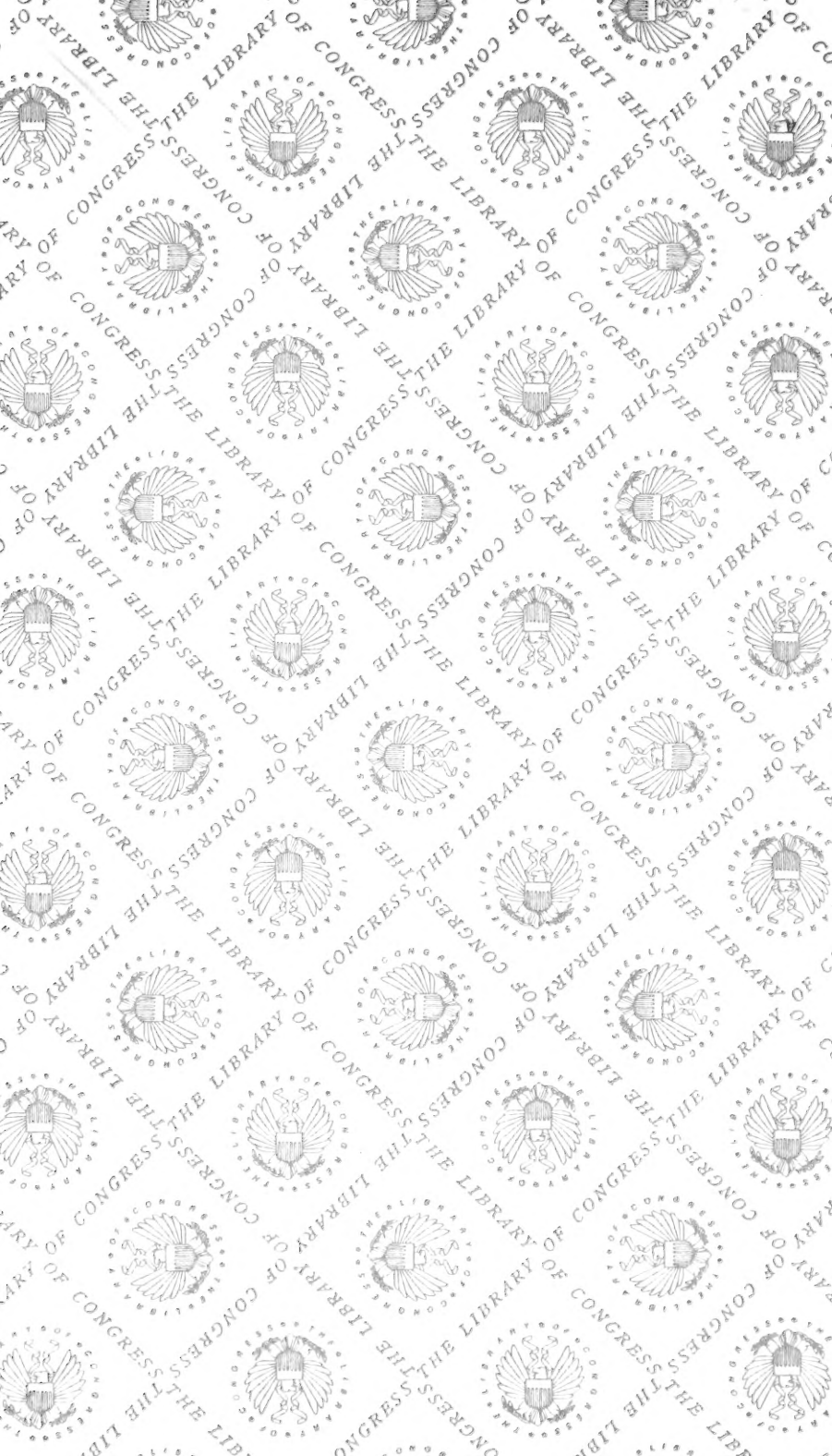
