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BEFORE THE

Essex Agricultural Society,

BY

GEORGE B. LORING.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

NEWBURYPORT:
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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY:—

A refulgent and luxuriant summer has brought us to that bounteous harvest season in which we are accustomed to come up to our annual festival, and take counsel together of our experiences in agriculture. We have indeed abundant reason to be grateful to an overruling Providence, which has smiled upon our endeavors, and has taught us, in a time of distrust and disaster, how true the earth and sky are to the olden promises.

But I should fail to express the foremost thought of every member of our society, did I neglect to dwell upon that bereavement which is brought before us most sorrowfully on this day, and on this occasion. In the midst of all our rejoicings and congratulations, there is one void which rests with a painful sense upon all who have devoted themselves to our fraternity. The place once filled by one of our most worthy Presidents, the Hon. Moses Newell, is now vacant. The manly and hearty enthusiasm which he imparted to our annual meetings, is gone. And it remains for us as a part of our duty, to emulate his example, and to sustain with his spirit the work which belongs to us as associated farmers of this his native county, for he was essentially the impersonation of the duty which we have taken upon ourselves. A farmer, born upon our soil, he

learned in his infancy the true genius of a farmer's life, and as he advanced to manhood, he grew in mind and body to the robust proportions demanded by the farmer's calling. His own lands were large, and the place was early assigned him of high authority in all matters of agriculture. He had a quick and sagacious eye, and a calm and correct judgment. A natural instinct seemed to direct his views aright, and from his genial and generous temperament, there went out a kindly interest in all agricultural enterprise, and a warm encouragement for all who were engaged in the work he loved so well. He may truly be called the public farmer of our county, for to him, of all men among us, was the public attention directed, whenever questions arose of general interest to the cause of agriculture. It was he who was selected to distribute among us improved breeds of cattle. It was he who spoke for our society in the State Board of Agriculture. It was he who represented our county honorably and well in the National Society. It was he who charmed the great farmers of the south and west by the cordial liberality of his feelings, and by the honest wisdom which characterized his thoughts. He had secured the warmest friendship of the late distinguished senator from the young and growing state of Texas, and in his intercourse with that liberal and sagacious statesman he seemed to cherish that tie which binds our ancient commonwealth in indissoluble bonds with the great agricultural regions which send from our farthest frontiers the vigor of perpetual youth to our mature republic. He bestowed upon our society and upon our county the benefit of his good reputation abroad, and of his good counsels at home. And while he served his state in her highest seats with honor, while he performed the part of a peaceable, honest and good tempered citizen, while he exercised those domestic virtues which are too sacred to be torn from the spot in which they were cherished, even for public admiration, while he displayed in all his duties an intellectual strength and precision which education alone cannot give, while he carried with him the harmonious influence of a truly kind heart, while he invigorated every public act in which he was engaged, while he encouraged a spirit of enterprise and improvement, while he abored always first for the good of others, he won a position

of high value and commanding excellence, as a sensible, liberal, honest and high-toned American farmer.

His services to our society can never be forgotten. Whatever station he was called on to fill, he filled it with fidelity. In our ranks he was a good soldier; and in presiding over our society, he was indeed in every point the farmer deliberating with his brethren.

It is not for him alone that I look around me in vain. Since we last met, my native town has been deprived of one of its most useful and exemplary citizens, and our society has lost one of its oldest and most valuable members. The Hon. William Johnson, of North Andover, has left behind him a reputation as an honest and upright magistrate, a conscientious and trustworthy adviser, and a prudent and thriving farmer. He belonged to a family distinguished for its substantial virtues, and in sustaining its character he performed his part well. He was one of a race of staunch and sturdy men, who, during the last generation, stood around the institutions of our community and of our common country, to protect and elevate them. He was a warm friend, an agreeable companion, a kind and liberal neighbor. The last acts of his life indicated his just appreciation of the means by which society is to be preserved and improved. As a member of our Board of Trustees, he took a high stand at a time when his associates were men who adorned our country; and he never lost that interest in our association which had led him through a long and active life to encourage the pursuits of agriculture.

I have felt that I cannot pay a more fitting tribute to the memory of these, our late companions, nor occupy your time more appropriately and profitably, than by considering the duties and opportunities which belong to us as an agricultural society.

