should be made to realize that he owes an obligation to his children, who are quite likely to be the scene in the natural course of events.

For most young folks, college experience provides the best and quickest approach to preparation. What we are aiming toward as a nation of as many as possible of our most capable young men and women for positions of as great responsibility as they can rise to, is a matter of importance that should concern every young person.