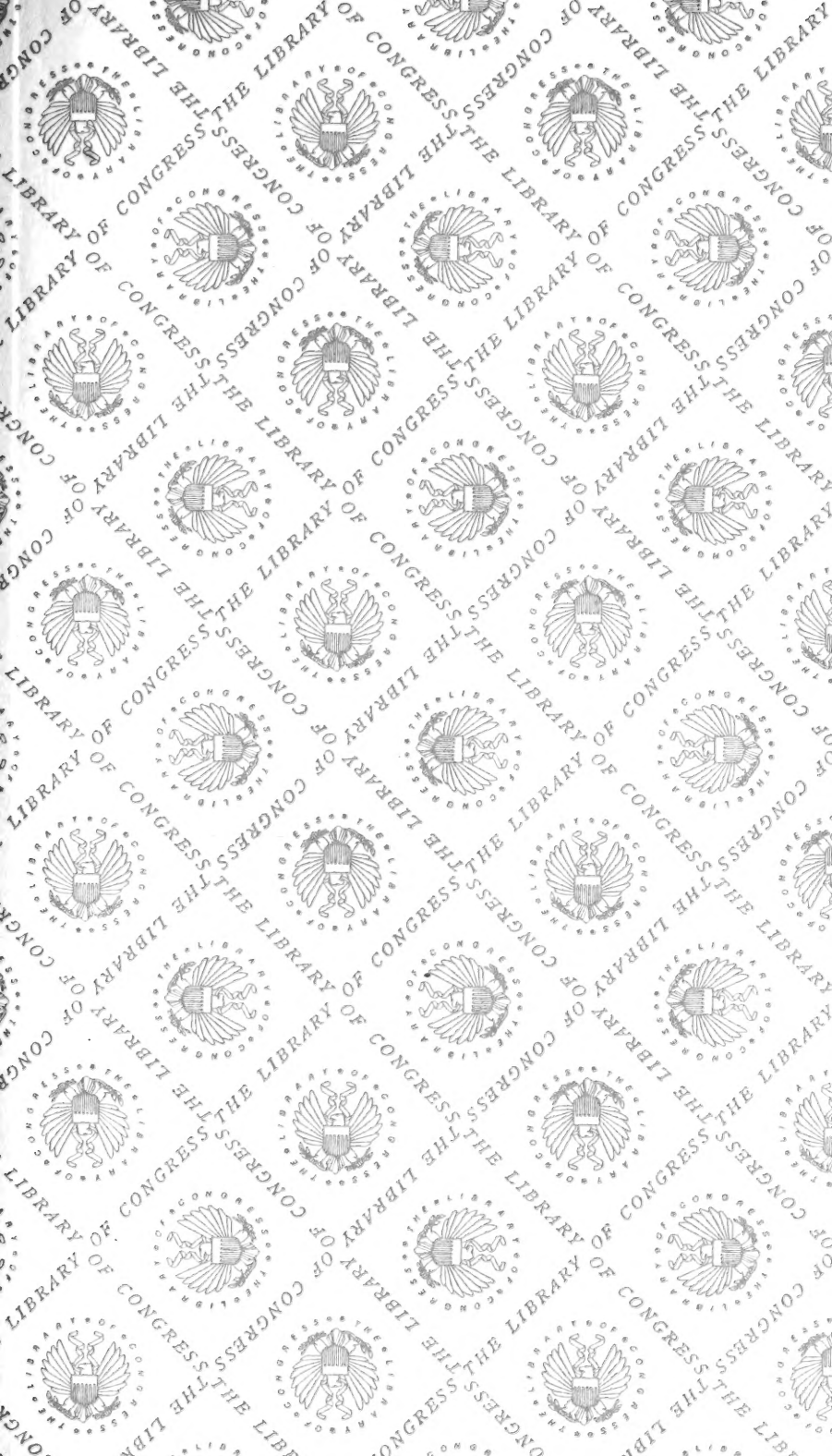


