

quently the case that he reasons something after this manner: Joseph, the elder, has a business turn of mind, and will make a successful merchant: for him I will secure a place in some prominent mercantile establishment, where an opportunity will be afforded for acquiring all the training essential to this pursuit. Edward exhibits a taste for learning, and shall have the benefit of college education. James is inventive; he shall be placed at a scientific school. David, the best beloved, whose strong arm and stout heart were intended by nature for a tiller of the soil, he shall remain at home and work upon the farm, as did his father and grandfather before him. Thus their various courses are debated and marked out, and while the others are sent to preparatory training, the prospective farmer is obliged to abandon all thoughts of mind cultivation, for the necessary culture of that concerning which he knows little—the soil. Now as regards this authoritative jurisdiction on the part of the *pater familias* we have no fault to find except in one case—that of David. The idea of an agricultural education, such as is obtained from a study of those sciences which pertain to agriculture—Chemistry, Botany, Geology, etc.,—is one that has been long ignored by a large class of what is termed “practical farmers. It is thought by many that the farmer’s education should be more of a physical than mental nature; a process that shall give muscular power to the arm for wielding the implements of labor, rather than enervate it, as some assert, by the useless study of theory which actually disqualifies its supporter for the laboriousness of farm life. Such persons regard all book-knowledge, when applied to anything practical, as utterly utopian, and theorists, who talk of improvements, as idealists, and visionaries not worth listening to.

For our own part we believe the successful farmer to be a man of education—that is, educated in respect to the calling which he follows; other than this, a more thorough intellectual culture may be regarded a luxury rather than requirement. We believe it necessary for him to understand the nature of the soil he cultivates, so as to be able to analyze it and become thoroughly acquainted with its various properties. It is not enough to know that this is sandy, that clayey, and the other alluvial; he should enter into a chemical combination, thereby becoming able to judge correctly of the power of substances

on which he is obliged to depend. He should also be a botanist, for a knowledge of the vegetable kingdom is his peculiar prerogative. Indeed, the education of the farmer being so broad and comprehensive, it is not to be wondered at that our legislators have for several years past been engaged in debating the most efficient plan for its general diffusion.

The recent action of the State Legislature in regard to the establishment of an agricultural college in Massachusetts, is a step forward in the right direction, as indicative of the good time coming, for the thorough educational training of our farmers. Already have the people of New York begun to appreciate the importance of such an institution, and other States are awaking to a realization of it also. Let the good work go on, and we shall have in future, a class of farmers earnest in their efforts to “improve the soil and the mind,” for without a proper attention to one, there can be no successful cultivation of the other.

—P. IN *Mass. Plowman*.

NOBILITY OF AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS.

HERE is very little absolute evil in the world; in other words, there is very little evil that is wholly unmixed with good; and although the war pending in this country may be looked upon as a great national calamity, yet the nation will be ennobled and elevated by the various influences set in operation through its agency. One of the chief of these is the fresh impetus given to agricultural pursuits. There has been a growing dislike, on the part of our farmers’ sons and daughters, to the quiet peaceful pursuits which have surrounded their early years with all the comforts of life, if not its luxuries. Sharing in the fast spirit of the age, they have been unwilling to wait the slow but sure gains which have brought a competency to their ancestors from tilling the soil, and, indulging in dreams of suddenly acquiring fortunes, and ambitious for luxury and display, have hastened to engage in trade, or swell the crowded ranks of the professions in our large towns and cities.

Much has been done by the noble efforts of our rural press to stem this disastrous tide, but yet a still more potent power has been needed, which the war has supplied, by the uncertainty and instability with which it has invested other avocations, and also by