Now, gentlemen, it was not simply to excite a spirit of emulation in the farmers of this county, it was not to create a rivalry here which might end in enriching the soil and embittering the people, it was not to record a chapter of fortunate accidents, a long list of mammoth fruits and monster animals, it was not to encourage an ill-regulated and unprofitable strife for excellence, that our fathers founded this society in which we

take pride, as in a rich inheritance. Do you suppose the wise and practical patriot and statesman, whose lofty duties in the service of his country, established an intimacy between the planter of Mount Vernon and the farmer of Wenham, which gave a glowing dawn to our rising republic, and shed the golden sunset hues of these great lives over American agriculture, had no higher aim than this, when he gave the first impulse to our foundation? It was the recorded experience of more than a quarter of a century which he desired to accumulate, and we are now living to enjoy the realization of those hopes with which his mind was filled. His dreams are our realities. Year after year the work has been going on, until the farmers of this county have the classics and text-books of their education in the pages of your transactions. Here, on this very soil, those facts have been gathered, which are important to the daily life of every man who dwells upon this same corner of the earth, and under this same arch of the sky. Could those men, who, when this society was formed, felt that a clay farm was a reproach and a stumbling block to agriculture, whose chiefest agricultural skill consisted in selecting the choicest soils, whose knowledge of manures extended hardly beyond their own barn yards, whose surface drainage destroyed the symmetry of their "meadows and fields," whose machinery consisted in the intelligence and untiring industry of the farm labor of those days, and whose success in agriculture in spite of all obstacles, should teach us a most encouraging lesson, could those men have pondered over the record of under-draining and deep ploughing, could they have studied the experiments made with all the fertilizers which sea and land have furnished from their ample stores, could they have learned how labor may be lightened and all farming operations be facilitated by labor saving machines, could their thoughts have been stimulated and instructed by the records of this society, if by nothing more, would not the dark corners in which they were groping have been filled with the light of noon-day? If the wheel of time could be reversed, and, waking them from their long sleep, could carry back to them the knowledge which we possess, were it only that rudely raked together in our own little circle, the design of our society would seem to them almost more than fulfilled.

For I look upon an agricultural society as in the highest sense an agricultural school, in which all are teachers, and all are pupils. And in this lies its most important duty. The best professor of agricultural chemistry, is he who comes embrowned from the compost heap, which by judicious application has forced a hundred bushels of corn from each of his well cultivated acres. The best teacher of the art of tilling the soil, is he, who has by long experience become acquainted with the habits of plants, from their tenderest infancy to the ripened harvest. The best expounder of agricultural truths, is he who has learned by diligence and perseverance, with a liberal and enquiring mind, what those economies are which give success to the farmer. The best farmer is he, who, while he becomes intimate with the laws of nature, and learns her mysteries so far as she will reveal them, has a quick eye for those useful discoveries and inventions which the ingenuity of man is constantly laying at the feet of agriculture. And herein lies the great end of agricultural education, get it where you will, from the school, or the club, or from those societies which excite investigation and experiment by the stimulus of competition.

And it is difficult for agricultural education to go further. For agriculture has not yet become a fixed science. The astronomer calculates the courses of the stars, and runs his eye with unerring precision along those erratic orbits which are traversed but once in centuries. The chemist reduces the solid earth, the waters, and the invisible air to their original elements, and learns the hidden affinities with the certainty of law. But for the farmer "the wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth." The soils submit patiently to the most searching analyses, but they baffle all inquiry into that secret principle of life which the art of man has never reached, and which is known only to those acute and delicate investigators, whose thousand fibres draw forth that sustenance which gives stature to the mountain pine, and clothes the valleys with their living verdure. Men begin to vaunt themselves upon their success in supplying the human race with food, when a mysterious disease invades one great staple of their productions, and year after year rolls on without revealing to the anxious explor-

er the slightest remedy. One of the illustrious minds of the age applies the full power of science to supplying the deficiencies of every soil, and to furnishing each plant with its own peculiar food, but is finally obliged to acknowledge, that the relation existing between the earth and the fruits thereof, is not to be reached by any human power. The changing seasons send abroad their decrees, the winds exert their influences, the sun comes forth on its errand, night shuts down over the earth, the rain and the dews descend, heat and cold come in their appointed times, the earth goes on with its silent changes, all warning man that not as a dictator, but as a patient and willing servant can he hope to reap that reward which the soil will always yield.

