

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

FOURTEENTH SESSION

AND THE

QUARTER-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

American Pomological Society,

HELD IN THE CITY OF

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

SEPT. 10, 11, 12, 1873.

By MARSHALL P. WILDER,

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

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31 School Street, Boston.

A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF THE AMERICAN POMOLOGICAL SOCIETY :

With the close of this session a quarter of a century will have elapsed since the establishment of our National Association.

Most heartily do I congratulate you upon the pleasant circumstances under which we are assembled, and upon the progress and prosperity of our society. We meet on this occasion, not only to assume the labors, discussions, and duties incident to another biennial session, but to commemorate by appropriate exercises a period which will ever be memorable in the record of our existence. We accept with great pleasure the cordial welcome extended to us by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, whose liberality has made such ample provision for our accommodation ; and while acknowledging these courtesies we desire also to express our obligations to the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, and to the gentlemen who with them have presented funds for the promotion of our cause.

Nothing could be more grateful to my feelings than your presence at our old homestead, and in my own behalf I bid you welcome to the privileges and enjoyments of the occasion. We meet as representatives and co-laborers from different and widely distant sections of this great republic. We come from various districts, but with no other rivalry than a laudable

ambition to promote a great industrial pursuit, whose salutary influences are for the benefit of our common country. From whatever section you come, — whether from the sunrise or the sunset shores of our continent, from the Dominion of the North, the valleys and prairies of the great Central West, or from the broad plains and hill-slopes of the sunny South, — I extend to all a hearty welcome to our time-honored metropolis of New England.

Especially do I welcome you to our own beloved Commonwealth, the home of the Pilgrims, where our fathers planted the germs of a civilization which we believe will ultimately be extended to the remotest nations of the globe. Here the tree of liberty was planted under whose genial shade our whole land now rejoices ; and here Concord, Lexington, and Bunker Hill rear their monuments of historic fame, to remind us of the priceless blessings we enjoy. Here were the gardens and orchards of Gov. Endicott, whose pear-tree at Danvers still survives the revolutions of two hundred and fifty years. Here at Marshfield are the relics of the apple-tree planted by the first male child born of the Pilgrims. Here on Boston Common were the orchards of William Blackstone, the first settler. Here were the gardens of Gov. Winthrop, of golden-pippin renown, and here at a later date the gardens and orchards of John Hancock, the first signer to the Declaration of American Independence, Gardiner Green, and others, from whence were disseminated some of the first fruits introduced into this country from the mother-land. Here is the home of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, of whose munificence I have before spoken ; the home

of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, under whose auspices we meet, both of which institutions were the second of their respective kinds established in America. In this vicinity were the fields of labor of Lowell, Dearborn, Manning, Kenrick, the Perkinses, Downer, and other early pomologists; and here are the homes of many now living, whose names will be remembered as promoters of our cause when they also shall be gathered to their fathers. Here within the limits of our city were planted the first Bartlett and the first Flemish Beauty pear-trees imported to this country, both of which survive to this day. And here the Dix, the Dearborn, Dana's Hovey, Clapp's Favorite pears, and the Downer Cherry were born. And here within a few miles were originated the Hovey's Seedling Strawberry, the Concord, Diana, and Rogers' Hybrid grapes.

Many of those who participated in the formation of this Society, and to whom we are indebted for much of its success, have ceased from their labors, and gone to receive their reward. But I am most happy to recognize among those present to-day some of the noble pioneers who aided in the establishment of our Society, who rocked the cradle of its infancy, and who now rejoice with us in the grand development which this day witnesses. We recognize, also, many others, who in later times have contributed and shared with us in this march of improvement, who like them have stood as faithful sentinels on the watch-tower of duty, and whose efforts to advance our objects will demand and receive, in coming time, the thanks of millions of grateful hearts. To no one is this occasion of more interest than to him who, by your kind indulgence, has

occupied this chair for so many years, and who, in the course of nature, cannot again witness the assembling of its members in this city of his home. With feelings of no ordinary gratification we receive you here, where some of the first efforts were made in the cause of fruit culture, and from whence in the early history of our country, as well as in later years, so much has emanated for its extension throughout our land.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

In my former addresses I have often spoken of the acquisitions and usefulness of our art ; but in the presence of so many intelligent cultivators, who from scientific attainments and practical skill have become renowned as teachers themselves, I would not trespass on your time by a repetition of well established opinions, but would rather offer my congratulations on the progress we have made, and draw therefrom motives and inducements to increased efforts and perseverance in our benevolent work.

