

THE VISITOR

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YOUR PART IN THESE TIMES

J. O. CHRISTIANSON, Superintendent, School of Agriculture, and Director of Agricultural Short Courses, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn.

In these times of stress and strain when we are part of a planetary struggle of all, we must not forget the strengthening of the home base. You men who serve in the various communities as teachers of agriculture may well hold your heads high for, not only through your teaching of agriculture, but also through your teaching of community consciousness and appreciation of fundamental values in community relationships, you are strengthening those qualities without which a community or a country cannot grow strong. I thoroughly welcome this opportunity of joining with each of you in your communities through the medium of the *Visitor* which I believe has carried the gospel of agricultural education throughout this state and nation longer than any other similar publication.

I have just recently finished reading a most fascinating book entitled "The Juggernaut, the Path of Dictatorship," written by Albert Carr. Here is outlined the pattern by which many of the dictators of human history have operated. It is interesting to note that all of them followed pretty much the same pattern, the same ruthless way, the same greed. The most hopeful note we get from it all is that their final destiny was the same in each case and that was defeat. After reading this story, one is impressed with the fact that throughout all history civilization has received its nourishment from certain roots which grow in clean, Christian, tolerant soil. These roots have always been pretty much the same. They have been the home, the church, freedom of assembly (which includes our public schools), moral stability, and the right of private property. Whenever any of these roots have been weakened, the plant of civilization itself is weakened. The policy of all the dictatorships, including the present rule of disorder under Schickelgruber, has been to weaken the plant of civilization by cutting away at these roots. First, the home was cut away. The actual institution of the building was not destroyed, but the loyalty of the children to the parents was transferred to a man-made power outside of the home. The attack on the other roots of civilization by this totalitarian disorder is now a matter

of common knowledge to all of us—cutting away of the church and breaking up the freedom of assembly, the regimentation of the schools, the breakdown of moral stability, and the confiscation of private property.

Today all the forces of common decency and the hope of mankind have joined round the world in the most stupendous struggle yet recorded in the annals of human history. The most hopeful sign that is to be seen or found is the knowledge that there are eternal laws of right and wrong. No individual can long break those laws but what that individual will be broken. No nation can long break those laws without itself being broken as well. As we carry on in this struggle, each contributing in every way possible, let us not forget that the strength of this nation rests upon the strength of its communities, its homes, and its individuals. The attitudes and philosophies that motivate the action of man constitute a powerful force and as you direct and mold those attitudes and philosophies in the pattern which throughout all history has shown itself to be that of construction and growth, you contribute to the stability of the order of civilization and Christian progress.

Therefore, I say to you men engaged in the business of teaching agriculture in the high schools, it seems most fitting that you direct your attention to the nourishment of the roots of this great plant and, as leaders in your community, guard against the destruction of those roots and finally, the plant itself.

It was Lincoln who said, "We shall meanly lose or nobly save the last best hope of earth." Edgar Guest in a recent poem concludes with these words:

"They cannot build guns enough
To blast my dreams away."

Our faith and our pride in our institutions and our homes depends to a great extent upon our knowledge of these homes and institutions. If I could write the readers that are used in the public schools, I would write into those readers the stories of achievement and sacrifice on the part of the pioneer builders of each community. I would write in there the story of the people who built the first home, the first school, the first busi-

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THE STAFF

A. V. STORM

G. F. EKSTROM

A. M. FIELD

R. R. BENTLEY

A. M. FIELD, *Editor*

ness organization, the first cooperative association in that community. I do not think much of any boy or girl who is not proud of his mother and dad. Neither do I think much of any mother or dad who is not proud of their children. By the same token, I do not think much of anybody in this country who is not proud of this country, of all that it has meant to each of us. And yet, sometimes that pride and faith weakens when we fail to carry on the story of those who have gone before. Socrates, in emphasizing the value of studying history, said, "The pathetic thing is that man takes no lessons from history."

Local Recognition

I believe that you men are most strategically situated to carry on a significant activity in cooperation with existing agencies in emphasizing the local history of the community which you serve. I would like to see each teacher of agriculture join the teacher of history in the high school, the local historical society, and the Future Farmers of America organization, in putting up markers where the first home was built in each township, where the first church was built, where the first cooperative association was built, and to put on those markers the names of the people who were responsible for that building. Then, when the youngsters go on their way to school, they would see the names of these people, some of whom perhaps are still living there in the community, and they would have stimulated a bit more reverence and respect for those who have gone before and who have builded these institutions for them. I would make an effort to pay special recognition and tribute to those older people in each community, now living, who had contributed to the building of that community, either through the maintenance of a good home, or in building or maintaining any of the other worthwhile institutions of the community. This would be a fine activity for the Future Farmers organizations, not only on

the part of those in the associations, but on the part of all others in the community as well. By carrying on an activity such as this, you are strengthening the roots of this plant we call civilization.