The science of agriculture is therefore of all sciences the most uncertain, whenever you would pass beyond the bounds of actual experience. The details of farming may indeed be taught. The use of the implements of husbandry is something that must be learned. A knowledge of the proper rotation of crops, and of the adaptation of soils to the vegetable kingdom, comes from teaching and observation. The rules applicable to the proper proportions of animals may be got in the schools. Building and draining and planting and fertilizing, may all be instilled into the mind, until the student of agriculture may go forth ready to subdue the hardest soil, and filled with tastes which will make his farm agreeable to the eye, as well as an addition to the wealth of the community. So far perhaps agriculture may be made a science. And so far, an agricultural society is capable of furnishing the principles of that science.

In such a school as this, who are the professors and teachers? Is not every member who contributes his mite to the treasury of knowledge? I have seen a young man in our own county who by care and diligence and skill and method, has procured year after year, from soil yielding previously hardly enough to pay its taxes, a crop of turnips which gave him a handsome annual income. Is not this young man a good teacher in the science of agriculture? I have seen one of the most thriving towns in this section of the state enriched, until its whole population appears to be elevated above the thought

of want, by a skilful devotion to its onion crop. Have the farmers of that town no claims to be considered capable professors in the school of agriculture? I have known an old orchard not far from us, to be brought from a state of almost hopeless decay and barrenness, to the most abundant bearing, by patient and continued cultivation. Is not this actual fact, established here in our own borders, a lesson which every farmer in this county can learn, and by which he can profit? I have admired from my childhood the fruitful fields, and the agricultural system of an ample farm in one of your towns, and have learned from it that there is in our own population, a capacity for farming which is surpassed in no section of our country. I have thought a better agricultural school than this farm could not be found. I have before me also, that most valuable of all citizens, one of what are called the yeomanry of our country. A farmer, born and educated to his calling, and filled with determination to discharge his duty well. The virtues of a New England home gave tone and direction to his earliest impulses. The sharp and bracing air of his native hills nerved his arm, and knit his manly frame into that sturdy symmetry which his destiny demands. Amidst the conflicts and trials, amidst the joys and sports of the district school, he laid the foundation of his knowledge, without advancing into that realm of letters which is beset with the snares of ambition, and is surrounded by all the temptations which the high mountains of society are sure to reveal. The great book of nature lies always open before him, and the relation which exists between the earth and its cultivator is the first lesson he learns from its pages. The capacity of his native soil becomes as familiar to his growing eye as the careworn form of his industrious father, from whom he learns year by year the practical business of agriculture. Among the animals of the farm he walks supreme and applies an unerring instinct to his estimate of their quality, and to the work of rendering them obedient to his will. He learns not only the art of tilling the earth, but the demands of the community in which he lives; and as he advances to that position which he is born to fill, he finds that the experience of his fathers, and the recorded trials of his neighbors, constitute that science which he is most eager

to learn. As he goes on in life, a busy world responds to his enquiries. The agricultural societies, which, in the best farming countries in the old world and the new, are founded for the benefit of all men like himself, pour forth their treasures at his feet. Subjected to his treatment, his ancestral acres unfold new riches at his hands, and he becomes, as he goes on in life, the impersonation of successful, economical, progressive agriculture. Will not this man, as a member of our society, serve as a teacher of the best truths of agricultural science? As he returns, day by day "warworn and weary" from his contest with nature, does he not accumulate practical wisdom, which, if imparted, will lighten the load man is forced to carry in every occupation in this toilsome world?

In estimating as I do, the value of the farmer as a teacher of agriculture, both in his private capacity and as an active member of a society, I would not be understood as opposed to agricultural schools and colleges. There is no royal road to learning in any of its branches. I have no doubt that a thorough agricultural education would save much misapplied time and labor and capital. I have no doubt that it would accelerate the progress of agriculture. I can easily imagine the effect it would have upon the farming interests of our own county, not only by the universal influence it would exercise, but by the stimulus it would give the leading and prominent members of the profession. It would make the good farmers better, and the poor ones good. And I can easily understand the advantages which those practical teachers of agriculture whom I have designated, might have derived from a thorough knowledge of the general principles taught in schools, not only by means of the actual acquirements and the increased wisdom given by culture, but also by means of that freedom from prejudice and that liberal spirit of enquiry and progress which lie at the foundation of all true success, and have enriched and elevated mankind by the patient toils of invention, and by the brilliant and startling achievements of discovery, and which education alone can give.