I have heretofore alluded briefly to the history of our society, but it might be deemed an omission of duty did I not on this Quarter-centennial make a record of its origin and progress, not only for the benefit of those present, but for the information of those who are to come after us. I propose, therefore, even at the risk of repeating what may be well known to our earlier members, to place in the annals of our society a page which shall survive when we are gone. Thus shall we "bind fast and find fast" the record of our times.

Briefly, then, let me state that the idea of a pomological convention appears to have occurred to individuals in different

States, at about the same time, — as new ideas in regard to progress frequently do. Thus, in the summer of 1848, consultation was had with Andrew Jackson Downing, the great American landscape gardener, and editor of the "Horticulturist," then on a visit to the city of Boston, in regard to the chaotic condition of our pomology, — the want of accurate and well-defined knowledge of our fruits, whereby correct conclusions could be drawn as to their various merits; the best means for improving the condition of fruit culture, and the expediency of establishing an American society, so that, by interchange of experience, and more cordial intercourse, by general consent we might preserve those fruits which were valuable, discard those which were worthless, correct the confused nomenclature, and establish a pomology for our whole country. To establish such a society was a great work, but it was considered as the only means which could accomplish the desired object. A correspondence was immediately opened with some of our prominent agricultural and horticultural societies, and with the leading nurserymen and pomologists of our land. This resulted in the proposal of the American Institute of New York to have a convention held under its auspices in that city. Pursuant to these arrangements, a circular was issued signed by committees of the Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New Haven Horticultural societies and the American Institute of New York, proposing to hold a "Great National Convention of Fruit Growers" in the city of New York, October 10, 1848.

Of the fifteen persons whose names were appended to this call, three only remain. All the rest have joined the great procession of the dead.

The convention met, and the Society was organized as the "American Congress of Fruit Growers," by the choice of Marshall P. Wilder as President, a Vice-President from each of the several States represented, and three Secretaries. Of these, S. B. Parsons and P. Barry are here to-day.

The first national pomological assemblage solely for the consideration of pomological subjects, met at Buffalo Sept. 1, 1848, at the call of the New York State Agricultural Society, and after an interesting session resolved to perpetuate itself under the name of the "North American Pomological Convention." But it was plain that there could be but *one national* organization that could carry due weight. A conference was therefore had, which resulted the next year in the consolidation of the two associations under the name of the "American Pomological Congress." The first meeting of the united associations was held at Cincinnati, 1850. In consequence of a death in the family of the president he was absent, and Dr. W. D. Brinckle was chosen to preside, but at the next meeting declined a re-election, and the present incumbent was again called to the chair, which he has occupied to this date.

Its sessions, since the first three, have been held biennially. There have been three in New York City ; one in Cincinnati ; three in Philadelphia ; three, including the present, in Boston ; two in Rochester ; one in St. Louis ; and one in Richmond. The first session at Philadelphia, in 1852, will ever be memorable as the occasion when a eulogy was pronounced by the

person who now addresses you, on Mr. A. J. Downing, one of the chief projectors of the society, whose sudden death had occurred a short time previous. At this session a constitution and by-laws was adopted, and the name was changed to the American Pomological Society.

PROGRESS.

We hail the present anniversary as one of the most interesting in our progress, commemorating as it will the history of this Society from its infancy to its present stature of manhood. Nor can language express the grateful sensations which I experience, that my life has been spared to this time ; that I have been permitted to witness the rapid growth and increasing influence of our institution ; and that you have so kindly consented to come once more to the city of my adoption, to my own home, to celebrate with me the silver wedding which after so long a service has still found us united in the bonds of affection and regard. There may be, and probably will be, periods in the future history of our Society, when equal or greater progress will be made ; but it is a peculiar and grateful privilege to be able to record what has already been accomplished ; to look back to its early beginnings ; and here, perhaps for the last time, to join with you in congratulations on its success, and to look forward with confident hopes to the time when every section of our wide-spread territory shall be embraced in our association, and our standard of pomology be established throughout the Western continent.

