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AN ADDRESS

Delivered at Middletown, in the State of Rhode Island,

ON THE

21ST. DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1854.

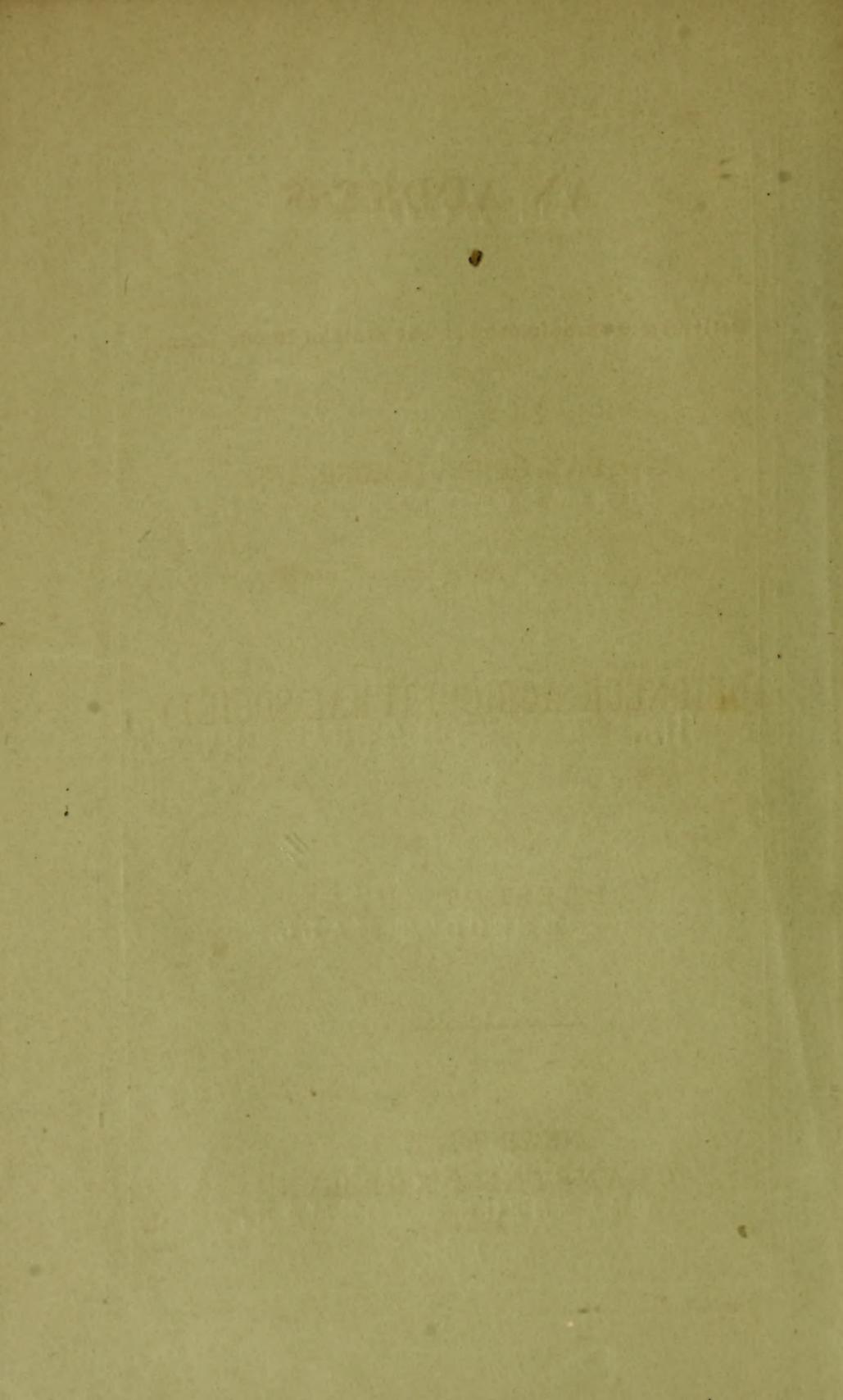
BEFORE THE

AQUIDNECK AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

BY

J. PRESCOTT HALL.

NEWPORT, R. I.
CRANSTON & NORMAN,
1854.



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MIDDLETOWN, SEPT. 23, 1854.

TO J. PRESCOTT HALL, ESQ.,

SIR:—In behalf of the Aquidneck Agricultural Society, of Rhode Island. the undersigned, a committee for this purpose specially appointed, are instructed to return you their thanks for the able and appropriate address delivered by you on Thursday last, and request a copy for publication.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

JOSHUA COGGESHALL, } Committee.
NATHANIEL GREENE, }

GENTLEMEN:

The address which you have been pleased to commend in terms far beyond its deserts, is hereby placed under the control of the Society represented by you, with a wish that it were worthy of their acceptance.

Very truly yours,

J. PRESCOTT HALL,

To MESSRS. GOGGESHALL AND GREENE, Committee, &c.

Newport, Sept. 25th, 1854.

ADDRESS.

“ Quid faciat lætas segetes :” “ What makes the harvests joyous : under what sign should the earth be ploughed, and the vines trained upon their supports : what is proper management for cattle, for sheep and for bees ; for of all these, said the Roman Poet, I propose to speak.”

FARMERS OF RHODE ISLAND ! You need not fear, in the brief address which I am now about to deliver, at your request,—that I shall attempt to follow Virgil in his immortal work upon agriculture ; for, while I am wholly destitute of Virgil’s genius, so am I as far behind him in all knowledge of the subject ; which was so complete on his part, as to leave us in doubt which is most to be admired, the profound lessons he gave his countrymen in this important science, or the harmonious numbers in which those lessons were poured out.

And yet, it were an employment not altogether unprofitable, to study the works of this great master, and consider how much we are in advance of the ancients, if at all, in our information, as to the best methods in which the earth can be tilled, and our patient flocks and herds most profitably managed.

The Greeks and Romans attached more importance to

the value of frequent and repeated ploughings, than the farmers of New England are wont to do ; and it may be fairly questioned, whether we of modern times have not receded, rather than advanced in this part of practical, and indeed, indispensable husbandry.

Something must of course be attributed to differences in climates and seasons, which are here, sometimes short and always variable or uncertain ; while the skies of Italy and Greece reflect their azure tints serene, with a steadiness to us almost unknown.

But in cognate regions, such as those of the British Isles for example, the practice of much ploughing is adopted, and obtains more generally, and perseveringly, than in any part of North America.

When I was in England, some years ago, I observed not only the direct and cross furrow, but in many instances a third and diagonal one, which served to cut the soil in a new direction and subdivide it into smaller parts. And for this purpose, let me say in passing, that they frequently drive the ox there, in a manner not adopted by us, and which I think much inferior to the New England method ; for you would be amused to see four oxen harnessed tandem-wise patiently trudging along, one after the other ;—the leading animal being so far from the ploughman, that he could hardly be reached by the fifty-foot whip which the Hottentott flourished from his cape wagon, as he drove Mr. Gordon Cumming, through the trackless wilds of Southern Africa.

Tilling the earth, was of course, the first employment which engaged the attention of mankind ; and without referring to sacred writings for an illustration of this fact,

we may, nevertheless, turn with propriety to the pages of profane writers, in ages far remote, to ascertain what men then did to fill their store houses and improve their condition.

Hesiod one of the earliest of the Greek Poets, was himself engaged in rural pursuits in the first days of his manhood ; and hence, when the poetic divinity was stirred within him, he put forth a work upon agriculture still in existence, and now the most ancient in the world, which he naturally clothed in the stately hexameters of his native language. Homer, who lived at a period nine hundred years older than the Christian aera, has such frequent allusions to the employments of husbandry, both in the Iliad and in the Odyssey, that we may well be persuaded that these pursuits were not only honorable in his time, but that they largely engaged the attention of learned men.

In his description of the shield of Achilles, he gives an elaborate account of the subjects selected by Vulcan for its adornment ; some of which were taken from proceedings in agriculture ; for he says, there was upon it, a soft fallow field three times ploughed ; and that oxen, the animals now employed by us for the same purpose, were driven on all sides by numerous ploughmen.

In another place in the Iliad, however, Homer declares that mules are better than oxen to drag the strong plough through the deep fallow, although the latter were selected as more ornamental in poetic description. He also describes the process by which the harvests were gathered in ; for upon the shield was placed an enclosure of wheat, and workmen were reaping it with sharp sickles. The reapers were followed by binders, and these last by boys

who gathered the handfuls as they fell, and supplied the binders therewith, and the sheaves were then fastened with cords.

But the harvest seems to have been a festival, as well as a necessity in Homer's time ; for under an oak, servants were preparing a feast by the sacrifice of a large ox, the flesh of which, strewed with white flour by women, formed repast for the more dignified laborers. On another part of the work so artfully fashioned, was a vineyard heavy with grapes, surrounded by a ditch and rampart ; while a herd of cows, with horns erect, occupied a place upon the shield at once curious and instructive; for from it we may infer that the mechanic arts were in the highest state of advancement 2700 years ago, since it is not at all probable that Homer drew upon his imagination for his circumstantial account of the form, the ornaments and finishing of weapons of war ; but must have described those which he had seen, and which were in actual use amongst the ancient Greeks.

