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## THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES—1860-1930<sup>1</sup>

By Professor LOUIS BERNARD SCHMIDT

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THE transformations through which the United States has been passing since 1860 are so varied, so far-reaching and so profoundly significant that the historian is justified in assigning to this period of our history a place of importance second to none of the many corresponding epochs of time in the preceding centuries. It is an era of great complexity; a challenge to the student of American development.

The importance of these changes was emphasized more than a generation ago by David A. Wells in his book on "Recent Economic Changes" published in 1889 in which appear these significant passages:

<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented before Section L—Historical Sciences, of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Des Moines, Iowa, December 28, 1929. The foundation of this paper is the article on "Some Significant Aspects of the Agrarian Revolution in the United States," which appeared in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, 18 (No. 3): pp. 371-395, July, 1920, published by the State Historical Society of Iowa.

The economic changes that have occurred during the last quarter of a century—or during the present generation of living men—have unquestionably been more important and varied than during any former corresponding period of the world's history. It would seem, indeed, as if the world, during all the years since the inception of civilization, has been working up on the line of equipment for industrial effort—inventing and perfecting tools and machinery, building workshops and factories, and devising instrumentalities for the easy intercommunication of persons and thoughts, and the cheap exchange of products and services; that this equipment having at last been made ready, the work of using it has, for the first time in our day and generation, fairly begun; and also that every community, under prior or existing conditions of use and consumption, is becoming saturated, as it were, with its results. As an immediate consequence the world has never seen anything comparable to the results of the recent system of transportation by land and water; never experienced in so short a time such an expansion of all that pertains to what

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