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AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Md. State Agricultural Society,

AT ITS

ANNUAL EXHIBITION

AT

BALTIMORE, OCTOBER 28TH, 1853:

BY CHAUNCEY P. HOLCOMB,

OF DELAWARE.

BALTIMORE
FROM THE PRESS OF SANDS & MILLS,
Office of the "American Farmer."

1853.

AN

ADDRESS

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

[Faint, mostly illegible text, possibly a list of names and addresses]

S523
H72

CORRESPONDENCE.

To C. P. HOLCOMB, Esq.

Sir:—

The undersigned, a Committee of the Maryland State Agricultural Society, appointed for the especial purpose of soliciting from you a copy of the Address delivered upon this day before it, would most respectfully observe, that in gratifying the request of the Society in consenting to its publication, the interests of the common cause in which we are embarked would be most essentially subserved by your compliance, as from the sentiments embodied in your eloquent lecture so replete with interest and information, its diffusion through the press can but exercise a most beneficial influence upon the agricultural community which our Society has the honor to represent.

With sentiments of the highest respect and esteem,

Yours, &c.

SAMUEL P. SMITH,
THOS. R. JOYNES, JR.
JNO. CARROLL WALSH.

Baltimore, Md., Oct. 28, 1853.

BARNUM'S HOTEL, BALTIMORE, Oct. 28, 1853.

To SAMUEL P. SMITH, THOS. R. JOYNES, JR., JOHN CARROLL WALSH,
Esqrs., Committee.

GENTLEMEN:

In answer to your note requesting me to furnish a copy of my address for publication, I reply I will do so with pleasure.

I fear you greatly over-estimate its merits, but such as it is—the MS. containing the substance of my remarks will be placed at your disposal.

Respectfully yours,

CHAUNCEY P. HOLCOMB.

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A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY—

MY BROTHER AGRICULTURISTS :—

I suppose I may regard the summons by which I appear before you, as one calling upon me to testify as a witness in the cause of Agriculture, rather than as an advocate to argue its claims, or as an orator, eloquently to declaim about it.

This is an anniversary occasion intended for the promotion of Agriculture, and intended to be in honor of Agriculture—and we may at such a time very appropriately refer to the past. I have sometimes thought that in our congratulations of ourselves upon our success, we might seem indirectly to reflect upon our predecessors—upon the dead—the men and the generations of the past. We should be careful to do their memory no injustice. There is certainly a very general and wide spread public opinion to the effect, that rural sports and pastimes, the turf and the chase, the exercise of an unbounded hospitality, and the time spent in social intercourse, not only interfered with their agricultural pursuits, but that to these causes are mainly to be attributed the worn-out estates to which the present generation succeeded. This is a short-sighted and very erroneous view of the subject.

It is true that the landed proprietors of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, in particular, continued to engage in and enjoy the sports that were regarded as appropriate to country life—and which are so regarded now, and so practiced now by the people from whom we are descended—a practice in which I hope, succeeding generations of our country population will long continue to emulate them. Men cannot work always ;

the bow should not always remain strung. We have resources for amusement and relaxation in our field and other sports, not only more manly and healthful, but more harmless and innocent than those that are nightly sought by the denizens of our cities. I trust the day is distant, when either the economic spirit of a utilitarian age, or the austerity of a religious one, will banish these from our manual of pastimes and exercises.

The short and truthful history of the past is this. The early settlers of this district of country found themselves in the possession of good lands, a fine climate, rich staples, the country intersected by fine Bays and Rivers, giving them easy access to market, and a general time of prosperity ensued. They not only fed the country to a great extent from their wheat fields, but grew for export an amount that almost entirely supplied the foreign exchanges, as wheat and flour were the leading articles of export up to 1805, when the export of cotton rose to \$9,000,000, taking the first place which it has since retained.

But the era of Agricultural Improvement had not yet dawned, not even in Europe. The course of tillage was one of exhaustion, sending away with the wheat and tobacco crop, year after year, the valuable constituents of the soil, without any attempt at restoration. Contemporary with the prostration of their lands, the markets began to give way. The long European wars had terminated; peace had succeeded our war with Great Britain, and the price of wheat went down in 1820 in England, subject to a heavy duty, to 44 shillings a quarter, while in our own markets it was worth but about 65 cents a bushel, and corn 25 cents. There was more Flour and Wheat shipped out of the country during the last ten years of the last century than there was thirty years later. From 1790 to 1800 there was shipped of wheat 5,386,710 bushels, and of flour, 7,684,456 barrels. From 1820 to 1830 215,272 bushels of wheat, and 8,295,920 barrels of flour—the excess of the first decennial period being equal to about two and a half millions of bushels of wheat.