From the passage last quoted, we learn that fences made by a ditch with the earth thrown upon one side were in use, as far back as King Solomon's time, and that the hedges of old England are not of modern invention or construction. One other thing we also know from the passage referred to, and that is, that the cows in Homer's time were not Durhams, since those upon the shield, had *their* horns erect ; and to this subject I shall recur again, when, in an appropriate place, I intend to say a word or two in relation to this breed of animals, now so wide-spread and so far renowned. In one particular, however, they seem to have fared better when Troy was besieged than we do now ; for Homer says that as the

ploughmen came to the end of the furrow, on the boundary of the field, a man approaching gave into their hands a cup of luscious wine, which made them more eager to accomplish their work.

It will thus be seen that the maxims of Mahomet and Father Mathew are of comparatively recent date ; and that laborers in the poetic ages of Greece, had failed to take the pledge.

To come back to the subject from which we have for a moment diverged, let me remark that the notion as to the necessity of much and frequent ploughing seems to have pervaded all systems of ancient cultivation ; and the Roman farmers always ploughed hard land, at *least* three times before it was sowed. This was first done in the Spring,—the next time in the Summer, and the third in the Autumn. By this means, the earth was exposed twice to the heat of the sun and once to frost : but if the land was uncommonly tenacious and stubborn, it received the plow the fourth time, at the end of Autumn, or beginning of winter ; and thus says Virgil :

“ Illa seges demum votis respondet avari

“ Agricolæ. bis quæ solem, bis frigora sensit :

“ Illius immensæ ruperunt horrea messes.”

That field, at last, answers the wishes of the covetous farmer, which twice hath felt the sun and twice the cold ; and immense harvests are wont to burst his barns. The ancients, like the moderns, paid also great attention to the rotation of crops, using ashes freely upon their lands, and burning the stubble upon such as were unproductive.

The employment of various substances, to stimulate and quicken the soil is of the most ancient date ; and

marl of various kinds was used for this purpose in some parts of Europe, 1800 years ago; different descriptions of soil receiving their appropriate dressing from this source. As to manure, the ancient writers give very precise directions both for its preparation and use, the worth of each and all substances being carefully calculated and classed. One thing it is very curious to observe; they placed no value upon the deposits of water fowl,—an estimate which if correct, would place the Chincha Islands at a discount; and it was only yesterday that I read in a newspaper, that the Roman notion upon this subject, is becoming American also. The writer (a correspondent of the *Courier and Enquirer* who dates from Washington) says “the ‘Guano Question’ occupied the attention of a “special committee of the House of Representatives during “the last session. The committee found that three successive Administrations had made strenuous efforts to “reduce the price of Peruvian Guano, without effect; “and recommended that a duty be laid on Chincha Island “Guana, unless the Peruvian Government shall, after due “representation, grant to our merchants the right to purchase the article upon the terms of the most favored “nation. *Guano has proved an expensive delusion; something of a humbug.* It was used by the Incas three or “four hundred years ago with great advantage, but is too “fast for these times. It extinguishes the seed with which “it comes in contact, and nearly burns up the soil itself. “The price of Guano here is from fifty to sixty five dollars per ton of 2000 lbs. Its use is chiefly confined to “the districts between the Delaware and the Capes of the “Chesapeake. The farmers in that region are coming to “the conclusion that the immense sums expended upon

“fiery stimulants to their soils have been thrown away. Its use has been particularly disastrous this year. It destroyed nearly all the Indian corn planted with it.— The replanted corn on the same lands came up, it is true, but was caught by the drought and will not mature and the singular spectacle is presented, of a fair crop on lands not manured at all, and of no product worth gathering in adjoining fields overspread with this costly but most deleterious foreign substance. It is estimated that two millions of dollars were expended last Spring by the farmers of Virginia, Maryland, the District of Columbia and Delaware, in the purchase of Guano, and that they have lost five millions of dollars in consequence.”

Farmers of Rhode Island, if we must be dependent upon foreign nations for *anything*, let us never place our crops in peril by a neglect of the fertilizers within our reach. Never give up rock weed for guano, nor neglect your barn yards for the Chincha Islands.

Lime was used on Roman orchards and on vineyards; and applied in an especial manner to cherry trees, after they were brought by Lucullus from Asia Minor, about an hundred years before the Christian era. The ancients, we find upon reference to their books, were very ingenious and skilful in the construction and adapting of agricultural implements; employing most of those which are generally supposed to be of modern invention. They had harrows, clod-crushers, fanning machines and ploughs of every variety, with mould-boards, double as well as single; with coulter and without coulter, with wheels and without wheels; broad pointed and narrow, with cutters of many kinds and fashions; and the Egyptians used cylin-

drical rollers, almost exactly like our own, which were drawn by horses. The Romans also ridged their lands by back furrowing, as we do now; and that too upon soil which was *dry* as well as that which was wet; and in most cases they ploughed to a good depth; indeed, as deep as we do, although they practiced some forms of ploughing which we do not; the object being to stir the earth in narrow and perfectly straight lines, so as to present a soil well pulverized and lightened up, with a surface surprisingly even and level. Ploughing indeed with the ancients was of the last importance, and one of their writers asks, what is the first requisite in good cultivation? To which he answers to plough *well*. What is the second? to plough; what the third? to manure; and these answers became maxims amongst the ancient farmers. And they were in fact much more attentive to all modes of cultivation by stirring the earth, than we are, for their fields were so sown, that the grain came up in rows, separated by intervals wide enough for the passage of a plough which was applied to these intervals, even after the crop had attained to a considerable height. Wheat and barley were afterwards hoed at least twice and sometimes oftener.

Reaping machines were also in use in ancient times, propelled by oxen; and this *modern* idea, which created such sensation at the Crystal Palace in London, a short time since, is as old as our religion. The machine not only cut off the ears of wheat, but dropped them into a proper receiver, and it answered as well on open and level land, as it now does upon the western praries.

Threshing was performed in all the various ways adopted by us, by the flail, by horses and oxen to tread out the seed; and the Carthagenians, it is said

used threshing machines, driven by the power of animals, long before their subjugation by the Romans. Rollers were employed for various purposes in Roman husbandry and especially for the laying down of a surface hard and even for their threshing floors. Fanning mills were also in use, or machines of like effect, while sieves served to assist in cleaning the grain more thoroughly. The art of cheese making was as perfect 2000 years ago, as it is now ; and that which was most liked at Rome, was produced in the mountainous region near Rodez in the South of France. It was made of ewe's milk, and bore an unusual price. How much of advance then have we made in this art, since Gaul furnished Rome with one of its great luxuries ? Why, this very cheese, now known as Roquefort, is, to my taste, the best in the world, and it still bears its ancient reputation, being made in the same manner, and maintaining its original value. The moderns in this one particular, have made no step forward, but are glad to be able to maintain the ground on which the ancients stood.

All the fertilizers of land known to us were known also to the Greeks and Romans. They gathered them together as we do, and sheltered them from wind and sun, in hollow water-tight receptacles. These fertilizers they applied frequently in Spring and Autumn, but in moderate quantities each time, and they supposed that wet land demanded nourishment of this kind, more than dry ; an opinion, in which, from a little experience on a very wet farm I am inclined to concur.

The mixing of earths, the light with the heavy and the rich with the unproductive, was much practised as a

substitute for better fertilizers, and sometimes chalk was applied to sandy land and sand to chalky.

Every kind of fence used by us, both living and dead, was employed also by the Romans; from the quick fence, or hedge, down to walls of stone and mud. And here let me throw in a word about stone walls, so strong and useful in practice, but which disfigure the fair face of our beautiful Island so much. It has generally been supposed that old England is wholly destitute of these ornaments, and that all her fences are picturesque and tasteful. Not so. I have ridden for miles in her midland counties by the side of rude stone walls constructed exactly like our own, equally strong, equally useful, equally straight, equally monotonous, and equally ugly. It is true that graceful hedges abound in England; but our fathers brought the art of making stone walls, as they did their language from the counties in which they were born; and there is not one word or expression, no, not a *Yankeeism*, employed in New England and supposed to be local, original and peculiar with us, but what is now in use in some parts of Old England; as any one may prove who will refer to the very curious dictionary of Archaic and Provincial words recently published in London by Mr. Halliwell.

But to return. The ancients had many works upon agriculture, giving minute and systematic instruction in the whole science and economy of cultivation; from the first preparation of a field, down the final disposition of the crop; and these books were studied by all persons who had the charge of land. A Roman author remarks, “on the health of cattle, I have borrowed much from
 “ Mago the Carthaginian, which *I make my herdsmen read*

“*carefully.*” These authors discuss all parts of husbandry, including the description of a proper farmhouse; the size of a farm which is most profitable; the subject of cultivation by the proprietor, by a bailiff, or a head-farmer, or by tenants; and their conclusions would probably coincide, for the most part, with our own.

Gentlemen, you cannot have failed to perceive, by the course of my remarks, that I have very little familiarity with the great business and science of Agriculture. My occupation for a long time led me far from the walks of nature to the stirring haunts of busy men; from the fair fields, the pleasant valleys and sunny hills of Rhode Island, to the thronged marts and crowded pavements of a great commercial city; from the seclusion and charms of a country life, to the exciting scenes of the forum; where man meets man, with a suspicious mind, with caution and a never sleeping vigilance. And yet born as I was, in an agricultural district; educated amongst farmers; associating with them and their families during a quarter of a century, I confess that my heart has always been true to its first impressions, and has never failed to lean strongly and warmly towards those, who are engaged in the pure and peaceful occupations of a rural life.