But then, gentlemen, comes the immense power of example. Why, I can take you to sections of your own county, where the quiet and unobtrusive efforts of a sagacious, industrious, prudent farmer have operated, like contagion upon all about

him, until he has become one of a community of thriving farmers. His well cultivated and fruitful fields, his carefully pruned orchards laden with fruit, his thrifty and profitable cattle, his well ordered buildings, his walls and fences a protection to his lands, all lie like an open book before his neighbors, so that "he who runs may read." His farm is a treatise on agriculture which every man can comprehend, and which all men delight to study. And as he presents himself with the fruits of his industry at the annual exhibition of this Society, he does more than books and essays, more than schools and colleges, to awaken the agricultural ambition, and to advance the farming interests of this community. He is every day teaching by example, and is illustrating, moreover, that view which I have taken of an agricultural society as one of the best of agricultural schools.

That this kind of teaching is not in vain, let us look over this little section of the country, which contains the farming interest represented by this society. Here in Essex county, we have every kind of industry to tempt us away from agriculture. A long line of sea-coast, with good harbors, has been made famous in the history of commerce by the enterprise of our citizens, who swept the remotest seas when navigation was in its infancy, and it has been made illustrious in the annals of our country by the patriotic daring which gave our navy a name among the nations of the earth. Upon the banks of our rivers and streams, the capital of the manufacturer has built as if with a magician's wand, the thronged and busy palaces of his trade. The mechanic arts have peopled our villages and planted their shops along all our beautiful highways; and yet in this county enclosing four large cities, flourishing towns, busy villages, with every inducement to neglect the soil, our people have taken a high stand as intelligent and enterprising farmers. In the cultivation of root crops and vegetables we have not been surpassed, as the premiums awarded at the last horticultural exhibition in Boston will testify. The largest recorded amount of carrots upon an acre were raised in this very town where I am now speaking. Nowhere has the onion been cultivated with more skill and profit than on these fields directly about us. The application of sea-

manure of all descriptions to the soil, has been carried to the highest perfection along our coast. Some of the best experiments in improving cattle and sheep have been made upon our farms. In horticulture and pomology the names of Cabot, and Manning and Ives, are quoted as authority. Whoever has heard of the liberal and energetic President of our Society, knows that at Lynmere there is a growth of forest trees planted by his hand, which is almost unequalled as "a thing of beauty," and as a triumph of skill over a hard and sterile soil. I can show you on the shore of Beverly, the best arranged farm buildings that can be found perhaps in New England, taking them together; and you will find there as choice a collection of cows as can be seen anywhere, and I think decidedly the finest Suffolks and flock of Dorkings that can be found this side of the royal farm at Windsor, from whence they came. Not far from us, overlooking our very show ground is a greenhouse and grapery, which Mr. Paxton might envy, even among the costly edifices of his lordly master at Chatsworth. Our experiments in under-draining have become so extensive, that a manufactory of tiles has been established in the county. At a trial of mowing machines during the past summer, on my farm, six different inventions were brought upon the ground almost at a day's warning, and since that time, two others have been sent to me for introduction to our farmers who are becoming proverbial for their enterprise in the use of machinery. We have at our exhibition to-day, one of only two tedders that have been imported into this country—a machine which in the simple matter of spreading hay, is of inestimable value to every farmer who would secure this important crop thoroughly, rapidly and economically.

I will not say that all these agricultural improvements, these indications of an agricultural ambition among us, have been brought about by our society—but I am proud to say there is not one of them which has not been encouraged by its liberality. The competition it has excited in mowing machines alone, has aided in a very great degree, the development of an instrument of labor from one degree of perfection to another, until our farmers have the prospect before them of being able to resign the scythe with all its hard toil, and with the constantly

increasing expense attending its use. And will our horticulturalists, our breeders of cattle, our reclaimers of waste lands, our cultivators of field crops say that they have not been stimulated by our society and enlightened by its publications? For myself, I believe it has become an institution which our farmers would not resign. I know that the associations which cluster about it, bringing to our minds as they do the pleasant memories of our annual intercourse with each other, and connected as they are with the industrial pursuits of our wives and daughters, whose handiwork has given a peculiar charm to our exhibitions, are dear to us all. I value the knowledge it has accumulated, gathered together as it has been with the products of our own soil, as of priceless value to every enterprising and enquiring Essex county farmer.

