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REPORT OF A COMMITTEE,

APPOINTED BY THE

Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society,

TO VISIT THE

FARMERS' HIGH SCHOOL

OF

PENNSYLVANIA.

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[PROCEEDINGS IN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE

PENNSYLVANIA STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society, held January 17, 1860, at Harrisburg, reports being in order, Gen. E. W. STURDEVANT, of Luzerne county, on behalf of a committee appointed by the Society at a previous meeting, reported as follows :

That on the 18th day of May last, (1859,) in discharge of the duty assigned them, they visited the institution. It is beautifully situated in Centre county, in one of the finest and most extensive limestone ranges in this State. Of the four hundred (400) acres, near the centre of which the buildings have been located, three hundred and sixty acres are under cultivation. The land is fresh and productive, and the soil susceptible of the very highest degree of improvement.

The college buildings have been designed in good taste, and with a view to permanence and convenience. The architects who undertook the erection of the buildings, laid the foundation and carried up the walls to the height of

the first story, when finding that the cost would exceed the contract price, in July, 1858, abandoned their contract. The trustees thereupon suspended the work upon the centre building, east wing and curtain, and urged forward the work upon the west wing and curtain to completion.

The west wing and curtain, constituting about one-third of the entire structure, embraces two society and recitation rooms, one of which is used as a chapel, a room for the business office and college library, a reading room, a room for the chemical and philosophical apparatus, a room for the geological and mineralogical collections, three wash rooms, three bath rooms, a large and convenient dwelling house, now occupied by Professor WARING, together with sixty comfortable, well ventilated rooms for the accommodation of students and an unmarried professor.

Besides this building, there are two good dwelling houses, a large and convenient barn, work shop and tool house, blacksmith shop, wash and ironing house, slaughter house and pig pens, corn cribs and wagon shed, cattle and hay scales, root and grafting house, &c., &c.

The students, numbering upwards of one hundred, represent thirty counties of the State. On entering, they are examined and arranged in accordance with their acquirements, into two classes, called the third and fourth classes, one of which will graduate in three years, the other in four years, from the opening of the institution. They receive scientific instruction from four learned and experienced professors—who, being practical men, have also a general supervision of the field labor.\*

From two and a-half to three hours of active labor is required of every student daily. The work, as well within the College building as in the field, seems to your committee to have been well done; and very careful investigation and inquiry led to the conclusion that the work is performed by the students willingly and cheerfully.

A certain number are detailed to the foreman of the farm and the foreman of the nursery, &c., for morning labor. At the expiration of their time of service, their places are supplied by a new detail, who labor until noon. The same occurs in the afternoon. The labor, in every department, is thus performed daily by four distinct details. The labor required affords the exercise, and no more than the exercise essential to proper physical development.

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\* Since the preparation of this report the Trustees have been fortunate in securing the services of Evan Pugh, Esq., as Principal of the Institution. Mr. Pugh's extensive opportunities for observation among the Agricultural colleges of Europe, and his administrative ability, peculiarly fit him for the position.

So far from disqualifying the student for study, it prepares him for mental culture. If the weather be unsuitable for out door labor, the foreman leads the detail to the performance of work specially reserved for inclement weather. *Youth*, like men, are naturally inclined to ease and indolence. Some motive, some incentive beyond the mere prospect of promoting health, is required to secure regular exercise, and without regularity, physical exercise ceases to be beneficial; nay, it is often, from excessive violence, highly injurious. The students appear to enjoy remarkably good health, and if their day's dining with your committee is evidence, are blessed with unusually good appetites.

As leading objects of this institution, the trustees seem to have had steadily in view:

*First.* To elevate and dignify *manual* labor, by associating it with the acquisition of scientific knowledge.

*Second.* To reduce the expenses of a thorough practical, scientific education, so as to bring its acquisition within the reach of farmers, mechanics and business men.

*Third.* To secure a place at which agriculturalists may, from time to time, meet and consult for the promotion of their interests, and to which all interested may confidently look for reliable information.

We live in an age of progress, an age in which the human mind is actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge—not a knowledge of mere abstractions, which have so much occupied the attention of the learned in other ages—but a knowledge of those arts and sciences which bear directly upon the business of every day life, enlarging the sphere of man's enjoyments, and promoting his happiness. That such is the spirit of our age, is evidenced in the establishment of the Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania. An institution organized upon the principle that all labor which conduces to man's comfort and happiness is equally honorable, that it is the character of the occupant, and not the character of the occupation, which elevates or degrades, and that, therefore, to raise any useful pursuit, though now a degradation, it is only necessary to institute learning, energy and integrity, in the room of ignorance, indolence and vice. To remove the false prejudices of the community and to develop and elucidate this sublime truth, is the destiny of this great institution.

It addresses itself to men of wealth, who, with servants constantly at hand to do the work, find it impossible, at home, to impress the minds of their children with the true dignity of manual labor—impossible, because their labor is associated with menial service.

It appeals to the business man, who can spare annually from his resources, the sum required for his son's support; lessened by the product of his son's labor, when the expenses at any other institution of similar grade, would be entirely beyond his reach. But as an experimental farm, in charge of scientific, practical professors, aided by laborers in pursuit of knowledge—as a place at which Scientific Agriculturalists may meet, and spend days with interest and with profit; as a great central point for the collection and dissemination of ascertained results in Scientific Agriculture, it comes to supply a want long felt by the Executive Officers of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society. In a sense of this want the Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania had its origin.

Its infancy was nurtured and sustained by a liberal appropriation of the surplus funds of the society, and now, though it has attained the stature, the vigor and the dignity of manhood, it still looks to its *foster mother* for further material aid, to enable its Trustees to complete the residue of the buildings, and accomplish the great work for which it is destined.

The self-sacrificing labor of the Trustees, who have spent their time and their money without charge, challenge our admiration and command our confidence.

Your committee would do injustice to their own sense of right, in failing particularly to refer to the invaluable services rendered to the institution by the unremitting attention of one of the trustees in particular. The reference is to H. N. M'ALLISTER, Esq., of Bellefonte, who from the beginning of this enterprise has been untiring in his devotion to the interests of the School. To the same gentleman the committee are indebted for many of the facts embraced in this report. In conclusion, we take great pleasure in commending the Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania to the patronage, not only of the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society, but to the liberal support of every man in the community, disposed to aid in the great work of human progress.

All which is most respectfully submitted.

E. W. STURDEVANT,  
DAVID TAGGART,  
WILL. A. STOKES,

*Committee.*



After the reading, Col. THOMAS P. KNOX, of Montgomery county, expressed his gratification at the very able and satisfactory report, and moved that two thousand copies be printed in pamphlet form for the use of the society and for distribution. This passed unanimously, with the recommendation that the members of the Executive Committee exert their influence to have it printed and widely disseminated in the respective counties of their districts.

Subsequently the society voted to subscribe fifteen hundred dollars to the High School.

A. O. HIESTER, *Sec'y.*





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