The great orator of New England; the Farmer of Marshfield and of Franklin, once told me that he esteemed it as a part of the good fortune of his career, that he was reared amongst the hills of New Hampshire, spending there his youth and early manhood, in association with farmers, and the sons of farmers, for more than thirty years.

He considered them as a race of thinking men, who could follow their occupations by the use of physical pow-

ers ; while the mind was left free for reflection, undisturbed by fierce pursuits, or exciting passions. He said, "you and I, sir, have learned much from this class of society ; we have learned to place more value upon solid merit and less upon show and words. We have learned to address jurors as our peers, because those we associated with in our early time were our equals in all respects, and never descended below the level upon which they originally stood." I admitted then, and I admit now, here and everywhere, the respect I feel for the companions of my youth, and thank God that I was born under the free canopy, the pure skies, and amid the lovely scenes of an open country, in a rural home. There to my fancy the sun shines ever brightly, the fields are always green, the brooks murmur down their slopes, discoursing sweet music to soothed and listening ears, while nature presents herself forever in tranquil and graceful repose.

But although my manner of life from the starting point of an active and laborious pursuit, has been such as to call me away from scenes like these, yet I never have ceased to observe the progress of Agriculture, nor suffered myself to unlearn that which I acquired at an early period. I was made acquainted in my youth, with trees, with plants and with animated nature.

The forms and habits of birds, of sheep, of cattle and of horses, I have studied with attention ; and of them, I think I have some little knowledge. But so distrustful have I been as to my own fitness to discuss from knowledge or experience, any topic proper for this occasion, or this assembly, that I requested one of my neighbors, who is himself "every inch" a farmer, to give me some hints for a practical discourse.

This he very kindly did, in the form of a note which I intend to introduce here in this place, paragraph by paragraph, just as it was written, that I may thereby express my obligation to him, who has done as much to lay the foundation of this society as any man living; and I need not add the name of David Buffam to indicate the gentleman to whom I refer.

He writes me thus—"Some farmers have a great aversion to book-farming. It would, however, be well for all farmers, to be well educated and fond of reading, and compare the experiments of others with their own experience and to holdfast whatever would prove beneficial."

This first sentence of my neighbor's letter, led me to look back upon by-gone practices, to see how much of progress men have made during the last 3000 years in the practical business of agriculture; and a few of the results have already been stated.

He then proceeds in the following manner—"Deep ploughing to be encouraged as promoting ease in tilling and increase of crops."

In this opinion, you will perceive he agrees with all the early writers; and hence I have devoted some space to shew what the ancient practice was in this regard. Nay further; I have endeavored to make this maxim useful to myself; and I hope also to those who are to come after me; by carrying it into effect on that part of my farm well known to Mr. Buffam, which has been called "Dyer's Swamp." Of this piece of land, Professor Jackson in his Geological Survey of the State speaks thus: "A shallow but very extensive deposit of swamp-muck occurs in Dyer's Swamp—near the base of Miantonomy Hill,

situated north of Newport. It now lies wholly barren, or is only covered with bushes, and rank aquatic rush, and grasses. By drainage, effected by border ditches, draining to the North, this tract of land may be easily reclaimed and converted into a very rich meadow."

This description is perfectly accurate ; and when I took personal possession of the Malbone Place in the year 1849, I thought I would endeavor to remove in some degree, the very proper and just reproach thus cast upon it by Professor Jackson. For this purpose I carefully examined its surface, and found that the water with which the swamp was filled, proceeded for the most part from copious and never failing springs which gush up under the willow trees near the road at the base of the hill. I found also that there was no outlet for this flow, and that when the rains which pour down the slopes and ravines surrounding the swamp, should evaporate in the sun, as they always do in summer, the ground must still be saturated by the water from the willow springs.

Satisfied, however, of the justness of Professor Jackson's conclusions, I resolved to follow his advice. I began, therefore, by drawing lines of ditches all around the four sides of this almost level plain so as to cut off the deluge from the hills ; and I cross-ditched also, from North to South in three other places, so that there are five considerable arteries, through which the waters may flow. Many cuts were then made from East to West, as veins connected with the arteries ; and these cuts absorbed so much of the supply furnished by the springs that the surface of the swamp became measurably dry. The next thing was to find an outlet to the sea ; and the eye alone, unaided by instruments easily told us, that if a line were

drawn through the North East corner of Mr. Hunter's farm, that the waters from the springs would rush into the sea at the cove ; and thus, not only would my land be drained, but Mr. Hunter's supplied in all time to come from fountains which never fail.

Permission for the experiment having been obtained, I connected the northwest corner of the swamp, at the point indicated by Professor Jackson, with the sea, by a ditch ; and to my complete satisfaction, all the waters of the brook, which had been backed upon the land and held there, flowed off, with a steady and rapid motion ; the descent being greater than that which I had supposed.

Drainage having been effected, the next step was to rid the land of its bushes, rushes and the rank aquatic grasses described by the Professor ; and this was done by means of stout hoes, specially constructed by the blacksmith for that purpose, by bill hooks and scythes.

The worthless alders and wild-rose bushes being torn up ; the roots were consumed by fire, and their ashes, after the Roman fashion, strewed upon the upland.

The second year the surface was covered with a crop of wild grass ; and this was mowed, making tolerable fodder. But still something was wanting, and by a hint from my friend General George Cadwallader, himself an experienced farmer as well as gallant soldier, crowned with well earned laurels, I soon discovered what that something was ; it was a cast iron plough with the deep furrows of my neighbor Buffum. This was applied, and cuts differing in depth from eight inches to twelve and backing upon each other, were made by this noble instrument over about thirty acres.

The effect was not only to drain the land, but to furnish us with crops of timothy and red-top, reaching as high on some parts as three tons to the acre, and no where did they descend below two. Within the last four weeks, taking advantage of the drought, I followed the advice of the intelligent editor and practical farmer, who conducts the Massachusetts Ploughman; and instead of spending time in lamenting the conjunction of Sirius with the sun to burn up our fields, we allowed the Dog-Star to rage, and began to clear our ditches and to plough our swamp—now become meadow as Professor Jackson predicted.

My farmer, Mr. Josiah Albro, a man of sense and judgment, followed this purpose with all energy, and in a few days fifteen acres more were lying in furrow and will soon be ready to take the seed. In this manner we have reclaimed near fifty acres; the expense of the procedure not being one fifth the value of the land in its present state; and Professor Jackson has told you how worthless it was at the time of his survey. Are there not *other* swamps on this Island besides *Dyer's*, to be treated in the same way; and may we not increase the quantity of our meadows by these means, and thus add acres to our pastures?

The land referred to, will now produce good crops of hay without manure; but from an experiment made last spring upon six acres, we find, that a top dressing from the stable and barn not only improves the quality of the hay, but increases the yield most decidedly. It is our purpose, therefore, during the ensuing Winter, to cart largely from our barn cellar upon this reclaimed swamp; for you must know that all the proceeds of our stables, our sheep-pens and pig-pens are kept from the rain, the wind and the

sun, between substantial stone walls, under cover of the same roof, which protects our cattle and our hay. We have contrived this building with three entrances, and exits, one above another, by selecting the spur of a hill's side, where three levels are obtained ; by which means our barn, one hundred feet long by forty-four feet wide, is three stories in height. The upper story, which is approached from the east, and entirely above the earth, contains the hay, in quantity this year, at least one hundred and sixty tons, being nearly four-fold the amount produced by the same farm when it was in the hands of my tenant ; and this hay instead of being pitched up upon lofty mows, by the aid of three, four or five men, as the case may be, is all thrown below the level of the load, or horizontally from the cart, by the man who wields the pitchfork. The next story beneath, the east side of which is below the earth's surface, is approached from the South and the cattle are tied up on floors which extend the whole length of the barn, receiving their fodder from above, which is of course all thrown down through a scuttle or hatchway, the approach to the hay loft being at a right-angle to that which leads to the cow-stable. The first, or lowest story, which entered from the West, has its east side also below the level of the earth, and the whole of the first story and the east side of the second are made of solid stones, laid in mortar ; and this first story, receives all the produce of the stables above, through trap-doors, which open upwards therein, and at the same time it gives shelter to the swine.

Thus it will be perceived that we have at once secured ease of approach for our hay ; convenience in the feeding and care of our cattle, and a free departure with

our loads of manure, down the slope which leads to Dyer's Meadow where we intend to deposit it.

This plain, very obviously, and at no distant period, was a bed of the sea which invaded it through the cove, opposite the northern part of Coaster's Island, for at the depth of between two and three feet, we have penetrated through the superincumbent earth, formed by the decay of vegetable matter and the washings from the eastern hills, and struck the hard compact flat sand; (as it is called,) in all respects like that which forms the bottom of our harbor; and hence the foundations of our main ditches are in fact, firm roads.

