AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR THE DEAF

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3. Make one suggestion go as far as possible. Questioning should produce thoughtfulness and reasoning.

4. Questions designed to test the knowledge of the pupil should be obviously for that purpose and, relative to natural questions, should be few in number. Natural questions will be asked every day, every hour, upon any and every occasion calling for them, while test questions will be limited to lesson work strictly and to drill work in forms.

5. The honest questions of the child should be respected, and he should be encouraged to ask them in multitude.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR THE DEAF.*

In selecting as my subject Agricultural Education for the Deaf I am aware of my limitations when it comes to questions concerning education; yet no man is more impressed with the need of improvement in methods of feeding, farming, and agricultural education than is one who has been a student and kept abreast of the work done at our agricultural colleges.

In advocating agricultural education for the deaf I mean no disrespect to Gallaudet College. It has its place in the established order of things and has created

*An Address delivered at the Kansas School March 23, 1912, and printed in the *Kansas Star* for April 1. The writer began to lose his hearing at the age of five, but he was able to pursue his education in common schools until he was thirteen, when he entered the Kansas School for the Deaf. After his graduation, five years later, he spent two years in the State Normal School and a year in the State Agricultural College. In partnership with a brother, he now manages a successful farm of 325 acres.

a broader vision among its students, who in turn have become inspirations to all who have come in contact with them. It is out of the question for all the deaf to go to Gallaudet College. The reason is obvious.

Kansas is an agricultural state; fully 90 per cent. of her deaf are farmers or come from the farms; so it is by every right of reason and every rule of fair play and square dealing that they should be better prepared to meet the competition they will find when they begin their life work.

Kansas has a system of free schools, also maintains many institutions by public taxation, among them being the three higher institutions of learning, the Agricultural College, the University, and the State Normal. All children and persons have equal rights and privileges in them. No one ever questions the right of the deaf to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet when one thinks of the obstacles and prejudice the deaf encounter at every hand, one cannot help feeling they are being discriminated against.

Kansas realizes that 90 per cent. of her resources are derived from agriculture and is doing her best to make ample provision for a more complete and comprehensive system of agricultural education. The railroads have awakened to the spirit of the times, and are spending thousands of dollars to run "better-farming" trains. The Agricultural College maintains short courses for those of mature years or who have not the time to take a full four-years' course. The College has a correspondence course for the farmers and their wives. In the short-course classes it is not unusual to see three generations enrolled at one time.

The great question that confronts all the agricultural educators in the United States is, What is the next step in agricultural education? President Waters, of our

Agricultural College, believes the next step is the successful introduction of agriculture, domestic economy, and manual training into the curricula of the public schools of every grade. Elementary agriculture is now taught in 7,000 of the 8,000 rural schools in the state; it is also taught, with domestic science in addition, in 450 of the 500 high schools. Money is being literally poured into the rural or common schools. According to Dr. Fletcher B. Dresslar, of the United States Bureau of Education, during the decade between 1900 and 1909 the income of the common schools increased over 83 per cent.; attendance increased only 15 per cent.

At no very distant day you young ladies and gentlemen will leave this school and become citizens. Have you ever stopped to consider what you will do? Do you consider the education you have received here sufficient to help you hold you own against the young men and women trained in the industrial and agricultural colleges?

In her haste to emphasize the necessity of better grain, better stock, and better methods, also to make country life more attractive, manhood and womanhood more efficient, Kansas has neglected the deaf.

As citizens the deaf have, in a way, neglected their opportunities. They should take an active and constructive part in the civic affairs of the state. They should become conversant with the methods used in educating the deaf and all other persons in the state. They will not study the matter intelligently unless they give it serious thought. They have been letting the hearing people do their thinking and planning for their education. Hence the marvelous growth of oralism. We now see the folly of this neglect on the part of the deaf in the school's present condition, financially and otherwise, when compared with the public schools of the state. Educators of the hearing cannot sense things

from the viewpoint of a deaf person, or one who has been in active touch with deaf educational work.

