

1912

Citrus Notes-Agriculture

Charles C. Chapman

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/chapman_citrus_speeches



Part of the [Agricultural Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Chapman, Charles C., "Citrus Notes-Agriculture" (1912). *Charles C. Chapman Citrus Speeches*. Paper 2.
http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/chapman_citrus_speeches/2

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Charles C. Chapman Family Papers at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Charles C. Chapman Citrus Speeches by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact laughtin@chapman.edu.

(1)

CITRUS NOTES

"AGRICULTURE"

Orange County Teacher's Institute

1912

Read
Orange Co
Institute - 19

C The word agriculture as we understand it is very comprehensive. It embraces all occupations devoted to the raising and marketing the products of the soil and of domestic animals and animal products. Here is the largest latitude for the display of genius to be found in any calling followed by man. If this be a truthful statement then why not begin early in the life of the child to train and educate the mind, and heart as well, along the lines pertaining to science? Why not? Why not begin when the mind is receptive to learn the varied principles involved? It is hard either to interest or instruct a lot of old farmers who have gotten well along in life. Some of the leading educators from the State University have come to my town and offered free instructions on almost every phase of agricultural life, and yet but a handful of farmers would have enough interest to attend a session of the institute. Those who did attend could not grasp half that was said because of lack of primary knowledge - Knowledge which should have been gained at the public schools.

C The State has provided an agricultural department at the University. This is a splendid feature of that great institution, but it should be preceded by agricultural instruction in the lower schools. In the first place only a small per cent of students enter the higher institution, and if they do not acquire the first principles in the primary schools, the same as in other departments they will neither have the interest nor the success they otherwise would. X These various State agricultural schools have not met with that success that was at first expected, perhaps for several reasons, but the most potent, I believe, is that the boys and girls have been educated away from the farm instead of to it. C The love for farm life must be developed in the child. Let school boy see the attractive side of the farm work and he will not be so quick to rush off to the city.

C In the Year Book of 1904 is an article by Albert F. Woods,

of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Washington, D. C., bearing upon this very point, a paragraph of which I will quote.

"The fine art of modern agriculture is as much beyond the uneducated and untrained man as the art of sculpture is beyond the ordinary quarryman. The poor of the cities cannot be sent to the country and there made into farmers as easily as some superficial observer may think. The young man who would be a farmer or horticulturist must either be trained by some experienced member of the profession who has kept abreast of the times and has made a success of farming or horticulture, or he must go to an agriculturealschool, where agricultural training is made a business. A combination of both is still better. If a corredt educational system had been followed in the common schools under competent teachers, the young agriculturist will have when he comes to the agricultural college a practical knowledge of farm operations and a good general elementary education, including a training in the elements of natural history, before described as desirable for the young physiologist. X

It may be possible to obtain this training from the primary graded schools of our towns and cities. It is however, much more likely to be secured through the newer system of consolidated rurle schools now being adopted in our most progressive agricultural States. This rural school system starts with a primary school and leads up to the agricultural high school and college of agriculture, and has as its aim, from bottom to top, the training of agriculturists. The system meets a recognized economic and educational need and is sure to take a place coordinate with the older systems."

I w ould not wantonly criticise the sytem of instruction in our public schools. It is the development of long years of thoughtful work by our educators, and in some respects is above criticism. There are those, however, of great experience in school work who might offer suggestions as to methods, courses of study and text books that would be valuable. Often has it been that publishing houses have largely

shaped the system of instruction, going even contrary to views and experience of some of these practical educators. I say I do not wish to enter into a lengthy criticism of any of the methods now generally followed. In order, however, that I may forcibly emphasize the value and importance of early training along agricultural lines I will put some phases of the present system in comparison with what I believe is now greatly needed yet so sadly neglected in the education of many of our children. Because I may find agriculture of more vital importance to the happiness and well-being of a majority of students, I do not want to be understood as saying that other lines should not be taught. While it is quite proper that young men should be prepared for the professions and clerical positions it is not necessary to altogether ignore the demands of the farm, the largest field for employment. This is a weakness in the system that needs prompt attention, and I am pleased to note the tendency to embrace in the course of instruction that which in this utilitarian age will make our splendid public school system of far more value. The introduction of both theoretical and practical training in all departments of agriculture will appeal in time to a very large and growing class of our people. Such training will fit many to make a better living, if this is their conception of life, than they can make in other callings.