And while I am upon this topic, not of personal interest only, but of general concern, I trust, to all those who have barns to make, or swamps to reclaim,—let me repeat a remark lately made to me by the well educated, intelligent, and sagacious farmer of Vacluse which will long have a sticking place in my memory. “I once thought,” said he, “that all fertilizers should be placed below the surface of the earth by the plough; but I begin to believe that their true application is upon it; in other words, I begin to think that top-dressing, after all, is the best.” In this opinion I should concur were my experience such as to justify me in giving it an expression. The Romans thought highly of water as a fertilizer, and meadows were their admiration, because always ready to produce without culture; and they recommend the making of meadows *at all events*, if you have water, and if not, then to form them dry.

They admit that the grass of uplands will make finer hay than that of the lowlands; but insist that large crops are to be expected only from the latter; and they give

directions for passing the water slowly and evenly over the fields without stagnation. Water when allowed to stand upon meadows reduces the temperature of the ground too much at the roots of the plants, and for this reason it should be drawn off. And upon the authority of recent investigation we may now affirm, that the practice of tubular underground draining through porous pipes, is as old as the days of Ninevah and Babylon. On the hill sides, near the sources of the Danube in South Germany, where all the ground is full of springs, I observed lines of ditches, one above another, conducting the superabundant fluid gently over the grass, whereby, and by this means alone, three crops in a season are obtained.

The third sentence in Mr. Buffum's letter is as follows :
 "Keep the *best* domestic animals, as in general much more profitable ; and be sure to keep all kinds of stock *well*, and then they are always in a saleable condition."

These sentences may, in my opinion, be treated as axioms by farmers and herdsmen, to be acted upon, not only as the results of experience, but as agricultural wisdom itself. "Keep the best domestic animals" says Mr. Buffum. Ah! we will do so: but *which are the best?* and here come in all the jarring opinions as to long-horns and short-horns; Aldernies^{ies} and Ayreshires; the Herefords and Devons amongst cattle;—Suffolks, Berkshires and the Essex pigs of Lord Western come next;—while the Merinos of Spain and France, the flocks of Saxony, and the Cotswolds, the Leicesters and South Downs of Old England all follow in order. Nor will it do in these days of Shanghaes, Chittagongs, Malays, Game Cocks, and Bantams, entirely to forget the feathered race, lest we be

crowded over by all the exhibitors last winter at Barnum's Museum.

I shall not enter into an argument as to the merits of these various classes, but refer you at once to those authors who have carried on the dispute so vigorously ; and especially to the agricultural reports of Massachusetts, where the war wages hottest and the toughest stories are told. I have various works upon animals, all of which I read with pleasure, and I hope not without some instruction.

This is an important topic for the Farmers of Rhode Island. The animals employed here are not for the most part of our own breeding, although we have every facility and temptation for raising all the useful kinds.

We have grass and water in abundance ; — our climate is good, our fields generally well fenced, and if any county in New England can breed horses, cattle and sheep to advantage, this county can. As for hay there is no end to it, and we need therefore

“ Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages,”

but rest secure in the possession of these provisions for the animal creation. I was much struck by a remark made by the distinguished gentleman who addressed you last year, and to whom I have already referred. He says in his discourse, (I quote from memory,) that we, on this Island, cut too much hay in proportion to our acres, and do not pasture enough. As I was shaping my farm, almost exclusively for hay, I was at first disposed to question this proposition ; — but when I came to consider the economy of pasturage, in comparison with the crop cured and preserved for winter's use, in an expensive barn, I was

forced to believe Mr. Hazard to be right ; and, accordingly, I am now preparing portions of my meadow land for pasturage.

Indeed this use of the soil was in high estimation in ancient times ; for we are told by Cicero, that when Cato the Censor was asked, what the best policy in the management of landed property was, he answered — “ good grazing.” What next ? — “ tolerable grazing.” ! What third ? “ poor grazing ” said he. What fourth ? “ tilling,” was the reply. This is the same Censor, who, when interrogated by the same interlocutor, as to his opinion of lending money upon interest, answered the question by asking another — “ And what, said Cato do you think of killing a man” ?

If then we have the capacity for the breeding and raising of cattle, of sheep and horses, why do we neglect it, if profitable ? Is it advantageous, Farmers of Rhode Island, to carry your money to Maine, to New Hampshire and Vermont, to purchase there, the very animals that feed upon your pastures and consume the stores laid up for winter ?

If we raise what we now purchase, — and I think we can do so without diminishing materially those products of our farms which you are in the habit of selling ; — do we not thereby add something to the general property of the commonwealth, and so to its prosperity ? Think of this gentlemen, and if you will commence a more extensive system of breeding than that hitherto adopted, let me come to results at once, and recommend you to plunge into Mr. Youatt’s book, at page 226, and take the “ Short-Horns” to begin with.

I know that some fanciful gentlemen near Boston are

almost crazy about the Aldernies ; but this breed, although tolerably handsome and good milkers, have no size. They are worthless for the shambles, the cart and the plough, and all these things you are to consider when you breed for profit.

The number of cattle slaughtered annually in England near 20 years ago when the population was much below its present standard, is estimated by Mr. Youatt at sixteen hundred thousand,—and now if this reckoning be right it cannot fall short of two millions.

Suppose the animals to be thus slaughtered were Aldernies all, and nothing but Aldernies ! what a lowing would there not be in Smithfield, and what massacres of the Innocents by millions would follow to supply the great demand !

Our cattle are destined for an inevitable end, and by one mode ; an end to which all animated nature must come in the manner designed by the Creator.

Our bulls, our cows and our oxen—after their appropriate uses have terminated, are all to be delivered over to the butcher, and we should have an eye to this final result, when we select our stock.

I have looked at the different classes of animals. I have personally examined various breeds in England, in Belgium, in France, in Germany, and in the United States ; and out of them all, give me the Short Horns.

They are good milkers, good workers, good but not extravagant feeders, and they have that which my eye must always seek—they have size and beauty.

They are not only symmetrical in form, but beautiful in color, the prevailing tints being red and white intermixed in every curious and changeful variety.

When that fearless Patriot and excellent Farmer, Henry Clay, was last in Newport, I accompanied him to the top of Tonomy Hill, that he might get, as he said, "the lay of the land." While we were casting our eyes over the superb landscape and water-view presented from that eminence, some cows presented themselves within a few yards of the position he occupied, and this circumstance led to a conversation concerning cattle. I asked Mr. Clay which breed he preferred from his own observation and experience. "Why upon the whole sir," he replied, "I like the Short Horns best. They have most of the good properties belonging to other classes, and then I admire their color—I like the red and white;" and in these particulars, my taste, I admit, corresponds exactly with that of the "Great Statesman of the West."

But although the red and white are the most usual tints, yet I have seen Short Horns of other colors which had every perfection to gratify the eye. I have seen them pure white, pure red and of a red roan, and this last is now becoming most fashionable.

In Belgium, and not far from the Field of Waterloo, I saw a herd of cows in a pasture near the road that attracted my attention instantly. Descending from the carriage, I examined them with care for a considerable time. They were as perfect specimens of Short Horns as I ever saw in England, and yet, they had all been purchased in Holland and brought to Brussels, at the expense of a society, formed there to improve the breed of cattle. In color they were black and white; but these were laid on in separate masses, like the spots of the leopard; much indeed in the same form, that you observe them, in the red and white variety of Durhams.

Barring the difference in color they could not have been discriminated from English cows, — their general size, — symmetry, horns and form, being exactly the same. But their peculiar hues were made more beautiful by the lustre of the hair, which shone and sparkled like the coat of a race-horse ; and if I had money enough to gratify all my tastes, I certainly would make an excursion into Holland, to see what might be found there.

The English have absolutely *made* their breeds by judicious crossings and great care in selections. We have now the means of doing the same thing, for the enterprise and liberality of Americans have caused the importation of some of the most valuable animals which the United Kingdom ever possessed ; and it is supposed by persons competent to judge, that we have more and better Short Horns in the United States, than are left in the British Isles.

Many Farmers believe, because the Short Horns are large, that they are therefore voracious, and require rich meadows and pastures for their support. This I conceive to be an entire mistake, and my opinion is founded upon some observation, as well as enquiry. There are two farmers in a neighboring county, whose lands are contiguous, — exactly of the same kind ; one large farm indeed, divided by a stone-wall to mark the respective possessions.

Upon the north portion of this division, Short Horns are reared ; upon the south, cattle of what is called our “native breed” — although it would puzzle their possessors to point out that spot in America where cows were found, when John Smith and Sebastian Cabot sailed along the coast of New England. Well, amongst the

Short Horns north of the boundary referred to, I can point out the finest Steer in Rhode Island, weighing at least 2000 pounds ; while south of it, there is scarce an animal raised on the adjoining fields that will exceed 600 ; most of them indeed falling far below that standard ; and all these animals north and South of the wall, have fared exactly alike.

The largest, strongest and best oxen ever raised in Rhode Island have been Short Horns ; one pair of which I purchased in Bristol, and worked on my own farm ; and Mr. Albro will tell you that they were the most powerful animals he ever drove.

I am aware of the excellence of the Ayreshires, the Herefords, the Devons and the Aldernies ; the latter producing milk, rich and thick—not butter ready made, as the Bostonians would have us believe ; but milk of the very richest kind.

Nevertheless it is always most convenient for each Farmer, to keep but one class of cattle, unless he would allow his breed to become degenerate by careless crossing.—One cross may answer very well, but to preserve your strain of blood pure, you must go back continually to the original fountain. Like produces like in the animal creation, whilst Hybrids, (a proper name for them) even of the same genus, continually descend in the scale of degeneration. I therefore stick to the Short Horns, and hope to be able, hereafter, to exhibit specimens which may improve our stock.