The marvellous growth of our country has constantly been opening up new States and Territories for fruit culture. These have been embraced within our fold, thus bringing together the wisest and best cultivators, and combining not only the men, but the fruits of our rich and varied clime, and States which had no place in our Union at the formation of this association have become the most fruitful in resources. Thus we have gone on, step by step, encouraging whatever was worthy, rejecting what was unworthy, treasuring up the best information, and promulgating, for the benefit of our whole people, the results of our wide-spread researches.

Few are aware of the great revolution which has taken place in fruit culture since the establishment of this National Pomological Society, or of the laborious efforts of those patient pioneers and investigators who have spent their lives for the promotion of our art. Nor can we omit here to acknowledge the influence of the press, to which we are so much indebted for the dissemination of our experience. Some are now living who can remember the time when there was not an agricultural or horticultural paper, nor a book on fruit culture, published on this continent. Look back and compare that period with the present time, with its flood of books, newspapers, and periodicals which are wholly or in part devoted to the spread of pomological knowledge, and we shall appreciate the great advantages arising therefrom. Many of those present can remember the time when there were but few apples sent from our Western States to the Eastern coast. Compare this with the thousands of barrels of fruit that are now annually sent to the markets of the East. But time would fail

me were I to enumerate the vast quantities of pears, peaches, grapes, and small fruits which come from the Western, Southern, Middle, and Pacific States to our great Northern and Eastern cities. Some are present who can remember the time when there was not a nursery of any note west of the Hudson River, where now, as from the great commercial nurseries at Rochester, Geneva, and other Western cities, there are annually sent out millions of trees and plants to other sections of the Union.

The thought, therefore, which most impresses me on this occasion is the rapid progress in American Pomology, the beneficial results which have arisen from the establishment of this national institution, and the duty of perpetuating and preserving it for all coming time. No modern event connected with the culture of the soil, and the sanitary condition of our people, has been fraught with more salutary effects than the establishment and operations of this Society. The more I reflect on its benign influence in promoting the wealth, health, and happiness of the nation, the more am I desirous to do what I can in my day and generation for its advancement. True, much had been done by the Pennsylvania and Massachusetts Horticultural Societies, the leading pioneers in the east, to open the way for this new epoch in the fruit culture of our country; much has been done by other associations and individuals in the way of co-operation; but here was a new departure, here was a union for concerted action, which should thenceforward embrace every section of our constantly increasing territory. How grateful to the feelings of our departed associates, could they have seen the growth and influence of

our Society ! How would the hearts of Downing, Brinckle, Walker, Hancock, not to speak of the living, have swelled with joy could they have seen, as we now see, the progress of fruit culture in our land, and the prospect which is opening up in the great future of our science.

How striking the progress in our own day ! It is not fifty years since the first Horticultural Society was established on this continent. It is but half that period since the formation of this, the first National Pomological Society in the world. And what do we see in the grand cornucopial display of to-day ? Not merely the fruits confined mostly to the Eastern States, where our exhibition is held, but the fruits of almost all climes of the habitable globe. Here in counsel are assembled the representatives of our wide-spread territory, laden with rich experience and with precious fruits, far excelling the fabled gardens of antiquity.

Here the Canadas, Nova Scotia, and New England warm to the genial influences of the sunny South ; here the great Central West responds to the East ; here California, with golden fruits more precious than her golden sands ; here peaceful Kansas brings her crimson fruits ; here youthful Nebraska, representative from the great American desert, where sixteen years ago not a fruit tree had been cultivated, comes with her car of precious products and with her Governor at the head ; and here from territories, where but a few years since the track of the wild beast and the trail of the wild man had only marked the soil ; to-day, in this northern clime of granite and ice, on this rock-bound coast, we meet as representatives of a united and prosperous people, to rejoice together in a jubilee

crowned with fruits surpassing those of any other nation of the earth. Such is the progress of American pomology ; such the harvest we are permitted to reap ; such the fruition of our fondest hopes.