① Agriculture as a study is regarded by the masses as stupid and uninteresting. There are reasons for this view for until recently but little effort has been made to hold up the attractive side of farm life to young people. They have seen only the drudgery, the product largely of ignorance, of the want of that knowledge which would enable the farmer in this day of helps of all kinds to divest the profession of this repelling feature and place it first among the callings followed by an intelligent and cultured people.

② The unattractiveness of farm life to the young is not altogether on account of the drudgery of field work. In the home there is often presented a very uninviting and unattractive life for sons and daughters to be reared there. Many farmers unnecessarily

subject their wives and daughters to a life of drudgery in caring for men on the ranch and doing work that could be done by the cheapest of help. Then, in many instances, instead of providing the comforts and conveniences which would make the home life most attractive the accumulated ^{sum} is paid out to buy more land. Many thus sadly neglect making provisions for the boys and girls of the farm, such as they might well provide and which would go far to make them feel after all that the farm home was the most delightful place in the world. When those boys and girls are growing up into young manhood and young womanhood and note the contrast between their conditions and that of those who live in the city they become dissatisfied with the farm life, and together both the young man and the maiden seek companions for life not from those of like rearing, but from among those who are city bred. This is potent influence which goes largely to drive our young people from the farm into the city: I know a farmer, and this one represents a large class, who has property worth \$40,000.00 to \$50,000 has reared a family of sons and daughters, and yet has never provided a horse and buggy for any of them. Never provided comfortable apartments with all the necessary conveniences which he was amply able to do. The music of the piano was never heard there. Indeed few of the ordinary conveniences were provided.

The city with its opportunities for what the boys and girls of the farm consider respectable employment so fascinates them that they flock there with never a voice to present to them the charms, the superior opportunities for acquiring wealth, health and happiness that the farm possesses. This is a mistake, a serious mistake. It is really sad to see the vigorous young man well fitted for farm life enter a life of bondage in the city. In a few years he is worn out in the treadmill into which he so willingly entered. We soon find him bald-headed, nervous, frail and dispeptic, his nose to the grindstone, unable to enjoy life and going to a premature grave. He has given up the very life that would have afforded him a large measure of happiness, a

life in which he might have been a man of wealth, and prominence and usefulness in the community, kept him in vigorous health and where he could have grown old gracefully.

C I say that the idea ^{that} of study of agriculture is uninteresting and unattractive is a mistake. Being false the school should immediately make an effort to demonstrate how really interesting and fascinating it is. There is scarcely an occupation followed by man which is more varied or involves a greater amount of scientific principles than it does. There are none which ^{require} more thoughtful study to master or even in which to become reasonably efficient. Our schools and the trades unions demand a long preparatory course of study and training for entrance into the profession, or mechanical trades, but none for the men who would be a farmer. This is based upon the false theory that they are more technical and intricate and demand higher qualifications. It is not true. The calling of the farmer is quite honorable, and may prove as remunerative as any other which the most gifted may follow, and demands as high degree of intellectual training and ability.

C It does seem a little inconsistent that a young man must devote three years of hard study and work to learn how to lay a sewer, or put in a wash bowl, when the process of putting in any sewer and every wash bowl he may ever be called upon to put in will be practically the same, and yet by so many it is not considered worth while to attempt to instruct one how to farm. In the first is involved only a few simple mechanical principles, while in the other a knowledge of some of the most intricate scientific principles, the use of manipulations of many implements, a large measure of executive ability and a general knowledge of business laws and customs. Indeed, any up to date farmer is intellectually well equipped and disciplined along many lines. A man in no other calling can turn a liberal general and special education to so good account as the farmer. If we can succeed in devoting a portion of our school training to education along agricultural lines, and do it in a way that will be effective, so that farmers will be as well and highly educated as men in other callings, farm life and all that this means will prove

6 the most attractive and profitable calling in which the masses can engage. The tide now flowing toward the crowded and unwholesome cities, carrying the children of the farm, would turn and thousands would seek the more sane and sensible field for human existence and happiness.

