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national product in 1950 to 10.5 percent (or \$322 billion) in 1982. On a per capita basis, that amounts to a fivefold increase (in constant dollars). He blames the cost explosion on the rapid "monetarization" of medical care.

Before World War II, medicine in the United States was "quasi-eleemosynary": Hospitals relied heavily on charitable donations, young interns worked at hospitals in return for their room and board, and physicians who sought admitting privileges at a prestigious hospital were required to work without pay in its clinics for several half days a week. Even staff doctors were expected to "volunteer" in this way. After the war, all that began to change due to rising U.S. affluence, the spread of private medical insurance, and (in 1965) the creation of federal Medicaid and Medicare.

With more revenue and fewer bad debts, hospitals were able to raise the salaries of nurses and other staff people; at the same time they reduced their reliance on nuns and volunteers. As doctors found it easier to earn good livelihoods, Ginzberg writes, "they curtailed their hours of work and particularly the amount of time that they donated to hospitals for the care of the poor." (No small contributing factor was the cost of maintaining a medical practice: for a New York City neurosurgeon, about \$70,000 yearly for malpractice insurance and \$80,000 for rent and other expenses in 1984.) Gradually, medical care has entered the "money economy."

Monetarization set the stage for the rapid growth of profit-making hospital chains after 1970, Ginzberg says. These new hospital-businesses, unlike their nonprofit competitors, cater to well-insured patients to the exclusion of the less well-off and otherwise seek to maximize income.

Nonprofit hospitals are being forced to follow suit just to stay alive. But Ginzberg argues that the United States cannot afford more runaway health costs. He lauds Congress for imposing limits last year on how much hospitals can collect from Medicare for certain kinds of services. Curbing financial opportunities for health-care providers, he believes, will give Americans their best chance for quality treatment whose cost will not bleed them to death.

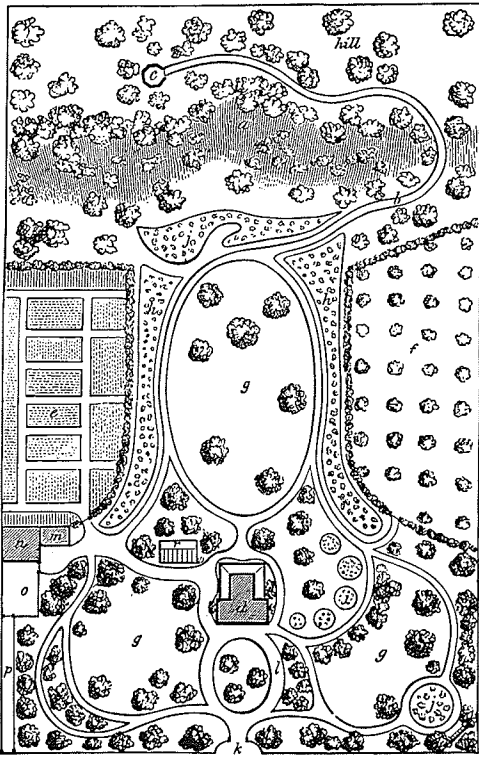
The Moral Value Of Gardening

"The Moral Dimensions of Horticulture in Antebellum America" by Tamara Plakins Thornton, in *The New England Quarterly* (Mar. 1984), Merserve Hall, 243 Northeastern University, Boston, Mass. 02115.

Early in the 19th century, Boston's wealthy merchants, manufacturers, and lawyers suddenly discovered the joys of gardening. For them, the cultivation of fruits and vegetables was more than a pleasant pastime. It was a moral act, writes Thornton, a Yale historian.

To the Boston elite (and, eventually, to other well-heeled Americans), horticulture was a balm for anxieties about their role in America's tran-

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Horticulture's importance is evident in landscape-architect Andrew Jackson Downing's 1842 plan for a two-acre homestead. The lawn (center) is flanked by a sizable vegetable garden (right) and an orchard.

sition from a land of yeoman farmers and small shopkeepers to a commercial society governed by materialistic impulses. So long as the "mind is absorbed at the shrine of Mammon," warned the journal of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in the 1840s, the products of horticulture will be "neglected or despised." Businessmen, eager to show their appreciation of the finer things in life, repaired to their gardens on Saturdays, where they cultivated the old virtues along with their apples, peaches, and pears.

The gardening craze did have its critics. Some writers denounced it as "antirepublican," because of its historical association with the landed aristocracy. But defenders of horticulture, such as landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing, replied that it had the practical value of improving plant breeds. Indeed, the new back-yard gardeners generally avoided the cultivation of flowers as too frivolous. Fruits were preferred.

Downing and his fellow true believers made some ambitious claims for horticulture. Because it offered a "pleasant alternative to the dramshop," Thornton writes, it was thought to encourage temperance. In 1848, Downing pointed to "the rapid increase of taste for ornamental

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gardening and rural embellishment" as evidence of America's growing refinement. He also saw it as an antidote to the characteristically American "spirit of unrest": Growing plants in a way encouraged men to put down their own roots.

Between 1818 and 1857, some 40 horticultural societies had sprung up in towns and cities across the youthful republic. It might be said that the gardening movement bloomed—and has never withered.

A Failing Grade For Colleges

"Trying Higher Education: An Eight Count Indictment" by Chester E. Finn, Jr., in *Change* (May-June 1984), 4000 Albenmarle St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.

The recent flurry of published outcries over the sorry performance of the nation's public schools has left America's 2,013 four-year colleges and universities largely unscathed. It is only "a matter of time" before that oversight is corrected, predicts Finn, who teaches at Vanderbilt University, and a "huge ruckus" erupts. He will be among the first to stand up and cheer.

Finn contends that America's colleges must share the blame for the defects of the public schools: They train the schools' teachers and happily accept their mediocre graduates.

Partly because the pool of college-age youths is shrinking, "Our colleges will do practically anything to lure warm, tuition-paying bodies into their classrooms," Finn asserts, and "practically anything to hold onto them"—from supplying such amenities as bowling alleys and psychological counseling to "individualizing" instruction so that students can avoid required courses. Grade inflation further eases the pain. A University of California study found that the percentage of "A" grades awarded by the faculty doubled between 1963 and 1974.

The universities are ill equipped to cure such decadence, Finn believes. Most university presidents stick to fund raising and alumni relations, leaving academic affairs in the hands of faculty committees. Change will be slow in coming without strong, centralized leadership.

Finn has few kind words for his fellow professors. Of the 850,000 full- and part-time teachers in U.S. higher education, he speculates, only about 10 percent contribute materially to the "enlargement of human knowledge." Few are "workaholics." None punch time clocks. A full-time professor typically teaches only three courses per semester, involving at most some 22 hours of classroom and office work, according to Finn. Some spend additional hours on faculty committees, which he dismisses as largely unnecessary. And faculty pay averages \$28,509—not bad for a nine-month year of "flex-time."

America's university educators must be made more accountable, Finn argues. Needed is a set of common measures to gauge the performance of individual students and, thereby, of the institutions charged with their education. If academe does not heal itself, he warns, the public is likely to apply "some very painful therapies."