

### University Agricultural Experiment Station.

Hence, I deem it both logical and expedient that in point of time the Agricultural Experiment Station should precede lectures from a Chair of Agriculture; the former will pave the way for the latter. The main purpose of an Experiment Station would be RESEARCH WORK, and here, with deference, I suggest that purists may have to revise the conventional limits they have ascribed to research, and to recognise that research is still research, even though undertaken for purely utilitarian ends. Research work at an Agricultural Station, although not exclusively so, would have a strong utilitarian bent; and I hazard the opinion that it could but add lustre to any institution with which it happened to be connected.

Where, it may presently be asked, is the particular need for agricultural research? And, assuredly, such inquiries will find no echo in University circles; they know too well that research is free as air; that it bloweth where it listeth, that it concerns the stars, the earth, the ponderable, the imponderable, the finite, the infinite; that it knows no limits but man's choice. There are none to-day who would care to maintain that the last word has been said in any line of human activity; and that I take it, is the best justification of research in any department. But apart from its purely subjective interest, agricultural research is likely to have a very direct bearing on mundane affairs. And particularly is this likely to be the case when the intensive farming flood, which we see gradually gaining strength, is at its height; questions innumerable will arise on all sides; and if your untrodden tracks are to be dimly lighted by beacons trimmed elsewhere, there are many who will be led astray. There is room, then, in our midst for an Experiment Station, which, in matters of agricultural moment, can take a coldly impartial stand, and weigh in the balance the hasty judgments of men.

Imagine an experiment Station under able and imaginative leadership; a beehive of industry delving into questions vexing the souls of men from the more militant walks of life; in the world, but not of it, and yet in sympathy not detached from it. Follow the issue of

periodical statements of work achieved, meagre at first, but gradually swelling in importance; valued, first at home, catching the world's attention in time. I have already expressed doubts as to the probable success of a local Chair of Agriculture; such doubts are inadmissible should the experiment Station succeed: the success of the one would be but the prelude to the success of the other. Let but the work of the Experiment Station develop, let its reputation be built up by patient and diligent endeavour, and just as, in the Middle Ages, it was the men—or rather, their works which drew students from all part of the civilized world, and not mouldering walls, so we may anticipate that without intentional effort, and of their own initiative, those we need most will be attracted to the University. In other words, we shall need Agricultural leadership in the future: let the University prepare the way for it.

#### **University Research.**

And now, although I am shocked at my own temerity, I propose dropping the particular and taking up the general. With due deference, but with unpardonable liberty, perhaps, I am about to extend conclusions drawn from a consideration of questions purely bucolic to University matters in general. And I shall ask, is not a University maimed and cut off from the source of inspiration that is not steeped in research work? Is it any better than a glorified High School? Is it helping to extend knowledge as well as passing it on? And if not, is not the act of passing it on in danger of becoming altogether mechanical and perfunctory? I have heard of the many obstacles that lie in the way of research; of the inadequate buildings, the lack of funds, public apathy, and what not; I have heard, of these, I say, nor can any one doubt their validity. It is a matter of experience, however, that some obstacles are easiest circumvented by ignoring them, and I am persuaded that neither penury nor lack of equipment could have held back those mainly responsible for the unprecedented material progress of the nineteenth century. As a matter of blunt fact it is not buildings that make research, nor equipment, nor abundant capital, nor even exceptional attainments, so much as the humble determination to do and to achieve. The University stands in need of things to-

day: that this is realized and that redress is sought, is of the very essence of progress; in the end however, only realization expressed in deeds can control events. I fear much that a parade of poverty cannot help us to riches; not even a glittering display of good intentions, had we but the means to compass them: but rather discreet emphasis on what has already been done, and is being done at the present time. Let us show unmistakably that we have deserved, and do deserve, support, and eventually we shall command it.

### **The Essentialness of Publicity.**

This humble suggestion raises an important issue, happily the last for which I shall crave your attention. I have gently hinted at need—the urgent need, as it appears to me—of greater publicity in University work. And in stressing this point I feel that I am perhaps treading on delicate ground; nor am I unaware of the instinctive repugnance of many to anything savouring of self-advertisement. Nevertheless and here I stand on firmer ground, the University, although a cluster of gifted individuals, has as an in ultimate resort a public, whose support is essential to its continued existence. A craving for the limelight may be a detestable weakness; work may be its own reward; the seeker after truth may be careless of the approval of any but his peers; research work may be more or less a matter of lonely furrows—all this and more may be true, indeed praiseworthy from the individual viewpoint. But it leaves untouched those particular University needs which strong local approval can alone satisfy. Let the lonely furrows carefully drawn out in seclusion be as numerous as they may, of what avail are they in what immediately concerns us, unless from neighbouring highways and byways plainly visible to the owners of the enclosure? In fine, if the active support of the public is to be enlisted, it must be given periodical reports of what is being done. Doubtless individual distinction can come to those whose doings are chronicled in the specialist pages of the periodicals of the world. Division, dispersal, however, never yet made for strength, and the scattered individual efforts of a young University can make but a poor showing. Gather together on the other hand, present them periodically in a body as the work of the University, and

like drops of water whose persistence eventually wears away the hardest rock surface, they will at first attract the attention, and in the end the strong support of those for whom the University was brought into existence.

#### • Conclusion.

We have been in pursuit of efficiency, material and moral, and the course has been long and devious; nor can I be sure that I have lighted the landscape to best advantage. Shall I add that we have not even caught fitful glimpses of our quarry, and if so, it rests very largely with ourselves whether they shall ever materialise. This chase after betterment, however, is no very modern task; it is as old as the consciousness of the human race; indeed, when the world was young it probably carried with it greater zest. Let me quote to you the blind bard's saying of over three thousand years ago: "Skill is of greater avail to the woodman than strength; skill steers the vessel in the teeth of the gale; skill is triumphant in the chariot race." We cannot improve upon the mental attitude that is implied in these words; we cannot make it our own. As for me, however much I may have failed to make it clear I have endeavored to-night to keep steadily before me two essential points; the good of the country which has now sheltered me for over a quarter of a century, and the good of the University which has honored me with a seat on its Council. The first I believe to be chiefly dependent on energetic concentration of efforts towards greatly increased soil production; and success in this direction will, in my judgment, be very largely a factor of judiciously conceived education system, with an insulating rather than a levelling influence, and offering to all a fair start in the race of life. What I conceive to be the good of the University has been so admirably expressed by another that I make no apology for closing with the following quotations:—"The ideal University," says Brereton, "should be in the world, but not of it; a cloister to which all the world can come, which contains alike recluses and friars—recluses who pursue knowledge for its own sake, carrying their knowledge to the skies; and friars who carry it to the market place a miniature of the world, or, rather an ideal of the world, while the world should be the realization of the University."