It has been greatly benefitted already, by those spirited individuals of Newport, who have imported the breed I prefer ; and we are much indebted to Governor Gibbs

and another excellent person of his family, for their exertions in the improvement of our cattle.

Marks of the Short-Horned blood may be traced in many farm yards, and I have purchased some on this Island, reared here, which I am not ashamed to exhibit in any part of the country.

If you raise cows, raise the best and keep them well. The expense of keeping a cow which produces twenty quarts of milk a day, is not greater than that of one which gives but ten quarts. I have examples of both. I have two cows which cost me \$45 each, and I purchased a Short Horn of Mr. Bailey for which I paid him \$80. Rose and Ella together give me but ten or twelve quarts at a milking, and have two mouths to be filled; while Juno furnishes the same quantity at a *meal*, and I fill but one mouth in her case.

I use the good, farmer-like word *meal*, as it is now used in the north of Old England, and as it has always been used in New, to signify the milk of a cow produced at one milking; and although it is eschewed by all our Dictionaries, as a Yankeeism,—manufactured here,—yet if you will turn to the pages of Mr. Halliwell you will find that our ancestors used this word, as they did all others, with strict regard to propriety, both in meaning and idiom.

In relation to Sheep, we have not time to say much; and to say much, upon this topic, before such an assemblage as I see before and around me, would be superfluous and out of place.

But I have a strong impression as to the kind which suits our Island best; and I pronounce without hesitation in favor of the South Downs.

The Bakewells, the New Leicesters and Cotswolds have all great size and long wool. The Merinos of France have also great size, but short wool and fine. A Leicester sheep has been known to weigh as much as 368 lbs; and there are Merinos upon this Island, approaching to the same enormous size. But I incline to think that the gentlemen who have, with so much spirit and liberality, brought these monsters among us, are not altogether satisfied with their experiments, for I found one of them in my pasture, the past summer, culling out some South Down male lambs from my little flock, without much remark about the cause of this selection. South Downs can be exhibited in this country and in England which will weigh between one hundred and sixty and one hundred and seventy pounds; and this volume is quite sufficient to answer all reasonable requirements.

The wool of the South Down, although not so fine as that of the Merino, is, nevertheless, of excellent quality. In quantity it corresponds with the relative sizes of the animals; while the mutton of this breed is exactly what an epicure desires; moderation in size, but juicy,—the fat well laid in, and of excellent flavor. The flesh of the South Down is quite as good as that of the Welsh sheep, of which the English boast so much.

I have seen these animals, in large flocks upon their native Downs and Wolds; and I am quite sure from my own observation, that they keep themselves in better condition, with the same food than any other breed.

This climate and our hill sides are entirely congenial to their constitution and habits; and observe it as you may, the mutton of sheep fed upon Rhode Island, will be found

always good, and in my judgement quite equal to any in the world.

I have had many opportunities of comparing American mutton, side by side, on the same table, with that brought from England, and although the latter is as good as can be desired, it is in no respect superior to our own; while our beef is decidedly better, more juicy and rich.

A butcher in New York, with whom I have often dealt, a man of sense and observation, is in the habit of exchanging, every year, by means of steam vessels, the products of his own market with those of Liverpool. In his stalls you may see, throughout the winter season, pheasants, black grouse and red, quails, partridges, beef and mutton, brought from England, and thus compare, as many times I have done, our own, with the products of the British Isles.

In exchange for these, Mr. Broadway (for that is his name) sends out American oysters, American deer and American Grouse; and last, but not least,—believe me if you can,—American Beef also; and I am told by him, that of all his exportations, the American Beef is in most demand at Liverpool. His correspondents inform him that their customers at home, consider it quite superior in flavor to their own; and hence have learned that the boast of Old England can be equalled in regions far beyond the Atlantic.

But, “*revenons a nos moutons.*” Let us return to our Sheep. I shall certainly commend to your attention, and cultivation, the South Downs of Sussex, the very best of which will be found upon the farms cultivated, as well as owned by His Grace the Duke of Richmond; himself a pattern for farmers as well as noblemen, for his intelli-

getice, his unassuming manners and graceful hospitality.

If you would have swine of the best form, you must go, I think, to the Essex breed of Lord Western; or to a cross of that kind with the swine of Sussex.

The hairless Suffolks, with their sides almost reeking with *grease*, rather than good honest *fat*, as I observed them abroad, are no favorites of mine, although they may be used perhaps, for crossing, with profit and success.

But you can *make* a breed of your own, by attention and care, equal to the best in England, formed in the same way; and in truth *it is already done*. I found on this Island, when I came to my farm in 1849, swine very nearly right in all desirable particulars and which I then purchased. With these materials in hand, we have endeavored to “train on,” and now with a male from New York, of the New Essex and Sussex breed—presented to me by my friend Mr. Slate, himself a rival for Lord Western, I will show a sow this day, with twelve pigs by her side, against any which can be produced from Suffolk or Berkshire. Attend carefully to the crossing: give the animals length, with a middle-piece for the pork-barrel, while the hams, shoulders, and jowls are of moderate size, and you have all that can be expected or desired, in the shape of swine; and the breed preferred by me will give all these at moderate expense, as they keep in good condition with comparatively little food.

The Chittagongs, Singapores, Bramah Postras, and all the other “big things,” come, most probably, from one and the same place, and that is Shanghae.

In my opinion they are all varieties of one breed, made different in their color and the clothing upon their legs by the fancy breeding of the Chinese. They were unknown

in Canton twenty years ago and have been brought to that place recently from the northern parts of the Empire.

Come from where they may, they furnish the elements for excellent crossing with smaller and more compact fowls ; and upon trial, you will, I think, prefer the Black Iavas, or Black Shanghaes rather, to all others. These last we have found hardy, good layers, and good mothers ; while under black feathers, you will find flesh, juicy and good, covered by a clear and yellow skin.

The pride of your barn-yards, however, is the Game Cock. Observe him with plumage of every color glistening in the sun and rivaling the Asiatic Pheasant in beauty. See his fierce eye, his quick athletic step, proudly departing himself amid his harem. Hear his “ shrill clarion ” challenging like a Knight of old, all comers to meet him in the lists ; consider his indomitable courage, sometimes defying the bird of Jove himself ; and tell me whether the Game Cock is not the prince of all fowls ?

Cross him then with the noble breeds of China, and you will have just what you want for the kitchen and the table.

And now Gentlemen—“ paulo majora canamus ; ” let us take a loftier theme, from the animal creation and say something of the Horse,—the most beautiful, the most spirited, the most soul stirring and perhaps the most useful of all the tribes that came out of the ark.

Observe him trained for the race, exercising for war, or harnessed to the chariot ; his eye on fire, his nostrils expanded, his coat glistening like burnished gold, and tell me if he is not a subject for the painter and a model for the statuary ?

The Arabs write,—“ true riches are a noble and fierce

“breed of horses, and of which God said, the war horses ;
 “those which rush on the enemy with full-blowing nos-
 “trils ; those which plunge into the battle early in the
 “morning.”

We had in New York, some years ago, a most estimable gentleman, who rose from humble circumstances in mechanic life, to fortune and to honor ;—being successively Mayor of the City and one of its representatives in Congress. In this latter place he became very fond of investigations into taxation, importation, exportation and all the sources of national prosperity and wealth. These subjects he would argue anywhere ; in doors and out of doors ; in sunshine or in rain ; and if he caught a willing ear he would exclaim in exultation,—“if there is anything in the world I *do* understand, it is *tanning* and political economy !”

My own conceit, as to my own acquirements, leads me in the same direction with my former friend ; and I too, can exclaim, if there are any things in the world I *do* understand, they are—horseflesh and the law !

If I do not understand something of this subject my opportunities have been thrown away ; and all in vain, have I been President of a Jockey Club.

In my earliest days I was introduced to the horse in his noblest forms ; for the Arab fondness which my father cherished for Thoroughbreds, he imparted to his son, who has retained that attachment all his days. He had at one time when I was yet a boy, five excellent and beautiful specimens of the Race Horse, the Cleveland Bay, and the animal of all work, now known as the Morgan ; all of which were kept for the improvement of their respective

classes; and the names of Escape, Paolet, King Williams and Kocklani, are familiar sounds in my ears.

It was my father who first told me the story of Lindsey's Arabian, a horse well known to him, and in my native county by the name of Ranger; and I have galloped a grand daughter of this steed many a mile, weary enough for her, but cheering and pleasant to me.

This beautiful Barb was presented by the Emperor of Morocco to the Captain of an English frigate, who landed him on one of the West India Islands, for exercise and refreshment.

Being playful as a kitten he was turned loose into a lumber yard, and taking it into his head to ascend a pile of timber he fell and broke three of his legs.

The master of a vessel out of New London, well known to the Captain of the man-of-war, upon solicitation, received the horse as a present in his crippled and hopeless condition. With much skill and patience the master of the "Horse Jockey" caused the fractured limb to be set, and succeeded at last in bringing the animal home to Connecticut, where he became the ancestor of many brave sons and beautiful daughters.