I consider therefore this collection of practical knowledge, as one of the highest duties our society has to perform. I would have it continued by every means within our power, consistent with prudence and economy. We may rely upon it, that the general elevation of agriculture here, will be more promoted by this, than by any endowment of schools and colleges; for while these develop the faculties of the few, the efforts and influences of our society may be made to reach the humblest farmer who is striving to make the most of his single talent. I am confident that by a faithful discharge of this duty, we shall find our whole farming community advancing in intelligence and prosperity, and developing those resources which lie hidden in our soil. And I am encouraged to believe this, when I look abroad and see what other similiar associations have done, and what they indicate. In England, where agriculture has reached a degree of perfection unknown elsewhere, the greatest attention is paid to agricultural societies. There are but five agricultural colleges, and even these are buried in comparative obscurity, while the meetings of the Royal Agricultural Society are thronged by an interested crowd of husbandmen, who have felt the effects of this noble institution upon all their interests. In 1857, the number of visitors to the show at Salisbury amounted to over thirty-five thousand, all learners in a school which first roused the English mind to the true value of artificial manures, to the necessity of

under-drainage, to the importance of a thorough and careful investigation of the best method of feeding animals, and to the most successful modes of cultivation. It is impossible for me to lay before you all that this society has done to remove the prejudices and awaken the minds of the English farmers, both by its publications, and by its exhibitions of machinery which has been actually used upon the farm, of cattle which have been improved beyond a doubt in England, of products which high farming has brought forth upon that very soil. Let me tell you that one great era in English agriculture, dates from the opening of this society in 1839, when, as has been truly said, "farmers began to be familiarized with men of science, and men of science learned not to despise agricultural experience." It was an era also in our own agriculture, when the establishment of societies made farmers familiar with each other, and opened their minds to the importance of their occupation.

In the midst of all the higher duties which devolve upon us, let us not forget these humbler obligations which really lie at the foundation of all our work, and measure the amount of influence we are to exert. It belongs to us to cherish by every means in our power, a fraternity of feeling among our farmers. The love of land which we inherited from our Anglo-Saxon progenitors, is always attended by the desire for isolation, strong reliance upon self and exclusive devotion to one's family, which have always characterized that extraordinary race. Whatever tends to counteract an extravagant development of these qualities, binds society together with new bonds. The heart of man never expands until it feels the full force of the fact that it is but one of a community, and is warmed by the quick sympathies of neighbors and friends. The farmer living on his own land, has a sense of independence, which, if carried too far, might destroy all those ties which bind society together. The excess of individuality is his imminent danger. Prejudice and a fond adherence to old ways surround him on every side, with constant tendency to make his mind obtuse. In the calm and imperturbable spirit which threatens to encase him in an armour of steel, what a contrast does he form to the impulsive and excitable groups which are swayed to and fro by every

“wind of doctrine” that reaches their work-shops, and whirls them along with resistless current. In avoiding this extreme, he is threatened by another, from which associated labor alone can save him. It is the agricultural society which teaches him that his fellow-men have like passions and interests with his own. It is the agricultural society which extends his sympathies, and rouses his ambition, and enlarges his mind, and arms him against those foes which beset him behind and before to destroy himself and degrade his calling. The blood of our fathers makes us careful, prudent, successful farmers; the associations which they founded will make us intelligent, liberal and progressive ones.

In this respect every form of associated agricultural effort is of the highest importance. A town that sustains a farmer's club is sure to have its due proportion of good farmers. What invaluable allies to a county society they might be made! Local fairs cannot be too highly estimated, both as a means of bringing farmers together, and also as furnishing an opportunity for purchase, sale and interchange; and I trust the day is not far distant when the judicious recommendation made to you by your President, will be so far carried out, as to result in the establishment of monthly, if not weekly fairs, in some convenient location in the county. Let us in every way create a community of feeling here, a sort of *esprit du corps*, a desire to talk with each other, a desire to trade with each other, a determination to cultivate our own minds and supply our own markets, and Essex county will soon become as distinguished for its agriculture, as it now is for its wealth and enterprise in commerce, manufactures and the mechanic arts.