① This question is not a new one by any means. Many of our progressive instructors have considered it. One might, however, be a little surprised to learn the importance of agricultural education was discussed by a Roman Statesman during the palmy days of that great empire. An old Roman writer expresses his astonishment at this neglect quite as we would today. He says:

② " Nothing equals my surprise when I consider that while those who desire to learn to speak well, select an ^{instructor} ~~author~~ whose eloquence may serve them as a model; while those who are anxious to dance, or become good musicians, employ a dancing or music master; in short, that while everyone looks for the best masters, in order to make the best progress under his instructions, the most important science, next to that of wisdom, has neither pupils nor teachers. We have seen schools established for teaching rhetoric, geometry, music, dancing, etc., and have never yet seen a master to teach agriculture, or a pupil to learn it. "

③ It is evident that it will require much vigorous agitation before any practical results are enjoyed. The philosophy of this utter disregard of a matter of such ^{paramount} importance may be a little hard to comprehend. There must be some powerful influence which has prevented general and concerted action along lines of public instruction in agriculture in our public schools. It is too deep for me. However, we may find a partial explanation in the fact that God has been so considerate of the weakness and ignorance of poor humanity that He has given him a living from the soil if he would obey only the simplest law, a law of nature which the most depraved heathen understands. That is, if he will put seed into the soil somewhere near the proper season God will do the rest. He will send his sunshine and rain upon it to sprout, develop and ripen it.

④ This it has been in our beautiful and fertile country man has had no great need of knowledge in order to grow a little corn upon

7
which to live. The food was as wholesome as it was simple and the man feeling secure in his living, for land was plentiful, he cared not to further exert himself by trying to grow more abundant, or more varied crops. Like the savage, with some improvement I will grant, his wants were few and easily satisfied. He was content. Yet, the same Creator has made provision for a higher order of living for the development not only of our faculties, but of the boundless resources of nature.

C It is man's duty to produce from the soil the greatest amount of the most useful product that intelligence coupled with nature and her great possibilities can produce. There is much land now in our own Southern California that is producing good incomes on a valuation of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per acre which formerly yielded an income only on a valuation of \$25.00 to \$50.00 per acre. X

I stated that the farmer required knowledge of a large number of scientific principles, a liberal acquaintance with the laws of mechanics and a general business education. I want to elaborate this statement some in order that it may more fully be comprehended than it might by simply making a broad and sweeping statement. A farmer should be an excellent judge of soils. He should be able to tell whether they are richly supplied with the essential elements and suited to the needs to which he expects to put it. If it is short on nitrogenous element, or lacks potash, or phosphoric acid he ought to know it. It may have abundance of these, but lacks humus, that quality without which the best results cannot be had.

He ought to be a fairly good engineer so that he might lay off roads, ditches, run lines and put in the general topography of his land in the best possible condition for future use. He must have a general knowledge of the principal phenomena of plant life. This is an interesting field and if it was entered into in the early life of young people we would ere long have more Luther Burbanks.

There is much in Horticulture to learn. We must understand the science of budding, grafting, pruning and many other principles of fruit growing. Here in Southern California he must understand how to irrigate.

This is an interesting field.

The farmer has persistent and destructive enemies which he must successfully fight if he succeeds. He must, therefore, acquaint himself with their character and habits and the effective way to destroy or overcome them. He comes in the study of insecticides on their use. This in California is an important field and while the farmer need not be an etymologist he should have much of the knowledge of this department which can only be gained from the books, or in the school room.

The study of chemistry of soils, and of vegetation and the essential fertilizing elements and uses should be begun at the public school. The foundation once laid by proper training there the practical experiments along scientific lines can go on afterwards. Let the farmer be so educated that he can give intelligent reasons for doing things and to be able to investigate the cause of a certain phenomena. In other words carry on his work scientifically.