Some of these being employed during the Revolutionary War in the South as cavalry horses, attracted so much attention that their history and pedigree were inquired into with care; and the result was that General Washington sent Captain Lindsey of the army, to Hampton in Connecticut to purchase the foreigner; and thus it was that the Old Ranger,—beautiful as Apollo, white and shining as silver, went down to Virginia to lay his mended bones there. But before descending to the grave he left specimens of his blood in the form of Tulip and other capital

racers ; and now it flows to this day in the veins of many a high mettled steed, in that ancient and renowned dominion.

The horse has been the animal most interesting to man from our earliest history ; and the country of his fame, for speed, courage, stoutness and endurance, has changed from time to time as men have sought him out and cultivated his good qualities.

The East was the first region which possessed a breed fit for the purposes of battle ; and we read that the wise King of Israel introduced chargers from Egypt into his forty thousand stalls of Syria, a thousand years before the Christian Era.

But this war-like animal was known long before this period, for it is Job, (and he lived at a time so remote that we have no correct notion of its date) who describes the war-horse “ with his neck clothed with thunder, pawing the valley and rejoicing in his strength. He mocketh at fear and is not affrighted ; neither turneth he back from the sword ; the quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and shield. He saith among the trumpets ha ! ha ! and he snuffeth the battle afar off ; the thunder of the captains and the shoutings.”

Homer describes the steeds of Æneas as of celestial origin, for he says they were given by Jove the Thunderer, to Tros as the price of his son Ganymede taken up to Heaven for his beauty, to be the cup-bearer of the Gods.

Vergil speaks of a breed that had the east wind for an ancestor, so swift were they and so light of foot.

Ore omnes versæ in Zephyrum, stant rnpibus altis illae
Expectant leves auras ; et saepe sine ullis
Conjugiis vento gravidæ.

He describes the animal most in esteem in his time and says—

“Lofty his neck, his head small and slender; short in
 “the loin with a chest swelling in brawny muscles. His
 “color, bay or blueish gray; his mane thick and waving
 “upon his right shoulder, his back seems braced with a
 “double spine and his solid hoof resounds upon the plain;
 “such was the brace of Mars and such the chariot-horses
 “of great Achilles.”

This last Hero, declared at the Games in honor of Patroclus, dead, that if he were permitted to contend in the chariot-race he could win; “for my steeds, said he, surpass all others, because they are *immortal*; and Neptune gave them to my father and I inherited them from him.” The Greeks, however, were not fastidious as to color, and a chestnut horse with a white circular spot like the moon upon his forehead, meets the approbation of Homer.

But without stopping to enquire whether the poetic coursers of Homer and Vergil were entitled to the high commendation bestowed upon them by those authors, one thing is certain, that the best horses now to be found in Europe and the United States have had their origin in the East and most probably in Mesopotamia.

They were first brought to the notice of English Kings in the time of the crusades, and the charger described by Sir Walter Scott as being furnished by the Jew for his hero of Ivanhoe, and ridden by him at the tournament of “Ashby de la Zouch” in the presence of King John, the brother of Richard the first, must have been a true Arab, faultless in form and of courage invincible.

When the Crusaders went to the Holy Wars, they took with them the powerful, but heavy horses of Normandy,

Flanders and Hungary ; and although these animals, with Knights upon their backs, full armed, were like “ Elephants endorsed with towers of Archers ” yet they melted away like dew before the heat of Asiatic sands and the thorough bred cavalry of Saladin.

“ In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
 “ Prancing—their riders bore.
 “ See them in their forms of battle ranged,
 “ How quick they wheel and flying, behind them shoot
 “ Sharp sleet of arrowy showers, against the face
 “ Of their pursuers ; and overcome by flight.”

This is a very exact description, drawn by him who equaled “ blind Thamyris and blind Maconides ” not only in fate, but in the power and sweetness of his song ; and hence King John, when he succeeded to the throne of Richard, the Crusader, introduced some of this blood into England, and encouraged its cultivation by establishing race-courses, and offering prizes to be run for, by the Arab, the Barb and their descendants.

By these and the like means, from generation to generation, by the aid of the government, by private enterprise and emulous rivalry, — the English had infused so much of the eastern blood into their horses that in the time of the American Revolution and from those days down to our own, they had the best breed in the world.

They improved upon the Arab by giving him size, preserving at the same time all his admirable qualities of speed, stoutness and endurance ; for it is a maxim upon the turf—“ that a good big one always beats a good little one.”

John Blunt, an Arab in every particular, and as good a racer of his size, as the world ever saw, not fifteen hands high, could not contend successfully with Fashion,

because her superior height and length gave her a stride which so told upon the little horse, in a race of four miles, that he was compelled to yield the palm to that renowned, and in my opinion, matchless and unrivalled courser.

To come down to practical results then, you may ask, would you have farmers breed and use race-horses? Certainly *not* thoroughbreds; by which I mean animals whose pedigree can be traced directly to Arab originals; but I would have them never employ any, that were not strongly imbued with the best properties of oriental steeds.

The heavy horses of Europe, including those of England, France and Holland, are wholly unsuited to our habits, and purposes, being slow of motion and expensive to keep. For farming draft, oxen must always be preferred in New England to horses or mules, for when their career in the cart and plough is run, they have not lost any part of their value, but become food for man, as they were destined finally to be.

Again, the harness of the oxen employed by us, is of the cheapest and most simple description; and I defy any man to contrive a cooler or better mode of coupling this animal to his plough or cart, than by the common wooden yoke which we use and which is equally well calculated for forward traction, or for backing the load.

The horses which you ride and drive daily are all of them, strongly imbued with the blood of the thoroughbred, and we rarely see in this state a single specimen of the heavy draft-horse of Europe.

When Mr. Birkbeck, the distinguished English Farmer, first came to this country, more than 30 years ago, he wrote and published an account of what he saw; and amongst other things he remarked, and with some as-

astonishment that the American horses were all blood horses, or so crossed with that race as to cause its predominance to be seen wherever he traveled; and he pronounced them superior to those of Europe.

Even in Pennsylvania, their strong wagon horses have lost their heaviness; and while they are of the largest size, they have also blood, compact bone and good action. An English cart horse carries as much hair upon his fetlocks as he does upon his mane; while the legs of the Canestoga, may be found as clean as those of a Barb.

We have bred in this country from the best originals; and our trotters, including the Morgans and Blackhawks, owe their speed and endurance entirely to their eastern blood. Old Messenger one of the best racers that England ever lost, was introduced into this country shortly after the Revolution. He was the sire of Mambrino, a thoroughbred trotter, who could knock off a mile in three minutes in his twenty-first year when I saw him; and he transmitted his blood to the famous Lady Suffolk who could go the same distance in two minutes and twenty-six seconds!

He and she had the hardy grey color of Old Messenger who gave to *them* the speed and endurance of the trotter; while the same Patriarch imparted to Eclipse his swiftness as a racer.

Trustee, who not long ago astonished all England by going over a course of twenty miles within the hour in harness, was a son of imported Trustee,—a thoroughbred race-horse, whose price at one time was three thousand guineas.

Mr. B. of London, when in this country had so strong

a desire to see the animal that performed this feat, that I took him to his stable in Houston street, where we saw him harnessed to the baker's cart which he daily drew through the streets of New York.

He was a chestnut, fifteen hands two inches high, and exactly the kind of horse which we should breed and raise.

During the Canadian rebellion, the English sent over to those provinces a considerable body of cavalry. Many of these horses died on the voyage from stress of weather, and they were compelled to mount their men by purchases in New York, Vermont and New Hampshire, all along the borders of Canada.

These animals I saw in Montreal in exercise. They were specimens of the middling sized Morgan, with striking marks of blood; and Col. Shirley, of the Dragoons informed me in 1842, that they were the best cavalry horses for all work that he had ever seen; so good he said, that they were not to be sold when the regiment went home, but to be taken to England for use, as one would take coals to Newcastle."

Believe me, gentlemen, we of Rhode Island should breed our own horses, and breed them larger and better than we do now. It costs no more to rear and keep a good horse than a bad one; while their relative capacity for service can scarcely be estimated.

I saw when I was abroad, the horses of France, and found they had, amongst others, a middling sized race, remarkable for toughness and condition, which are easily maintained; but to improve their breeds the government makes constant draughts upon the English thoroughbreds.

Now, we have no need to go abroad for this kind of stock.

As a general rule our roadsters are much better than the English, and the stories about twelve miles an hour in post-chaises, as an ordinary pace, are not to be credited.

I found, when in England, that the rate of speed depended upon the roads. From South Hampton to London you may easily go at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour; but it took four beautiful bays two full hours to transport myself and four others in a light carriage without luggage, from Dover to Canterbury, a distance of only eighteen miles; and I bribed the Post Boys "*at that,*" holding my watch to see what English horses could do on a hilly road.

Between Hastings and Brighton over the sandy Downs and Wolds of Sussex, two horses in the same carriage, with only three persons in it, could hardly average five and a half miles the hour; while I was once taken with a party, without notice to the proprietors, or preparation on their part, in a common stage coach, weighing 1800 lbs. from Rochester to Lockport by the way of Lake Ontario, a distance of 63 miles, in ~~nine~~ *seven* hours, with ease.

I "timed" the race-horses of England at Goodwood and at Newmarket; comparing horses, weights and distances with our own, and came to the conclusion that their coursers are not superior to those of America; while in *sailing* all the world knows we can beat their yachts and ships to death.