Above all things, it is our duty to be in the ordinary term of rather an uneasy age, sufficiently progressive. This is a dangerous word I know, inasmuch as progress too often means an entire accordance with our own opinions. There is a restless, short-sighted spirit, which we are very apt to dignify with the name of progress, but which is nothing more than a superficial love of excitement, novelty and change. Agriculture tolerates no such handmaid as this. And I cannot too warmly congratulate this Society that it has escaped its influences. When I consider the alacrity with which every invention and every

new branch of agriculture have been recognized, the liberal rewards which have been offered for all improvements, the generous consideration which has been shown careful breeders of our most valuable farm animals and the attention which has been aroused by the published essays of the society, I cannot but look with pride upon an association which seems blessed with perpetual youth, tempered with the wisdom and judgment of mature manhood. In its devotion to the cause of agriculture, it has kept pace with the best intelligence of the age, and has placed itself on an enduring foundation in the minds of the farming community. An agricultural society, which, while too many have yielded, and fatally too, to a passion which leaves no room for the homely fruits of honest farming, has discriminated between the different uses of the animal kingdom, deserves all praise. It has a due regard for all the interests which come under its cognizance. One of its great objects is the encouragement of breeding valuable animals for the profit of the farmer and for the advantage of the community, whether it be for the dairy, for draught, or for driving. In all this, it is observant of the most important interests submitted to it, and is as truly progressive in its recognition of all classes of animals as it is in the reward it offers the various branches of farming. It is the legitimate use of animals, and the legitimate growth of crops with which it is concerned. Our society offers liberal premiums for bulls—does it follow that we must have a bull-fight at every annual exhibition? We all value the horse and have encouraged the breeding of this important animal with ample rewards—will the most intelligent judges among us say that they require the trials of the track, in order to make up their decisions? All these things have their place, but it is not exactly at a farmers' exhibition, or as part of a society, which should be actuated by an honest feeling of competition, based upon a love of excellence and a desire to advance an honorable and useful calling, and which has no more connection with the ardor of the race-course, than submitting the seed to the uncertain influences of the earth has with the hazards of the faro bank and the dice box. The two occupations cannot live together, neither is it necessary that they should for the benefit of any branch of industry. Not that I would

have our society discontinue the liberal encouragement it has always extended to the development of the American trotting horse, than which no animal is wiser, more enduring and patient, more courageous, nor more defiant of all obstacles. But as it values its own existence, as it regards the dignity of that occupation to which it is devoted, I trust it will never substitute a dangerous excitement for that healthy exhilaration which the farmer feels as he surveys the creditable products of agricultural industry and skill. There is enough in our exhibitions to occupy the attention of all who come to learn, enough to gratify the curiosity of all who come as spectators, enough to arrest the thoughts of all who come to witness the progress of that business upon which the subsistence of society depends. Anything beyond this is inappropriate. And I am constrained to believe that a desire to introduce amusements among us, which might for a time eclipse our more important duties, arises from an inability to comprehend the true object of our association. What do you suppose a solid Yorkshire man would say, were he called away from handling Lord Feversham's prize Short Horn bull, to witness a trial of speed between Mr. Tenbroeck's Prior, and the slashing mare Blink Bonny. Our trans-Atlantic neighbors know better than this. They breed thorough breeds, in almost every race of animals domesticated by man, they understand the glowing pleasures of the chase, they know all about the hearty joys, and the fascinating chances of the race-course, the Derby, Epsom, Newmarket, are all entered in their calendar—but when the steam plough is brought into the field, when the earliest maturity of beef and mutton is to be considered, when the best methods of producing breeds of animals adapted to specific purposes are to be investigated, when cultivation and crops are to be examined, the Englishman closes his sporting book, and becomes an inquiring, progressive, successful farmer. And will any one say that the Englishman does not pay sufficient attention to the breeding of horses? Why, it has become a science with him, taught and developed not by converting his fair grounds into the turf, but by that care and intelligence which always receive their reward, and which may be imitated by us to our honor and profit. Let us then as a society encourage still the attention our farmers are giving these useful ani-

mals, and if any man doubts the benefit to be derived from it, let him witness the extraordinary success one of our own Essex farmers has met with by the exercise of that judgment and skill which have enabled him to produce a Childers, and to fill his stables with a collection of colts unequalled as a whole, from which one yearling animal has been sold at a price greater than was ever before obtained in New England. Let us do this, and I think we shall be progressive enough for the most ardent lover of horse flesh in the country ; let us continue the encouragement we have always offered the legitimate improvements of agriculture, and I think we shall be progressive enough for the most zealous farmer in the country.