The power and endurance of the Chinese people is due in large part to their faith in themselves, in their history, their neighbors, and their institutions. Dr. Walter Judd, medical missionary in China for many years, says that China will never go communistic because the people have their roots in the soil; it is a part of their very life blood passed on from generation to generation, and with it is passed on the history, the stories of those who built. I would suggest that in line with this same emphasis on the history of your community, you encourage the young people of your community to learn of their own ancestry from their parents. Give to each one a pedigree sheet and have him fill in the ancestral record on both the mother and father's side. You will be surprised to find how few people know much of their ancestry beyond their immediate parents; they may, at best, know their names, but what did they do, what kind of people were they, how did they meet their problems? In understanding them, each person will be better able to analyze himself, for each one is the result of thousands of yesterdays and inheritance ranging from prince to pauper.

A teacher of agriculture is a teacher of rural living, the most ancient and honorable of all the means of livelihood, the foundation of any people. As you stimulate in the minds of your best students the significance of this to the extent that they remain on the farm and in the community, so you again serve to strengthen the home base. Too often these young people of particular aptitude as students have been urged to go into so-called professional lines rather than to remain on the farm. Utilize every opportunity of developing in the minds of those young people in your community a philosophy of life—a standard of life—as well as a standard of living. Picture the longtime objective of security, of contentment, of satisfying achievement. Omar Khayyam in the eleventh century said, "In this world he who possesses a morsel of bread and some nest in which to shelter himself, who is master or slave of no man, tell that man to live content; he possess a very sweet existence." We are civilized insofar as we plan ahead. The first steps in civilization came through the saving of a bit of food from the hunt today for the family for tomorrow when the hunting might not be as good. Some people even yet are only a day or a week civilized; some, more successful, a year civilized; and then a small percentage whom the world oft-times calls lucky, are many years civilized in that they have planned ahead over a longer period of time. We must learn what the centuries tell us rather

than the hours alone, for out of those centuries we find over and over again the basis for the development of our standard of life today.

A Great Teacher

That person is indeed fortunate who as a youth meets a great teacher. Through the school, the home, the church, or perhaps a neighbor right in the home community, that great teacher will help that youth to look beyond today, to measure ahead by the rule of the past as well as the present, to plan his actions on the basis of permanence and abiding satisfaction, and to take his part in a Divine scheme of things, working in cooperation with and in appreciation of the forces of nature. You have that opportunity. President Coffman, in answer to the question "what makes a great teacher?" wrote, "In a time of change teachers especially must try to understand the social forces that are exerting an influence in our lives, and seek to analyze the channels through which they gain expression. At the present they must know more about government, security, taxes, and taxation—about tariffs, exchange, commerce, war and peace—far more than they have ever known. They must be students, as never before, of the circumstances and conditions that affect human welfare. I would, however, call their attention to the fact that a teacher acquires this basic understanding primarily that he may become a better teacher. There rests upon the teachers as upon no other class the supreme duty of teaching the facts about human progress.

"Let it be repeated that the recognition of a teacher comes as a result of his worth as a teacher. The worth of the teacher is enhanced as he grows in intellectual stature, as his knowledge becomes more expansive, more catholic, more cosmopolitan, and as he becomes more skillful in the techniques of his profession. *A truly great teacher is one who comprehends the things he is teaching as social instruments or social materials that bear intimate relations to the world in which we live.* A truly great teacher is the one who is able to fuse the fragmentary substances of the curriculum in the alembic of analysis in such a way as to produce students whose attitudes of mind and dispositions of character are socially desirable and socially worthy."

President Coffman added further: "We find that the justification for education lies in the fact that we are attempting to liberate the human spirit and to direct it in ways that will lead to its own self-development and growth. A school is merely a device which society in its wisdom has created to provide for the human spirit the stimulation that will enable it to attain, under guidance and within the limits of its possibilities, its largest and most expansive expression."

Roads of Reason

The gods of destruction are on the march today as at no time in all human history. They march down roads which have been built or opened through our own lethargy, indifference and smug complacency. If all that we hold dear is to survive, we must say to the outlaw nations of the world, "You must not, you shall not go any further." We pledge ourselves to rebuild the roads of reason and Christian decency so that all may travel them in faith and security. Dr. Lin Yutang, author of that great book "The Importance of Living, recently wrote in the New York Times, "Modern civilization would be destroyed if the things that make for civilization, the things we take for granted—freedom of belief, the rights and liberties of the individual, democracy and faith in the common man—if these things were destroyed. And so what threatens civilization today is not war alone, but the changing conception of life values entailed by certain political doctrines." To all of us in the field of education is given the opportunity of joining with the forces of civilization in its preservation. Our effectiveness will be determined by the extent to which our efforts serve to strengthen the home base, the faith of all people in themselves, their homes, their churches, their institutions, and to maintain that faith through strengthening not only the visible and material, but also the intangible, yet most significant forces of all, Christian character, decency, and tolerance. The culture of a civilization and of an individual is the accumulated history of all the acts and habits, both great and small.