The deaf have yet to learn that every civic or educational problem in America which concerns the deaf or the schools for the deaf must be solved by the deaf themselves. Therefore the problem of agricultural education for the deaf, like all other industrial problems, will never be solved by educators of the hearing; they must be solved by those who are vitally interested in them. I believe it will be solved very largely by personal leadership. Where anything has been done in any one community or state, there has always been one man, or a few men, who have taken the initiative in bringing things to pass. It sometimes has been a minister, a teacher, or just an ordinary deaf citizen. As I have said before, in order to improve the social, educational, and moral status of the deaf in this state, the change for the better will rest largely with you young people and the deaf of the state at large. The way must be paved. But how? The answer is: Secure entrance to the Agricultural College. When I was a student there, the professors and the students accepted me as one of them. They gave me a place in their little world of duty and pleasure. I was one of the seven students asked to take part on the programme at the State Dairy Convention. In introducing me, Professor D. H. Otis said I was totally deaf, took the same studies as the other students, and stood near the head of a class of 400. The student body arose as one man and cheered. I sincerely regret I did not stay and take a four-years' course. I am only an ordinary deaf man like the rest of you. There are many, aye, scores of you, who are better equipped to enter the College than I was at that time. You can and will exceed my record there. When the deaf enter the Agricultural College, the faculty will

find that they already possess a working knowledge of carpentry, geometrical drawing, domestic science, etc.

The deaf as a whole must study the importance of organization and co-operation. It is true the deaf have organized bodies, but they mean nothing, can do nothing, and have gained nothing except a little experience. It is only because they do not understand the need of thorough organization and co-operation. The great spirit of this age is combination and organization; the brightest inspiration of this century is the spirit of co-operation. It is not as well understood by the deaf as it should be. The enthusiastic superintendent and teachers of this school cannot alone solve the problem of how to obtain an agricultural or industrial education for the deaf after they graduate without the co-operation of the deaf, their parents, and their friends.

I am deeply interested in the subject of agricultural education for the deaf. So long as the deaf have poorer school facilities than their hearing brethren, so long as they are discriminated against, and stress is laid in the school-room and in the home upon the advantages of city life and of big wages paid, without teaching them how to attain a better life on the farm, the drift toward the city will continue unabated. I am very grateful that your esteemed superintendent, Mr. White, and his able corps of instructors are using all their influence to encourage the back-to-the-soil movement.

Health conditions are not so favorable in the city as in the country. Diseases follow the crowds. Removal from the danger of contagion, with fresh air, out-door activity, fresh foods of all kinds—all these tell for health. Health involves happiness and usefulness. In the country, libraries are not as accessible as in town, though books are inexpensive and may be all the more valuable when bought and owned, for then they are studied more.

One is apt to gain more real culture (intellectual and æsthetic) in that way; for reading too many books, or reading merely for entertainment, is a dissipation instead of an education.

The country offers one field of study not offered anywhere else—that which is involved in scientific farming and stock breeding. Science literally means "to know." Stock eugenics is the science of being well born and bred, as in the case of a horse, a cow, a hog, or a sheep, and is not exactly new, yet is having new development. Scientific farming stimulates a man to keep up to date as a scientist and have a practical knowledge of more things than the average city man dreams of. The boy who has tastes in these lines need not aspire to become a professor in order to get constant and life-long culture. Let him become a farmer and he has the professor beaten to start with, and can keep him beaten through life, because he can get the same learning and make it his own by practical application.

There is no great fortune to be made from farming. Many fortunes have been and are being made over and above a good living, but it is a slow and steady growth.

No occupation responds more readily and profitably to scientific culture than farming. Unscientific farming leads to heart-breaking results. The principal attraction of the farm is its security, safety, and sureness. The farmer is independent. He is not tied down like the factory worker. There is no asking the boss for a lay-off to attend a picnic or a convention. He can go when he pleases.