But who can even estimate the progress of our art, the importance of this industry to our nation ? Whose prophetic eye can survey the grand expanse which is to open on our course during the next twenty-five years ? Ere that time shall have arrived much of the unoccupied territory of our country, now greater in extent than that of all our present States, will by the aid of our trans-continental railroads be opened to cultivation, and Columbia River, Puget Sound, and the whole Pacific coast, with its untold treasures, be united with us in the great work of promoting the pomology of this land. Give us twenty-five years more, and from ocean to ocean, from the Dominion to the Gulf, our hill-sides shall be clad with the vine, our great valleys adorned with orchards and gardens, and the fig, olive, and orange of the South and Pacific shores shall rival those of exotic growth. Give us twenty-five years more, and our catalogue of fruits shall be filled with native varieties, and dedicated to American pomologists, who by their labors and benevolent efforts have contributed to the wealth of our country and the happiness of its people.

NEW FRUITS.

But to accomplish this most desirable result, and to fulfil our mission of supplying every section of our country with fruits suited to its own locality, we must rely mainly on those

originated on American soil. Bound by my promise in former addresses to ever recognize the importance of this duty, I again invoke your attention to the consideration of the subject. The good results already attained are but the harbingers of still more glorious rewards. We have discussed at length the various processes of Van Mons, Knight, Esperen, and others of the old world ; but whatever may be said of the superior fruits produced by them, we have the strongest proofs that the clear sky and warm summers of our American climate are far more favorable for propitious results than theirs, and that such circumstances will conduce to the health and longevity of a variety. Especially is this the case in California, where almost all the products of the vegetable world come to perfection. From past experience it seems probable that the deterioration of certain varieties of fruits will exist in the future as in the past, and that the same causes, whether from the removal of the forests, or from whatever circumstances, will still continue. Hence the necessity of raising new varieties to supply the places of those that decline. Happily this degeneracy is confined to the apple and pear, affecting the pear more particularly, while in the cherry, peach, plum, strawberry, and small fruits generally, there are no signs of this deterioration.

That as fine fruits can be raised from seed here as have been produced in any other country, there is no longer a doubt. That this is the plan prescribed by our bountiful Creator for their production and improvement, is equally true. That there is any limit to its progress and extent, we have no reason to believe. True, the number of superior fruits is small com-

pared with the host of indifferent varieties that have come down to us from the past. One reason for this is, that our taste for finer fruits has been elevated to a higher standard, and those of an indifferent or medium quality fall out by the way; and we have no doubt that the old pears so highly lauded by historians, were most, if not all of them, only coarse unmelting kinds.

When we reflect upon what has been accomplished in the improvement of animals and vegetables in our own day, and how many splendid acquisitions have been brought forth that command the admiration of the world,—when we reflect upon the many fine American fruits already obtained with but comparatively little effort,—we surely have cause for great encouragement and perseverance. There is no limit to progress now or hereafter, and we believe that the fruits of this earth are to become more and more perfect as time advances. The march of science is ever onward and upward, and it is our duty to keep pace with it. What has been done can be done again, and will be done, until the final culmination of all created things. Then let us not be discouraged by obstacles or disappointments, but—

“ Let us act, that each to-morrow
Find us further than to-day.”

If a pear like the Bartlett or Beurre d'Anjou can be produced which shall be suited to every section, then another of like or better quality can be created and possess the same adaptation. Nor is there any reason why a strawberry like the Wilson, or a grape like the Concord, may not be raised of far better quality, and yet possess all the other valuable char-

acteristics of these varieties. That there may be a point beyond which a fruit is not susceptible of improvement, as believed by some, we cannot aver, but that most of our varieties fall short of this perfection all will agree. When we consider the character of the fruits which have come down to us from antiquity, the wonder is, not that we have no more strictly first-class varieties, but that we have already produced so many superior sorts. These considerations afford ample evidence of the tendency towards improvement, and lead us to the belief that by planting the seeds of our best varieties, we shall advance still further towards perfection.