Dr. Samuel Black of Delaware, in a very curious and able Essay, published in the old *American Farmer*, in 1820, states the average of the crops of that period in New Castle County, to be, 5 bushels of wheat to the acre, 10 of corn, and 15 of oats. These were the causes—national causes—commercial causes—the state of agricultural knowledge—that prostrated this interest so low before the close of the first quarter of the present century, and not a few horse races and fox chases, or the discharge of the duties of an open and liberal hospitality. Another charge indeed, is in effect, that they did too much—that they cleared up the whole country and wore it all out—having every where felled the forests, and incontinently ploughed it forever. I apprehend they did about the best they could, and

“He who does the best the circumstance allows,
Does well, acts nobly, the best and most generous can no more.”

They did not reclaim their poor fields, nor, gentlemen, with their means, could we have done it.

These were dark days for Agriculture—days of gloom and despondency—a night, a double night—an “opaque of nature and of soul” seemed to shroud it. The population were flying from the Old States, and there appeared to be danger of a general exodus.

About this time a few bold public spirited men began to urge most strenuously the necessity, and the practicability of a reform in Agriculture. Conspicuous among these, though there were many others in different parts of the country, was Col. John Taylor, of Caroline. The first Agricultural press, the old *American Farmer*, made its appearance about this time, and no one can refer to its early columns without feeling that there is a deep debt of gratitude due to John S. Skinner.

A better rotation of crops and the use of Plaster and Clover, and finally of Lime, were beginning to show their effects in improving and ameliorating the condition of our lands, when the great Agricultural *discovery* of the age—so far as reclaim-

ing worn-out lands is concerned—the discovery of the virtues of Peruvian Guano, has enabled us at once, in a single season, by a single slight dressing, hardly more in weight than the seed with which we sow the land, to restore the most worn-out and exhausted fields to the production of their most palmy days.

Your merit, my brother farmers, the merit of our contemporaries, is in the zeal and spirit with which all have engaged in this cause of Agricultural improvement. No sooner did a single ray of hope appear—no sooner were men able to grope their way by the dim lights of science, or the doubtful results of half tried experiments, than they were willing to venture—willing all uncalculating to cast their bread upon the waters. It was not in a mercenary spirit, or one that looked alone to gain. It was with very many—perhaps a majority, a generous, unselfish, patriotic purpose to improve their Estates if this could be done without hopelessly embarrassing themselves. Of course they looked to returns first or last, or rather hoped for them, but the direct profits of the enterprise was less considered than its success, and many a swail and bog, many a worn-out and gullied old field has been encountered, subdued or reclaimed in this spirit. I repeat, this is creditable. It was the impulse of a sentiment, unprompted by the passion of avarice, or the base spirit of lucre. The mind too, with you, has been more than ever an “informing principle to the plough.” Men have thought, and read, and pondered over this great subject in all its bearings. Judging from the success that has attended us, there is every cause for hope in the future. The three States in part represented by this Society, are even now unsurpassed in the production of wheat, the great staple of the world, by any other like amount of population in the Union. The aggregate population of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, by the last census is ~~2,378,061~~; their production of wheat 17,209,807 bushels or a fraction over $8\frac{1}{4}$ bushels to each person. The aggregate population of Ohio and Michigan, is 2,378,061; their production of wheat, 19,413,289 bushels, or a fraction less than $8\frac{1}{4}$ bushels to each person.

Wisconsin is the only other State that gets up to 8 bushels, and this State with a virgin soil exceeds it. The crop of Ohio, it should be observed, is said to have been short the year the census was taken, or in 1848.

And thus the facts show, that in a few short years we have completely falsified the vaticinations which are thus promulgated to the world in McGregor's work on this country :

“In all the old wheat districts of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, the land is all so completely exhausted by continued cropping, that it must be abandoned for years, until restored to vigour by the recuperative powers of nature, or transferred to another population better qualified to recover it by art and industry.”

Not only has such been the general result, but we may refer to particular instances where the crops grown by some of our farmers about equal in quantity, and surpass in quality the produce of the best English husbandry. A specimen of the beautiful Gale wheat is on exhibition here to-day, grown on the Estate of James T. Earle, Esq., of the Eastern Shore, averaging by weight 39 bushels to the acre, and a more clean, fair, plump and beautiful article can hardly be seen. The farm on which it grew produces now one thousand bushels for every one hundred it formerly produced, or the difference between a handsome income of several thousand dollars by the annual sale of several thousand bushels of grain, and the proceeds of a few hundred bushels sparsely gathered from its wide-spread fields by its former possessor, the ancestor of Mr. Earle, the late Judge Earle. This is but one instance, there are hundreds.