No! gentlemen, you have only to look about,—use the elements within your grasp and the trotters and gallopers of Rhode Island may be as famous in time to come, as the pacers of Narragansett once were.

There is a Jackson Morgan in Newport, that may yet rival the famous Old Snip, who, it is said, when pacing his

matches over a certain road, with a bridge twelve feet wide across it, was never known to touch that bridge with his foot !

He was caught wild, as the report goes, on the Narragansett shore, and was evidently a descendant of those Andalusian Barbs which the Spaniards carried to Cuba, and which our officers probably brought from that Island upon the return of the ill fated expedition against it in 1741.

And if you rear horses, farmers of Rhode Island, be sure that you keep them well when young.

The stories of Arab colts, fed until their fourth year upon camel's milk, are a perfect delusion ; animal life cannot be sustained, expanded and developed except by food and that bestowed by no sparing hand.

Mr. Burekhardt, the only man who ever traveled in Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, with a competent knowledge of the languages there used, is the author upon whom I rely in this particular, and he says, "it is a general but erroneous opinion that Arabia is very rich in horses ; but the breed is limited to the extent of fertile pasture grounds in that country, and it is in such parts only that horses thrive, while those Bedawins who occupy districts of poor soil rarely possess any horses."

"It is found accordingly, that the tribes most rich in horses, are those who dwell in the comparatively fertile plains of Mesopotamia on the banks of the river Euphrates and in the Syrian plain."

"Horses can there feed for several of the spring months upon the green grass and herbs produced by the rains in the valleys and fertile grounds, and such food seems ab-

solutely necessary for promoting the full-growth of the horse.”

“The best pasturage places of Arabia not only produce the greatest number of horses, but likewise the finest and most select race.”

Certainly this must be so, and common sense teaches what Burekhardt expressly asserts. If you will redeem your former fame in this regard, Farmers of Rhode Island, I will for the present take leave of the Horse.

The next sentence in Mr. Buffam’s letter to which I will call your attention, is the following, full of good sense, as well as of good taste :

“Some agricultural writer recommends to farmers—first
 “to make their farms as productive as they can, then as
 “covenient as they can, then as ornamental as they can.
 “It certainly (adds Mr. Buffam) is well to make a farm
 “home attractive, so that the sons of farmers may wil-
 “lingly continue in the business of farming, and not leave
 “it for the more shewy but less substantial occupations of
 “life.”

One would think, when my neighbor wrote this paragraph, that he too had been studying the ancients “to cram” for an agricultural address, for upon the subject of a farm-home even Cato abandons his cautious parsimony and recommends the residence of the farmer to be made attractive by every means within his power, as a temptation to fix him permanently there.

There was an ancient maxim derived from the Carthaginians, that the farm ought to be weaker than the farmer, and it was also said, that small possessions well cultivated were more productive than large ones neglected.

Columella, a Roman authority, is very choice in the se-

lection of the spot on which to build, both in reference to health and beauty ; only he recommends that the house be not near the high-road, lest all the idle acquaintances of the proprietor should be dropping in, and so interrupt the occupations of the farm. In this particular my neighbor has not followed Columella's advice in all respects, for although his residence is upon a spot eminent for health and beauty, yet it is placed very near the high-road, as if its purpose was to cause all his acquaintances to pause at the door.

“ Encourage,” says Mr. Buffam, “ the land-owners on the Island to ornament the roads by a row of trees on each side as tending to health, pleasure and comfort, and largely increasing the value of the land when offered for sale. Fruit trees, particularly pear and cherry are ornamental, and they grow well on the Island, and if the land owners generally would set cherry trees freely, we might have cherries in abundance as formerly.”

“ Fifty years ago I suppose there was no place in the United States where pears and cherries of the best kinds were so plentiful as on this Island. Make the roads good and ornament with trees, and then the term Garden of America might truly apply ” ; and with these beautiful thoughts, my neighbor closes his communication, in itself an excellent address for an occasion like this.

It is quite true that this Island was formerly clothed with trees, which were at once its pride, its glory, and its ornament ; but the ruthless hand of war laid them all low, and after the departure of the British army, our fathers had not the heart to begin replantation, while their children were crying for bread.

But we are bound to restore the land to its former con-

dition in this respect ; for we are here in the midst of smiling peace, entirely secure in the possession of our prosperity.

We have merely to resolve and the thing is done. What Mr. Buffam proposes in theory, he and his neighbor Mr. Bailey have carried out in practice, and both sides of the road, all along in the neighborhood of their farms are now bristling with trees planted by their care.

Specimens of those choice cherries already referred to, now grace the highway on the north side of Mr. Buffam's land ; and there is no reason why noble rows of pears, of apples, of chestnuts and of walnuts, as well as of cherries, should not ornament all our thoroughfares, from the Court House even to the Ferry.

When Verrazano was in Newport in April and May, 1524, he found our Islands covered with large and lofty trees ; with oaks, he says, with cypresses and many unknown in Europe. He found also apples, plums, filberts and other fruits ; but differing from those of the eastern continent.

Here also were stags, linxes, deer and other animals in large numbers, all of which have passed away with the trees of the forest. The wind no longer sighs through their leaves, or whistles through their branches, but rushing in its unchecked career, it strikes against our naked hill-sides, and pours down upon our valleys.

Farmers of Rhode Island shall this continue to be so in all time to come ? Shall not some part of the nakedness of the land be hidden by those rows and plantations of trees which were once our boast, and may be again by your helping hands ?

A few autumnal days given by each and all of us would in a short time accomplish this noble object. The weary traveller might then rest his exhausted steeds beneath a lofty elm planted for their protection. The way-farer passing along the roadside, would find delicious fruits, of many kinds, presenting their juicy pulps especially for his refreshment. With his healthful repast we should receive his blessing; while he would cast his eyes backward in grateful remembrance of those thoughtful men, whose unselfish kindness had looked to posterity, as well as to themselves.

There is another cognate topic, touched upon by the gentleman who addressed you last year, and who has requested me to present it again for your consideration; it is the preservation of birds,—the beautiful songsters of those very groves, to be hereafter planted by your generous care.

The farmer of Vaocluse, is filled with all manner of kindly sympathies which he does not seek to repress. On the occasion of a visit to him, I was looking at the stores of corn-fodder laid up for his cattle, and modestly suggested the use of a cutter, as a proper instrument for the preparation of their food. It is a good machine, said he, but dangerous where there are children, and mine would be sure to cut their fingers off with it. We then passed to the ravine, and I casually observed that a dam across it would throw back a fine sheet of water, which would be a beautiful object. That is true, he replied, but the children would be in danger of drowning there, and I shall not think of it. We then walked into the pasture where I found cows without horns, and I asked why the polled

kind was preferred? Why, said he, I see no use in horns, and they might *kill my children*, while those without horns are their playmates. Why should we cultivate cattle with horns?

I could not repress a smile at all this caution; but I respected it as the offspring of gentle thoughts and a humane heart, and he it was, who interposed to save the warblers which his children delight to feed.

You have laws upon this subject which all are bound to respect, but which are defied and disregarded by some.

There is an act upon your statute book entitled "an act for the preservation of useful birds." And which are the birds declared useful by law? They are "larks, robins, wood-ducks, grey or black ducks, partridges, quails, woodcocks, snipes, grouse and plover."

The object of these laws is, to preserve those feathered races, during the time they are rearing their young, which of course every reasonable man would do, even if he were cruel. But why should birds of song be ever destroyed? Why should the migratory thrush, which is generally called the robin, be the object of slaughter? He is your companion throughout the year, unless the winter be unusually severe; the first to greet you in the spring, your cheerful, social, confiding friend during the summer and the last to desert you at the end of autumn. He builds his nest in your orchards and upon your fence rails. Why will you permit your children to tear it down in mere wantonness and the love of purposeless havoc?

The Meadow Lark makes vocal your fields during the whole of October and November, when the blasts of the north have sent away the warblers, the vireos, the Bob o'-Lincolns, the finches, the catbirds and song thrushes to

the milder climes of the south for warmth and protection. Even the rapacious birds do little or no harm with us. The little Screech-Owl amuses our autumnal evenings with his mellow, though somewhat mournful notes. The graceful Harrier, balanced on equal wing, sweeps over your meadows and swamps, seeking for rats, for frogs, for mice, snakes and other vermin of a like loathsome character. Gunner! why should you strike down this creature which God has made so beautiful and brave, for the mere purpose of exhibiting your cruel skill? In winter, when pressed by hunger he may take a chicken from your yard, or a pigeon from your dove-cote, but upon the whole he does you more good than harm.

And so do all the worm-eating and insect-catching birds, including even the Woodpeckers who bore into your old apple trees. They are seeking for food, deadly to the tree, beneath the bark, and you may well allow them to pursue their useful employments. The black ducks, the woodcocks, the snipes, the Virginia rails, and the meadow larks all make their nests, in each returning summer, upon my lands, almost under my own eyes; and shall I most inhospitably refuse them admittance and give them over to the spoiler? Forbid it generosity; forbid it all ye gentle elements of the human character.