Duhamel, Poiteau, and their contemporaries, after repeated trials with the seeds of the old varieties, produced but few worthy of note. It was reserved for Esperen, Gregoire, Bivort, Berckmans, and other modern experimenters, who sowed the seeds of improved sorts, to give us most of the fine new varieties which now adorn our tables. In confirmation of this opinion we have numerous instances in our own country. Witness the seedling pears of the Messrs. Dana, Clapp, and Shurtleff, of this vicinity, and those from other places, which grace this department of our exhibition. In these we have an illustration of what can be accomplished in the space of a few years, by the sowing of the seeds of modern varieties. In the extraordinary collection of Mr. Fox, of California, sent to me last year, we have also an evidence of the influences of virgin soil, high temperature, and clear atmosphere, giving us tokens of like advantages which we expect to derive from the new lands of our western friends, in the production of fine

varieties. We may add in regard to Mr. Fox's seedling pears, that we know not how to account for the strong evidence of natural cross fertilization which they exhibit, unless it was caused by the favorable climatic influence which we have just mentioned.

Formerly we were obliged to rely mostly on imported kinds for our best fruits, but as time progresses these are gradually disappearing, and their places are being filled by those of American origin. Of the forty-three kinds of plums in our catalogue, more than half are American. Of fifty-eight kinds of peaches, more than two thirds are American, and in fact very few others are much in cultivation. Of the nineteen kinds of strawberries, all but three are American. Of thirty-one varieties of hardy grapes, all are American. Thus, of these fruits we have in our catalogue at the present time, one hundred and fifty-one varieties, with the exception of thirty-seven, all are of American origin. Thus may we go on rising higher and higher in the scale of excellence, looking forward with bright anticipations to the time when, through the influence of these examples, and of our own and kindred associations, our catalogue shall be filled with varieties of American origin, and every part of our country rejoice in fruits born on the soil on which we live.

Why, it is only about a century since Van Mons, Knight, and the great pomologists of Europe were born. It is within the present century that Coxe, Thomas, Buel, Prince, Lowell, Manning, and Kenrick commenced their efforts to improve the pomology of our country. It is within a much later period that the Downings, the younger Thomas, Kirtland, Hovey,

Ellwanger and Barry, Brinckle, Kennicott, Warder, Elliott, Berckmans, commenced their operations for the advancement of this cause. These considerations should excite us to greater enterprise and renewed exertions. This is the great work of the American Pomological Society. We have but just entered upon it. How vast and inviting the field that lies spread out before us! Some of these thoughts, perhaps in another form, I may have presented to you before, but it is by line upon line and precept upon precept that I desire to enforce my advice; and were I never to address you again, I would repeat the counsel I have so often given, in regard to the production of new and fine fruits, namely, "*To plant the most mature and perfect seeds of the most hardy, vigorous, and valuable varieties; and as a shorter process, ensuring more certain and happy results, cross or hybridize your best fruits.*" Before many years shall have passed my voice will be hushed in that stillness which knows no waking; but while I live I would continue to impress on your minds the importance of the beneficent work of providing these blessings for generations to come; and when I am dead I would by these words still speak to you. Thus will you advance one of the most delightful and important industries of the world; thus will you build up a pomology for the most favored nation upon which the sun ever shone; thus will you contribute to the welfare of home, kindred, and country, and transmit your names to future generations as benefactors of your race —

" Our lips shall tell them to our sons,
 And they again to theirs,
 That generations yet unborn
 May teach them to their heirs."

CATALOGUE.

In this connection I desire to refer to our catalogue of fruits, as the most important achievement of our Society. This was the first attempt in this country to suppress by common consent our inferior fruits from cultivation, and to define the adaptation and value of approved varieties to a widespread territory. Few can have any idea of the patient investigation which this has received from the committee, from its first preparation by Mr. Barry, in 1860, down to the present time. With the issue of this catalogue commenced a new era in the literature of American Pomology, by which every section of our country and the Provinces of British America were to be acknowledged and recognized in its classification.

At the time of its first publication it was issued in octavo form, but in less than ten years we have been obliged to enlarge it to quarto form, so as to admit additional columns for the new States and Territories coming within our jurisdiction. Instead of the fifty-four varieties of fruit recommended in 1848, this catalogue now contains the names of five hundred and seventy-seven kinds, and with the list of six hundred and twenty-five rejected varieties passed upon by the Society, makes a total of twelve hundred and two on which the Society has set its seal of approval or rejection. An important part of this work, not shown by these figures, is the reduction of our list as compared with former catalogues, by striking out varieties too good to be placed in our rejected list, yet superseded by better sorts. In pears alone, this reduction has been from one hundred and twenty-two to ninety-

one kinds. And thus it should ever be our aim to condense our list into as small a number of varieties as possible. When we consider that our catalogue embraces in its columns fifty States and Territories, including the Provinces of British America, with great diversities of soil and climate; that some of the new districts have but little experience in fruit culture; and that from them we have consequently but limited reports, we can readily appreciate the difficulties attendant on this great work.

