

man to teach us our duties to ourselves, to our fellow men, nor to our God, for these things are manifested in man by the Spirit of Truth—the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of God, and “as many as are led by this Spirit of God they are the sons of God,” and “this Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” when thus led. X.

SHOULD FARMERS BE EDUCATED? *

I have never had the good fortune to run a farm of my own. But I was born a farmer, and brought up a farmer, and in the mean time have spent a few years at college, so the Lobo Lecture Club concluded that I ought to speak with some little authority on this subject. This place, this platform, is not unfamiliar to me; but the audience is somewhat. You are practical men, and have come out to be instructed. But I *fear* you will be disappointed.

I am to answer the question: “Should farmers be educated?” I want to examine this subject under two heads. 1st. Should farmers receive a better general education? I mean should the intelligence among the rural classes be raised? 2nd. Should farmers receive a *special agricultural training*?

We have often heard it said: “If you send your boy to college you will spoil him as a farmer. Depend upon it he will never stoop to farm life again.” Stop! Is it a stooping from college life in to farm life? It ought not to be. Where then does the fault lie? If farming is considered a low business it is the fault of the farmer—the fault of the farming community. It is as they make it, honorable or otherwise. “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings.” Let us not be the slaves of fate, but ourselves the shufflers of circumstances. Farmers complain that when their sons and daughters gain a little education and intelligence they are off to the city seeking positions there. Now I do not blame them, nor is it

the fault of the city, nor yet the fault of education. It is lamentably the fault of home—home life, rural unattractiveness. But it seems to me that rural life is capable of being made one of the most attractive in the world. It hasn't so much of the gas-light and the electric-light of pleasure, but it has the broad sunlight of happiness. It has not the show and tinsel, but it has the “gowd for a' that.” When we go into the city, especially around the Xmas time, we see the farmers plodding along the streets gazing in every window at the beautiful decorations, “St. Nicholas and Reindeers,” “Molly Muggins,” and all manner of things tricked off in artistic fineries. His gesticulations unmistakably show that he takes it all in and is wonderfully delighted. But there is around his daily path, on his own farm, at home, beauties and wonders of nature that surpass all the trickeries of art. Poor mortal! he does not see them. He does not know that they are there at all. The violet, in modest innocence, smiles up at him, but he, unheeding, crushes it under his unsympathizing sole. Oh, the thousand treasures along the farmer's path if he only had the key of intelligence to open and enter and enjoy. It would turn a monotonous life into one of the most beautifully varied—a free and ever-enticing panorama of delights. Every morn, as he would look out, would show him nature's grand kaleidoscope turned, and each scene becoming, as he is better able to appreciate it, more pleasing than the last. The birds, instead of being thieves and pests to him, would be the guardian angels of his crops, the little choristers of the wood singing melody to his charmed and grateful heart. When we look up and catch the faint ray of some distant star, oh! what a satisfaction to know somewhat of its nature and history—to know that this beam of light was twinkled from a world in flame like our sun before we were born, and has been speeding through space ever since. It must convince us of an all-wise intelligence who foresaw us coming down the future and launched forth this luminous ray thousands of years ago to meet us here and now, and fill us with joy, and wonder and gratefulness. Uranography! Astronomy! You scout at the idea of a farmer even mentioning the words. I

* Essay read by Edgar M. Zavitz, before the Farmers Institute, at Colfax, Minn., First Mo., 1887.