In these times we hear the prophets of doom predict that we face a lower standard of living in this country due to the fact that we will have to get along without many things we have become accustomed to in the past. Perhaps we have been measuring our standard of living too much by *things*. What you belong to is a great deal more important than what belongs to you. A people belong to the forces that move them to act and think as they do and to establish their sense of values, tolerance, and justice. We must make clear that in sacrificing *THINGS* we need not sacrifice values and ideals. We may even anticipate that with less emphasis on *THINGS* we may more firmly establish a *Standard of Life* based on an abiding faith in the vital forces of growth throughout all human history. We may direct more attention to the matter of living in our own homes, building our own citadel of protection, of beauty, of contentment and rest. We may learn to discipline ourselves. I hope we do, for if we do not impose disciplines upon ourselves, there may be others, cruel and tyrannical, who some day will. The greatest songs of a people are born out of pain and sacrifice, not out of license and abandon.

Woodrow Wilson said, "I would rather belong to a poor nation that was free, than to a rich nation that had ceased to be in love with liberty. We shall not be poor if we love liberty."

We hear much, and rightly so, of the need of training people to work together and to get along together. In fact, I am sure most of us will agree that such is the ultimate objective of all education. A survey was recently made in one of our state universities to determine the most common causes of failure where young people had lost their jobs. Many thousands of cases were studied and after all evidence was gathered, it was found that over 70% of all who had failed to make good and had lost their jobs had done so through inability or failure to cooperate with others. They were jealous, spiteful, selfish. They were not courteous—they couldn't get along with others. The person who made this study concluded that equally important alongside of the three R's might well be the three C's—Courage, Courtesy, and Cooperation. Unfortunately there are those who feel that smartness and cleverness are the main things. It is, of course, important to be well-trained, but such training in factual information is of little use unless it is guided and stimulated through a spirit of courtesy and cooperation with one's fellow men, and a recognition of that abiding fact that smart though we may be or become, we are finally but a small part of a Divine scheme of things wherein an Allwise Creator has left an abundance of resources for the benefit of all the people, asking only that we have sense enough to work together and get along together. You are great teachers as you weave this objective and philosophy into your every contact with your students and your community.

In a recent book, "The Country School at Home and Abroad" written by Inman Elsie Schatzmann and published by the University of Chicago Press, this significant statement is made relative to the part of the rural school teacher in Denmark—"To the country teacher is intrusted a sacred and important task—the preservation and enrichment of local culture." In writing of Sweden, Bogoslovsky in "The Educational Crisis in Sweden" says, "The Swedish farmers have been given a feeling of dignity and of self-respect which has made them preservers of the best in Swedish national culture. They preserve the old national arts and handicrafts, while they run their farms with electricity and join with their neighbors in various cooperative activities." In writing of the rural schools of England, Miss Schatzmann says, "In sharp contrast to the neglected playgrounds of American rural schools were the well-kept, well landscaped, and attrac-

tive rural school gardens of England. Shrubs and flowers were found everywhere. One school visited had a rock garden with a hundred and twenty varieties of alpine plants. English girls and boys were imbued with a love, appreciation, and understanding of growing things." Our part is to preserve the best in our rural heritage. We can do it as we learn of our local history, of the contributions of our neighbors, of the beauty and adventure in everyday events and commonplace things 'round our own homes. We must learn of the place in which we live. You strengthen democracy and promote human progress, security, and happiness as you instill in the hearts and minds of your young folks and neighbors the ideals and goals which are eternal nourishment of the roots of civilization—your part in these times.

SUMMER SCHOOL

After reading the charge and challenge presented by Superintendent Christianson, thoughtful teachers will at once begin to plan their "Part in These Times." The University of Minnesota—a veritable fountain of knowledge, inspiration and progressive philosophy would be a splendid place to spend a few weeks in serious study and planning. The professors, the libraries, the laboratories, the classrooms and the many special programs would be excellent facilities for instilling a "new breath of life" into our old teaching pattern. Now is surely the time when we need the very latest information in regard to agriculture, social problems and leadership activities. Let us make this the year for attending summer school.

Registration for the first session is June 15. Teachers may attend for four weeks or six weeks.

CONGRESS FOR VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS

The 19th Annual Congress for students of Vocational Agriculture and the State F.F.A. Convention will be held at University Farm, May 7, 8, and 9. The congress activities will open with a picnic supper and program on Thursday evening. All judging and achievement contests will take place on Friday morning, thereby permitting the students to take part in an educational program consisting of tours of the cities on Friday afternoon and a series of demonstrations in the various divisions of the College of Agriculture on Saturday morning.

The F.F.A. Convention will sponsor a banquet in the Coffman Memorial Union Friday evening. An attendance in excess of 1,000 students from more than 100 departments of vocational agriculture is expected.