It was an important step taken by the Society when it placed its mark of condemnation on the long list of unworthy fruits which were then in our collections, thereby saving to cultivators a vast amount of time, trouble, and expense in the propagation of useless varieties. But a great and important work, requiring the utmost caution, is still before us, to avoid in the future the insertion in its pages of the names of inferior or insufficiently tested fruits, and to establish a correct nomenclature for all time, so that with every revision of our catalogue it may more nearly approximate to perfection. To aid in this most desirable work, the various State and local committees should keep well organized, and from time to time transmit to the General Chairman of the Fruit Committee all the information which is acquired in their several districts. It was the original object of the catalogue, and must always continue to be its aim, to restrict the worthless or indifferent kinds, to discover and retain the most valuable, and to furnish to all sections the fruits best adapted to their respective localities.

For the purpose of perfecting our catalogue, a meeting of

the Committee on Revision was held at Rochester, New York, soon after our last session.

After several days of deliberation, the present form, and the new plan of making three general divisions, and arranging the States in their order of climatic and characteristic association in regard to fruit culture, was adopted. This was a work of much difficulty, but I am happy to learn that it is regarded with great favor as a most important improvement, and will constitute, it is believed, through the united efforts of our members, ultimately the acknowledged authority of the country.

DECEASED MEMBERS.

While we rejoice in the presence of so many of our members on this occasion, we are reminded of the absence of some who have been removed by death. Since our last biennial session, two Vice-Presidents and one Ex-Vice President have deceased.

I allude to Lawrence Young and John S. Downer, of Kentucky, and Dr. J. S. Curtis, of California. Mr. Lawrence Young was an early member of our association, and for a long course of years held the office of Vice-President for the State of Kentucky. He was born on the 6th of December, 1793, in Caroline County, Virginia. He showed an early taste for knowledge, and made himself well acquainted with all branches of learning, especially with the science of Agriculture and Horticulture, and by his interest and example he learned others to appreciate what he so dearly loved. He was not only a scientific, but a practical cultivator of fruits, and for

these labors his own and adjoining States often expressed their obligations. For many years he was the Agricultural Editor of the "Louisville Journal." In later years he edited the "Western Ruralist," and for thirty years he compiled a monthly meteorological table for the Smithsonian Institute. Besides being Vice-President of this Association, he held the offices of President of the Jefferson County Horticultural Society, and President of the Kentucky Pomological Society. Energy, perseverance, and a love of nature were prominent traits in his character through life. He died at the ripe old age of seventy-nine years.

Mr. John S. Downer, our Vice-President for Kentucky, who was with us at our last session, has also been removed by death. He was born on the 19th of June, 1809, in Culpepper County, Virginia. His taste for horticulture and pomology dawned with his early years, and while yet a youth he discovered an ardent love for these pursuits which continued through life. In early manhood he established the Forest Nursery, and here from obscure youth, without fame or fortune, he built up an enviable reputation as a nurseryman and pomologist. He tested under his own inspection many varieties of fruits, and has done much to improve Pomology in the Central and Southern States, having produced several varieties of fruits which are now extensively cultivated. He devoted much time and patience to the production of new varieties of strawberry, and the Downer's Prolific, the Charles Downing, and the Kentucky, bear witness to his success. By testing and disseminating other fruits, he has conferred blessings on the pomology, not only of his own region, but on our whole

country. He died on the grounds where he first settled, and where, in addition to his many attainments, he has left the name of "an honest man, the noblest work of God."