But we have only fairly commenced. There are many matters indeed we have hardly laid our hands to at all, in which success is desirable and must be attained. We must not only excel in a general husbandry, but breeding and grazing must to some extent especially claim our attention; indeed the whole routine of the affairs of rural life as suited to our soil and climate, including Horticulture, and Fruit culture, and whatever is calculated to embellish our homes or enrich our estates must receive the best thoughts of our minds and the best labors of our hand.

To this end I will make some suggestions in reference to what came under my observation in a recent short visit to Europe.

Let me give you a description of *Wark* farm, situated in the county of Northumberland, on the south bank of the Tweed, which separates England from Scotland.

It belongs to the estate of the Earl of Tankerville, and is in the tenure of Mr. William Dove, a very intelligent and enterprising farmer. It contains 1200 acres of very superior land ; the annual rent of the farm is £3000, or \$15,000. It is worked in four shifts. Two hundred acres are in permanent pasture, two hundred and fifty in Turnips, five hundred in other crops—mostly Wheat, Oats and Barley, two hundred and fifty in grass. He works it with twenty-four horses, employs twelve ploughmen, two spademen, two stewards or overseers ; he hires thirty women workers in summer, and twenty in winter. In harvest he employs from eighty to one hundred and sixty hands in all ; he keeps a joiner and a blacksmith, he thrashes by water power. He keeps and feeds from six to seven hundred sheep, and feeds and turns off about two hundred and fifty head of cattle in the course of the year. The women laborers are paid twenty-five cents a day, the men about thirty-seven and a half, all boarding themselves. The cattle and sheep he mostly breeds on other Highland or Scotch farms he rents. He pays altogether \$25,000 annual rent.

Now I take this farm as a type or model to convey an idea of English farming operations—to show what crops they cultivate, to what extent they graze and feed, and for this, and the kind of labor they use and the price they pay, Wark farm may be considered a fair representative of a very large class of English and Scotch farms. It is larger than the average, but smaller than some. Two, three, five, six and seven hundred acre farms are more common.

Seven hundred out of the twelve hundred acres of Wark farm it will be seen are devoted to grazing and feeding, for the two hundred and fifty acres of Turnips are of course fed on the farm to cattle and sheep. This crop is made to answer to

our Corn crop, and though far from being of equal value they calculate that less than an acre of good Turnips will fatten a bullock. A large bullock they say, will eat six bushels a day. I have a much higher opinion of their value since I have seen how they will fatten cattle and sheep. I think we may cultivate them to advantage to some extent by way of a variety. But a little over one hundred acres on this farm of twelve hundred goes in wheat. In a good season they count on forty bushels of 70 pounds to the bushel, about equal to forty-six or seven bushels to the acre of sixty pounds to the bushel, our standard.

Besides all the manure that is made from feeding so many cattle and sheep, 25 tons of Guano and 800 bushels of bones are annually purchased, and once in about eight years the land receives a dressing of nine tons of lime, to the acre, about three hundred bushels.

Now to keep this farm in the condition its intelligent and successful proprietor desires, if he were to make grain its principal product and sell that off from the farm, the annual outlay for manure would have to be very great, and the \$15,000 annual rent probably could not be made. Their idea seems to be that the profits of breeding and grazing, whatever they may be, are clear profits, while in selling grain they are selling labor and manure, or a portion of the valuable constituents of their soil, all of which have to be bought back in the market again. I think we may take a hint from them here. I doubt if any country that is constantly heavily cropped in grain or in any tillage crop, and which is sold from the farm, is likely to reach a very high state of improvement and be kept there. We should not become so set in our ways or fixed in our habits as not to change our practice when the state and condition of the markets will compensate us for doing so.

The subject of the markets is not sufficiently considered by us; the English are wiser. We send for instance, our grain to market at a certain season *as a part of a mere routine*; we sow, harvest, thrash, and then send forward to market—without once considering whether there is a fair legitimate demand

at remunerating prices, or whether we are likely to be met only by the speculators in the market, buying in a glutted market at a minimum price to reap in good time the profits that should be the producers.

