

Class Oration

BETTER AGRICULTURE AND BETTER HOMES.

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It is being recognized more clearly every day that the life and well being of the people depend entirely upon the productiveness of the soil and the maintenance of a happy home life among the people. If the fertility of the soil is not maintained, and the home life developed, the nation cannot prosper. In view of these facts we, the class of nineteen twelve, have selected these suggestive words for our motto—"Better Agriculture and Better Homes." This is our aim as we graduate from this school; to do what we can to develop agriculture, and to make home conditions in the country better.

The purpose of this institution is to train us to perform well the work that will confront us as agriculturists and housekeepers. Here we are taught agriculture, manual training, and domestic science, with all the subjects relating to these that are included in a complete farm school course. The work given here is particularly adapted to those interested in improving agriculture and in making the home life in the country more attractive.

Our greatest need today as a nation is not new investigations, but to put into practice the principles which were discovered years ago. Let us put into practice the principles of the conservation of moisture, and our crops would not suffer from drought. Let us apply the laws of nature relating to stock raising and feeding which have been discovered, and we shall achieve wonderful results.

The factors promising a better agriculture are numerous. The most important which I wish to discuss are: first, farmers must have trained minds, and business ability. Second, they must organize themselves to work co-operatively.

Third, they must practice diversified farming. The first two pertain to personal characteristics and of them I would speak. In regard to possessing a trained mind there are three points to consider, 1st, he must be a good manager. By this we mean ability to adapt himself to conditions. If the spring is wet he must plant crops that are able to make good growth with an abundance of moisture. On the other hand, if the spring is dry, he must take other precautions, in both cases remembering that the moisture which he can conserve will, to a large extent, determine his harvest.

Second. A successful farmer must also have some general knowledge of veterinary practice; know a great deal about the care and feeding of his animals at different stages of development; be thoroughly familiar with all kinds of farm machinery; and know how to make use of a repair shop. A farmer must have, in short, a trained mind and hand, to perform well the work which confronts him as an agriculturist.

Third. I wish to consider the business ability required of a farmer. Farming is now recognized as a business. A farmer with business ability keeps a complete record of every department on his farm, and can tell exactly when he is losing or making money. He will practice crop rotation, that is, establish a systematic succession of the three general classes of grains, grasses and cultivated crops. In this way will get the pasture, the fodder, and the grain needed on the farm, at least expense of labor and fertility. A rotation will systematize the farming business more than any other one thing. It allows the farmer to plan his work in the future, and estimate the costs and profits. It shortens hours of