The seat of Dr. Joshua S. Curtis, of Sacramento, California, is also vacated by death. He was one of the representatives of that State, and was elected Vice-President at our last session. He was a gentleman of noble bearing, and much interested in the progress of science, and the elevation of our art. Some of us can remember the interest which he manifested, although for the first time with us, in the welfare for the Society, and the words of counsel and approval which he spoke to us at the festival that closed our meeting at Richmond; and it was his intention to be with us at this session. Dr. Curtis was born in North Carolina, and died in San Joaquin County, California, November 18, 1872, aged sixty-three years. He graduated at Chapel Hill College, and was also a graduate either of Philadelphia or Baltimore Medical College. He went to Tennessee in 1832, where he was extensively engaged in farming and his profession. In 1837 he removed to Holly Springs, Mississippi, owned a cotton plantation, and was the treasurer of the State. He went to Sacramento, California, in 1850, where he resumed his practice as a physician. A few years afterwards he gave up his profession, and was engaged in farming in Yolo County until the time of his death. He represented that county in the State legislature. His home was ever open to the poor, and his house was the home of the destitute.

Nor can I close this record of deceased members without allusion to another, formerly connected with us in official

relations, who has been called from this to the spirit-land. I allude to the Rev. Jeremiah Knox, of Pittsburg, Penn., who died of apoplexy, Nov. 13, 1872, aged fifty-eight. His father was a minister, which profession he also adopted while at the age of seventeen. He removed to Pittsburg early in life, and became eminent in his profession. He was social and sympathetic in his instincts, prepossessing in personal appearance, and gifted with oratorical powers. He was an old member, often attended the sessions of this Society, took part in its discussions, and was known throughout our land for his interest in the culture of the grape, the strawberry, and other small fruits. His enterprise in the culture of these was remarkable, and his plantations of the strawberry and the blackberry were very extensive. He gave to the *Triomphe de Gand* a new and extensive fame, and distributed far and wide the strawberry, No. 700, of his collection, to which he gave the name of *Jucunda*. He entered largely into the grape excitement, which existed a few years since, propagating immense quantities of vines, especially Concord, Delaware, and Martha. His name as the "Strawberry King," and the proprietor of the Knox fruit farm, will ever be remembered in the annals of American Pomology.

These associates have gone. It has pleased a wise Providence to remove them from the sphere of duty here, but we trust in the hope that we shall one day join them in that better land, where friends shall part no more.

CONCLUSION.

Pardon me, my friends, for the time I have occupied in the performance of a duty required of me by your Constitution.

With the close of this session will terminate the first quarter of a century in the history of our national association. We are now about to enter on the second era of its existence. A great work has already been accomplished, but more remains to be done. We have but just entered on the broad field which lies open to us, and gathered a few of its first fruits. Many of its former members have paid the debt of nature, and we, who were among the founders of our institutions, shall soon be called to follow them. But this Society, we believe, will live on to bless the world, and as time progresses the results of your labors in the development of our wonderful resources, will be more and more appreciated. And as our nation advances in wealth and refinement, so will the culture of fruits be better understood, and their importance and usefulness be more fully realized. Willing hands and generous hearts will labor for the same cause, and generation after generation will enjoy the fruits which your hands have planted for them. Persevere, then, my friends, with the noble work in which you are employed. Go on, until our ultimate object is attained, in perfecting one of the most useful and beautiful sciences of the world.

We have traced the progress of American Pomology from a period within fifty years. But who shall predict its development for the half century to come? Judging from the past, we may anticipate that ere that day shall dawn, our whole conti-

ment will be opened up for use, and the cultivation of fruits become scarcely secondary to any other branch of rural art. Look at the progress of the past, and estimate, if you can, the increase of the future, when the population of our country shall exceed one hundred millions of souls, as many now living may expect to witness ; when our fruits shall be adapted to every section of our land, and become not merely a condiment, but a necessary portion of our food.

Standing, as we do, on the line which divides the past from the present, let us remember with gratitude the labors of those who laid the foundations of this institution ; let us remember those who have so assiduously co-operated with us for the advancement of its objects, and let us transmit to posterity the priceless blessings our calling is destined to confer. And as our members, from time to time, shall assemble to gather up the fruit of their research, may they have reason to rejoice more and more in the benefactions which it bestows on mankind ; and when at last we shall be called to relinquish the cultivation of our orchards, gardens, and vineyards on earth, may we be permitted to participate in the cultivation of —

“ That tree which bears immortal fruit,
 Without a canker at the root ;
 Its healing leaves to us be given,
 Its bloom on earth, its fruit in heaven ! ”