But, you say, the robins eat up my cherries and destroy my strawberries. Well, let them, if we cannot have the sweet songsters upon any other terms. Let them eat up the cherries and strawberries and welcome, for they pay us in music. Welcome to the trees and vines which I intend to plant to entice them to my home. Come in and partake with us. Don't gather *all* if you please, but take without stint, and let me see you again as I have of-

ten seen you in former days, drop a ripe cherry into the mouths of your callow young.

Come ye Ospreys and take your scaly prey before my eyes, and with your "sail-broad vans" beat up into the wind's eye, to carry food to your nests in the wood. You have as good a right as I have, to take the treasures of the deep for your own use, and you disturb me not in my possessions or enjoyment. True it is, I once saw an envious Eagle plunge down from on high and rob you of the fruit of your labor, while you affrighted fled to the shelter of a tree. But the Bird of Jove is an imperial robber and does not even say "by your leave," although he too is generally innocent of injury to man.

Come ye Bob-o'-Lincolns and poise yourselves upon a single stalk of timothy, causing it to sway to and fro by the weight of your tiny bodies, yet giving sufficient support, while the full-hearted song of your happiness comes gushing from your musical throats.

If no one else will protect you, come to Malbone Farm and we will give you shelter there. Come all ye gentle songsters and harmless birds to us, and you shall be protected while within the boundaries under my control. The law is on our side; the right is on our side; humanity is on our side, and where I have power "vainly the fowler's eye shall mark thy flight to do thee wrong."

Farmers of Rhode Island, will you join me in this pleasant employment of saving alive, instead of destroying? If you will not, I appeal then to your mothers, your sisters, your wives and your daughters, and to them I shall not appeal in vain; and if I can but get the gentler sex upon my side, why the men may be defied, and I will proclaim to all the birds of the air that they are safe.

And now my fellow farmers, upon leave taking, let me say a word or two as to the peculiarity of our pursuit, its importance, its dignity and its consolations.

I know something of the value of your occupations, by their strong contrast with all those of my former life. It is true that you are exposed, like the rest of the world to the vicissitudes of fortune, for "Paul may plant and Ap-
" pollos water, but it is God alone that giveth the in-
" crease." You are dependent in some degree upon sun-
shine and upon cloud; upon the blasts of winter, and the
fickle summer's changes; and yet, after all, Mazzaroth is
always brought forth in his season by him who guideth
Arcturus and his sons. "For he saith to the snow be
" thou on the earth, likewise to the small rain, and the
" great rain of his strength." "Out of the South cometh
" the whirlwind, and cold out of the North;" but not-
withstanding all this, the dews of heaven descend gently
upon the waste earth and "cause the bud of the tender
" herb to spring forth."

You are as little subject to accident and chance as any
persons in this life can be; and your pursuits always the
same, are agreeably diversified by experiment and its re-
sults. When the labors of the day are closed, you can
lie down to undisturbed sleep, without those engrossing
anxieties which haunt the merchant, the physician and
the lawyer. You have no "Argosies at sea," no sick
and wearisome patients, no clients to tax your energies
and demand the exertion of every faculty with a cruel
tension. You know when your work is done. The phy-
sician and the lawyer never know *that*; but the minutes
of your slumber are the hours of their watchfulness and
never-ending care. You have time to think, to consider,

to compare, and your most serious labors are performed, thank God, under the pure canopy of Heaven, where your eyes may wander and take in all the beautiful works of his creation. The fair sun is above you in the summer, and the harvest moon sheds its soft radiance upon the gathering in of your crops; health is in the breeze, a fair reward in prospect, and you need not envy the occupations of any other class of men. Your business draws you away from the temptations, the arts and chicanery of traffic, of contract and of sordid-gain; so great that Solomon exclaimed "how can there be honesty between buying and selling?"

Cicero was of opinion that if a merchant satiated, or rather satisfied with just profits, were to leave the sea and make the harbor, and from thence invest his money in lands, he would be deserving of commendation. For, says he "of all gainful possessions, nothing is better, nothing more pleasing, nothing more delightful, nothing better becomes a well-bred man than agriculture."

We are told by the same author, the greatest and wisest of all the ancients, that Cyrus presented himself to Lysander the Lacedemonian, as the Persian farmer, that it might be understood that nothing to him appeared so royal as the study of husbandry. And the Carthaginians had a maxim to this effect, that he to whose heart a city abode lies close, has no need of a country estate.

The most distinguished men of this nation have been farmers, and the illustrious Washington, except when called by duty from his home to defend and direct his country's destinies, knew no other pursuit. While at the head of power his private letters shew that his heart was

at Mount Vernon, and he longed to lay his weary head beneath its peaceful shades.

Jefferson was a farmer ; Madison was a farmer, and Webster was a farmer. As such, the "great orator" was exceedingly well informed, both by books, by observation and by practice, and I have heard him express the wish that it might be his lot at some time, never to leave the borders of Marshfield, and the quiet scenes he there enjoyed, and which he always loved so much.

As your employments are full of dignity, so are they full of importance. Without your labors, civilized man cannot exist, and society would be compelled to go back to the savage state from which it emerged, and depend upon the bow, the barbed hook and the spear. Garments from South Downs would give place to skins of animals, and all cultivated nature, now so rich and beautiful, would be overgrown with weeds and choked up by wild and noxious plants.

You are here then upon this earth for a noble purpose. It is to improve and adorn it, and make it that glorious planet for which it was designed by its Creator.

You are here also as patriots ; for the land-owner has a fire-side and a home to love, to preserve and forever defend. Your walks in your fields are none the less pleasant that they are made upon your own grounds, and that which you hold you will not be likely to give up, that the stranger may possess it with a strong hand.

Your pursuits have also a tendency to purify the heart, while they clear and exalt the understanding, for a farmer should have no debasing thoughts or groveling desires. He deals with creation, simple pure and beautiful, and

there he finds no warrant for depravity or the indulgence of unworthy passions. The young farmer too, has a vast advantage over a professional man in this, that he can come to a competent knowledge of the business of his life at a comparatively early period. With his majority, his career is to begin, and he may then be full fledged for the flight which takes him out into the world ; and in later life when it is time to think of something besides the cares of business, the advantages of a rural life begin.

“ I look ” says Addison, “ upon the pleasure which we
 “ take in a garden, as one of the most innocent delights
 “ in human life. A garden was the habitation of our
 “ first parents before the fall. It is naturally apt to fill
 “ the mind with calmness and tranquility, and to lay all
 “ its turbulent passions at rest. It gives us a great in-
 “ sight into the contrivance and wisdom of Providence
 “ and suggests innumerable subjects for meditation.”

If this be justly said of a garden, and who can doubt it, how much more appropriate is it, when predicated of a farm, of which the garden is only a part. Every farmer has his garden, but all gardeners have not farms.

Again, Agriculture is the appropriate employment of declining years ; for it may be pursued to the very end of life. Not so the occupations of professional men, for they will find when the strength of their days is gone by, that younger and stouter rivals will hasten their descent, as they are traveling the downward slope of hostile rivalry.

I heard a short time ago, of a question put to one of the most energetic and prosperous merchants of New York, now in full career and who in age is approaching very nearly to four-score years. He was asked when he in-

tended to retire from business ? “ Retire ? ” said he, “ why should I retire ? where should I retire ? and to what ? Did you ever know a *Farmer* to retire ? ”

Here gentlemen is one of your consolations. You pursue an occupation so natural to man, that he can follow it all his days with undiminished satisfaction. He has no reasons for asking “ to *what* shall I retire ? ” for he is in the possession of that enjoyment which furnishes no solace to the rich merchant who cherishes no taste for country life, and finds no pleasure but in the excitement of gain and the busy hum of reeking wharves and crowded counting-houses.

He cannot say with Cicero, “ I come now to the pleasures of husbandmen with which I am exceedingly pleased, which are not checked by any old age, and appear in my mind to make the nearest approach to the life of a wise man. For they have relation to the Earth which never refuses command and never returns without interest that which it hath received : and yet for my part it is not only the product, but the virtue and nature of the earth itself which delight me, which when in its softened and subdued bosom, it has received the scattered seed, first confines what is hidden within it ; then when warmed by heat and its own compression, it spreads it out and elicits from it the verdant blade, which supported by the fibres of the roots gradually grows up, and rising on a jointed stalk, is now enclosed in a sheath, out of which it pours forth the fruit of the ear, piled in due order, and guarded by a rampart of beards against the pecking of the smaller birds. Why should I, in the case of vines, tell of the plantings, the risings and the stages of growth ? That you may know

“the repose and amusement of my age, I assure you
 “I can never have enough of that gratification. Nothing
 “can be more rich in use or elegant in appearance than
 “ground well tilled, to the enjoyment of which old age is
 “so far from being an obstacle that it is even an invita-
 “tion and allurement.”

The Farmer has resources then, which are denied to people in other occupations ;—he has that which cloyes not with time nor satiates by possession. His amusements too are connected with his employments and all these may be enjoyed on this Island, and around it in a perfection rarely united on the face of the earth.

Nothing can exceed the beauty of our natural scenery. Its combination of land and sea, of hill and dale, of winding paths and devious walks, of healthful breeze and basking sunshine, cannot be found anywhere but within the clasping waters of our glorious Narragansett Bay.

Here you are and here you sit secure. Your acres are your own. Your household gods are in your homes. Your hearts are fixed upon the prosperity of your country, and may God give you many days to possess and enjoy all the blessings he has bestowed upon this fair and most favored land.

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