

## "What of the Business Training of the Agricultural College Student"

*By Oliver F. Kilham*

MANY Agricultural College graduates have doubtless come to know what it means not to have had training in office work. Personally I am frank to say that I had been out of college but a very short time, when I began to see that a certain amount of training along such lines was what I needed more than any other one thing. Many of us agricultural college men plan on doing the practical work, the manual work, after graduation for various reasons. My own reasons were that I expected to grow stronger and healthier by doing outside work; and I had an idea then, that I must personally do all the practical things that must be done, before I would be properly fitted to be a manager, and do executive work. That was splendid theoretically, but somehow it was very discouraging when put into practice.

After graduating from college (if you will please pardon personal references), I worked at various things until fall, then the next winter I got a position on a dairy farm, a large, thoroughly modern one. On the farm there was an office, just the same as is maintained by the average business concern. In the office was a young man—combination bookkeeper and stenographer—graduate of some New York business college (taking a three months course), who didn't know the first thing about agriculture; and yet, do you know, he fairly lorded it over not only the ordinary hands, but even over the superintendent of that big four hundred acre farm. He would get his

way when bucking the superintendent, in spite of anything that gentleman could do. Probably because he was always in a position to command the ear of the "Chief," and when it came right down to fundamentals, he did actually know more about the running of the business and the farm as a whole, than the superintendent or anyone else other than his immediate employers. He was in a position to know, because all the business passed through his hands. I worked for a Nursery Company next, where I saw another example of the same thing practically, and I said to myself—"now look here, you have been to High School and through College, and yet you don't seem to be in a position to know as much about the workings of the business as this young "whipper-snapper" with a grammar school education plus a three or four months' course in a business college—what are you going to do about it? I took a three months course at a business college myself, and came out and entered an office.

One of the big advantages of starting at the office end of any business and working up is, that you have an opportunity to see (if you will), all the correspondence that comes in and goes out, even if you are not a stenographer, but better if you are. You are close to the central figure or guiding force of the whole business, and not only do you get a broad and accurate knowledge of the business, but being at the right hand of the