In this connection I want to refer to the blessing conferred upon the farmer by James H. Moore, in his discovery of the method of keeping and propagating nitrogen gathering bacteria. The value of this is not fully realized today, but as our soils become more impoverished by constant use it will be appreciated.

In this day of gas engines of complicated agricultural implements and machinery and automobiles a farmer must also know something of mechanics, indeed he must be as old German neighbor of mine, who had called to talk over the difficulties encountered with his gasoline engine, quaintly put it. He said a "farmer these days had to be a better ^{mechanic} "mechanic" than a mechanic himself."

A farmer must needs, also, be an excellent judge of stock of all kinds, and also be somewhat of a veterinary. He need not always depend the entirely upon his own skill in care and treatment of animals, but it is essential that he have a pretty good knowledge of the good and bad points of various kinds of domestic animals, understand the best methods of caring for them and to know what to do when overtaken by accidents or disease.

A farmer must not only know how to grow large crops of excellent products, but must also know how to market them. Like every other great department of agriculture here to is a field where education of the proper kind should begin early in life. It is discouraging work to attempt to educate these old fellows who are set in their ways, even as to the best methods of doing farm work, but in the marketing of farm products we enter into another realm where if we are to judge from the unsatisfactory results many farmers obtain special training is greatly needed. As above stated it is of little value to know how to grow excellent crops unless you also know how to convert them into cash, or its equivalent. This is not easy knowledge to gain, as most farmers will testify, and yet there are few primary principles and rules to observe which go far towards bringing satisfactory results. These violated means failure. These business principles should be taught in our school in connection with and as a part of the science of agriculture.

C In this country with its millions of consumers of varied tastes and wants, but with ample means any wholesome palatable product of the farm, be it fruit, vegetable, or animal should be disposed of profitably. X To do this, however, the business principles above alluded to must be carefully observed. You will pardon a personal reference, but the point in question is, I think, well illustrated by a brief statement. When I secured the Santa Ysabel Ranch I was commiserated by my neighbors because there were so many Valencia Late trees upon the place. These were regarded as of little value, indeed some growers had rebudded their Valencias to Navels. It did seem discouraging for there was no special demand for this late fruit. I believed, however, that fruit of such excellent quality would be appreciated if the public could have it properly presented. This I set about doing on business principles, such as might be profitably taught in the public schools. I feel that any one who would be a successful farmer should begin early to absorb these and to realize that the close adherence to them is absolutely necessary for financial success.

A farmer should spend in his days in the field, or orchard, or corral and his evenings in his library. He should be a student, not only of nature, but of books. The habit, as well as the love for reading

must be acquired when young. Our government is publishing splendid articles on different departments of agriculture and while they are doing good, yet only a small per cent of these are studied by the farmer. This literature will be of greater profit to the man who has had a primary education in the science of agriculture.

There are published some splendid agricultural journals, which should be read by our thoughtful farmers, but after all I contend that the place to begin to make a successful farmer is in the school room. Give the pupils the best text books and provide him, also, opportunities for making practical experiments and he will be attracted to agriculture as a life work if he has any of the elements in his nature.

Formerly the farm home had only a small amount of literature of any kind. The kind hearted old farmer along in December took home an almanac. It contained a few jokes which grew stale before planting time came. Then some prominent member of the community received from Washington a Patent Office Report. This was not very interesting reading matter for the children.

Thomas McAdams in a recent magazine article on gardening literature said - "Nine years ago I took my brother to see a distinguished professor's library, on throwing open the door I exclaimed "there is the largest collection of American books on horticulture in existence." "Not much to brag about either," he replied."

"When I first came to study here, the farm and garden books struck me as a "hayseed lot", but in the years that followed I had learned to love them for their real merit.

"The truth there was scarcely a book in the whole collection that a gentleman would care to have in his parlor. They had the book of the farm about them, faded covers, cheap paper, small type, scanty margins and grewsome old wood cuts. They abounded in realistic portrait of caterpillars, apple crab, plum rot and the like, all in heroic size and no book was complete without a certain classical picture of the Codlin Moth's offspring eating the heart out of an apple of iron texture. It used to fascinate me like the picture of Cortez burning the Peruvians at the stake.