Diversified farming is the best, for planting a variety of grains and keeping a variety of animals is the safe way and withal the most successful for insuring a steady income. Cattle will thrive on that which sheep will not eat. Sheep will fatten on things cattle dislike. Hogs

grow large and heavy on what neither will touch, and chickens and turkeys prosper on bugs and insects that serve only to worry the other animals. There is a place for all of them on the average farm, and they all work toward a common end—the enriching of the farmer—wasting nothing, destroying nothing.

I realize many of you will never become tillers of the soil. Nevertheless my advice is, "Go to the Agricultural College." It is for your own good. Here you are all together, in a little world of your own, forming set ways and opinions; you have little knowledge of, and little opportunity to learn, the customs and social usuages common to hearing people. To mingle with the hearing for a year or so at the Agricultural College will eradicate many erroneous ideas acquired at the school for the deaf. You will also make friends who will understand you and help correct the constitutional error that does the deaf an injustice and leaves the school in the wrong class.

Co-operation of that kind would be an encouraging spectacle. Just think! What a magnificent force concerted, educated deaf energy is when harnessed with a sympathetic hearing public!

The young men will find they can become practical and competent in the following lines:

1. Progressive farmers and stockmen.
2. Managers or foremen of estates, ranches, or farms.
3. Dairymen, managers or foremen of large dairies, buttermakers, cheesemakers, ice-cream makers, cream testers, and creamery managers.
4. Managers or foremen of breeding establishments. The courses in animal husbandry and veterinary medicine include stock judging, principles of feeding, breeding, and livestock management. They prepare the students to become competent meat inspectors, a line that requires keen sight and keen sense of smell.

5. Horticulturists. The College prepares students to become landscape gardeners, pomologists, market gardeners, etc.

6. The department of milling industry has a course that appeals to the deaf. It prepares the students to become competent inspectors of grain and hay, grain buyers, or elevator managers. Here the sense of smell and sight, with common sense, are the chief qualifications.

7. Agricultural engineers: Surveying, drainage, irrigation, civil and mechanical, hydraulics, etc.

8. Architects.

9. Agricultural chemists: Students become competent to secure positions with factories engaged in sugar making, starch making, and distilling. They can make analyses of feeding stuffs, mill products, dairy products, soils and fertilizers, ores and rocks, water, gases, fuels, foods, and beverages.

10. Blacksmiths, foundrymen, and pattern makers.

11. Expert printers.

12. More efficient teachers.

And the young ladies. One hundred years ago no girl was allowed to marry till she could bake good bread and while still warm cut it in nice even slices. No other lines were open to them. Now they can become:

1. Better housekeepers and more efficient mothers.

2. Dressmakers.

3. Tailors.

4. Milliners. It has been said on good authority that girls in the millinery class at the Agricultural College, especially those who had never worked on a hat before, were able in six weeks to make hats more difficult than Marshall Field & Co., of Chicago, expect of an apprentice who has worked three years in their shop.

5. Expert cooks, chefs, and caterers.

6. Floriculturists.

7. Instructors in domestic science in the schools for the deaf.

Kansas is known all over the universe as the state that does things. Kansas owes it to her deaf to give them the same rights and privileges as her other citizens. When you have gained your rights the Agricultural College and the University will have their quota of deaf students. The State Normal will have a class for would-be instructors of the deaf. Dactylology will take its place among the other ologies in the curriculum. Elementary agriculture will become one of the most practical and useful courses taught in this school, fitting the students for a full course in the science of agriculture at Manhattan. Then other states will try to follow Kansas. They will need qualified instructors. Everywhere there is a dearth of trained instructors in agriculture. Kansas will have them.

Arise, deaf people of Kansas! Awake from the lethargy, the indecision, the intolerance and inactivity that has enveloped you. Remember the goal can be reached only by united effort, hard work, unselfish co-operation with each other, and backed by an organization founded and managed along practical, generous, cordial, hospitable, and broad lines. Then, and then only, you will have reached the highest pinnacle in that priceless heritage—good citizenship.

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