And now, gentlemen, let me say a word with regard to the opportunities we possess for discharging these duties to which I have referred. The law of consequences and compensation which controls the life of each individual, and, under the guidance of Providence, prevents our being the mere creatures of accident, directs also the course of associations of men, and furnishes them their opportunity for good or evil. By a long and honorable career, our society has secured a position which by elevating its influence, multiplies its chances for effort. I believe you will all agree that it has won the respect of the farmers of our county, and of the community generally. It has been deemed worthy of the most liberal consideration of many of our best citizens. A valuable library has in this way been collected which furnishes constant opportunity for reference and information. And a large agricultural interest has learned to be stimulated by our rewards and instructed by our advice and counsel.

But above all, our association has been deemed a worthy recipient of one of the best farms in our county, a legacy bequeathed to us for the promotion of the science of agriculture. I think I do not estimate this bequest from Dr. Treadwell too highly, when I look upon it not only as a compliment to the reputation we have won as a society, but as by far the most valuable means we possess for carrying on the work we have begun. A farm for experiment and observation—how much is involved in this design ! Under the care of an intelligent farmer, and conducted by a competent committee, the

accumulation of facts which may be made there must be full of interest and instruction. We may learn within our own borders if we will, the changes of the seasons from year to year, the chances of crops in our latitude, the cultivation best adapted to our soil, the effects of manures, the expense and benefits of drainage, the relative value of products, without incurring that expenditure of time and money which renders experimental farming so hazardous and so generally unprofitable. I trust this golden opportunity will not be wasted ; and I most earnestly urge upon you the adoption of a system which shall render the records of the Treadwell farm an addition to our agricultural literature, which shall be creditable to ourselves and profitable to those, who, coming after us, assume our duties and inherit our opportunities.

In conclusion, we should not forget the thousand associations which throng upon us as we come up to our annual festival. The picture of home, of fond pride and warm attachments, is constantly before us. The fabric wrought at the domestic fireside, has enwoven through all its fibres the simple taste which designed, and the simple virtues which attended its construction. Not a plant or an animal adorns your exhibition that has not been an object of human care, appealing to man's ingenuity for its culture, and to man's kindness for protection. They tell of spring, struggling to come forth, touching the earth with the first faint soft hues of life—of summer, warming and cherishing to the richest exuberance—of autumn, dashing its gorgeous colors with bold and lavish hand over the landscape, and crowning the laborer with a rich reward—of winter, whose night season of repose shuts down over the earth, and binds with domestic ties man with his flocks and herds into one great family of mutual dependence, filled with faith and trust. They remind us of those possessions which appeal to our kindest impulses, and whose memory is always ready to cheer us through the dull hours of absence and trial. Have you never heard from the care-worn and grey-haired man, the story of that tree which cast its shadow upon the roof of his native cottage, and the music of whose branches he has always heard when far away amidst the din of busy life ? Have you never experienced the confidence and trust and the calm content which

the possession of the soil ought to bring? To those whose daily toil is devoted to the business of agriculture, the beauties of the farm may be hidden beneath the weight of care it brings; but above all, rises the genius of the occupation to find the ready response in man's nature, until the yoke seems to grow "light and easy." And when the temptations of an active world have drawn man away from his paternal acres into the severer labors of the forum or the market place, when he is tossed upon the stormy sea, or defies all danger in the battles of his country, his thoughts by day and his dreams by night carry him to those scenes of his youth in which the valley and hill, the pasture and woodland, the dewy morning and the quiet evening, the daily events of farm-life, prepared for his wearied soul a fairy land in which he can always find peace and repose.

"I flew to the pleasant fields traversed so oft,
In life's morning march, when my bosom was young,
I heard my own mountain goats bleating aloft,
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reaper sung."

This is not the poetry of farming life, but it is the reality which outlasts all fleeting events, which remains when the burthens of the day are all forgotten, which never faded from the memory of the great statesman, who, when his eye was growing dim at the approach of death, would have his last look linger upon those fields which he learned to love, before honors and ambition had besieged his fretted soul. It is a reality which dwells upon my mind when I urge you to cherish and develop the agriculture of your county, as the basis of much of its prosperity and happiness, and as the parent of its most loyal and devoted children. It is a reality which you all possess, which your occupation has given, and which God grant no power on earth can ever take away.

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