Last year much of the wheat crop was sold for 75 and 80 cents a bushel ; it subsequently went up, after it had parted from first hands to \$1.20. The farmer lost the profits ; he got pay, at most, only for his labor and his manure. It is often so, it is constantly so. If possible we should endeavor to learn the condition, or at least the prospect of the English crop, and the state of the western crop, particularly in the states of Ohio and Michigan. Knowing the importance of this information to my brother farmers, I did what I could the past season to keep them informed through the *American Farmer*, in reference to the English crop—and I have since had the satisfaction of learning that some acted on this information and held on till the price went up. If it is not safe to let our wheat stand in stacks, or we cannot house it, we should get it out and put it in granaries, or send it forward to be kept in store. Any thing but being sacrificed as we are by rushing into the market *blindfold*, and being forced to take whatever is offered us. The English farmer watches the market as a mariner will his Barometer, and like him too, he surveys, as far as he can, the whole horizon. If there is a speck of war no bigger than his hand he logs it—the price of freights, the state of the money market, the condition of crops in the different grain countries, all these are matters he well weighs and considers.

In reference to English husbandry, I may say generally, it is very neat. Their ambition seems to be to do work well, ours to do a good deal. They very justly attach great importance to good ploughing, and nothing can exceed the neatness and skill with which this important part of husbandry is performed. They do not plough as much in a day as we do, an acre is considered a good day's work. Many of their teams are harnessed tandem, three large horses to a big iron plough. In executing a job with despatch there is no people that can excel or equal us. We seek for the short ways and are at work

with head and hand at the same time. We exert ourselves more than they do, and man for man accomplish more.

But the English and Scotch are good neat farmers and deserve all praise. They take it coolly too—I was down in Devonshire in haying time; it had rained two weeks before I arrived and it rained more or less every day for the two weeks I was there—making thirty consecutive days of rainy or wet weather in the height of their hay harvest. I expressed my sympathy to one of the farmers who had thirty acres of heavy grass down, and which was literally rotting in the cock. “O, Sir,” said he, “the hay is quite spoiled as you say, quite sir, but then what a beautiful stand of Turnips I have? and what fine grass in my pastures, both of which have been helped by the rain, and you know if the bullocks get fat this fall and I turn them off, I can do without the hay, that is, sir, I shall do without it, you know, and then providence sent the rain and what have we to say.” The English certainly have a good deal of practical philosophy. They seem to me to be a very honest people. They regard a thing as right or wrong judged by a moral standard, and no sophistry or circumlocution can change its character.

The domestic animals of England, of the present day, are unequalled by those of any other country in the world. The improvement of their breeds has been a great source of national wealth, and exclusive of their stud, have probably doubled in value within the last half century. It is a great grass country; their sheep are a source of great income to them. I saw at Lammas Fair, near Melrose, in Scotland, 80,000 lambs assembled on one common, and all were sold between 7 o’clock in the morning and 12 o’clock noon. Three Banks were represented on the ground, occupying tents, to do the business; a quarter of a million of dollars changed hands in five hours, the banks furnishing facilities of exchange, &c. The lambs sold from 3 to \$5 a piece.

The demand for Stock in our own country of every description is good; prices are highly remunerative, and yet cattle seem to be scarce. Cows have been bought in Ohio this Au-

tumn at \$35 a head, to drive into the Atlantic market. Calves were selling the past summer, in the neighbourhood of Lexington, at \$5 and \$8 a piece, a few weeks old—and my neighbours have been buying in their store cattle, 3 year old Steers, at from \$36 to \$46 a head.

The rapid multiplication and increase of our cities, and the foreign demand occasioned by an advance of wages, by which the laboring classes are enabled to eat more meat, makes the increased consumption of meat, both of Beef and Pork, immense. In 1851 the arrivals of Bacon, at tide-water, was 10,398,900 pounds, and in 1853 the arrivals have been 19,330,500—an increase of nearly 100 per cent. The arrivals of Pork this year, exceed those of 1851 by more than 100 per cent. There are slaughtered in the city of New York, about an average of 4,000 beeves a week. The accurate report of the numbers brought to the city within the last ten weeks, is 41,852—and the number of all slaughtered animals during the same period, including sheep, lambs, veals, swine, and inclusive also of beef cattle, is stated at 233,729, making an average of about 23,000 animals slaughtered weekly in New York, which is only one out of many cities we now have to supply.

We have got now to growing the cultivated grasses. Clover in England, will only take once in about eight years.—With us, a single year intervening, or after two crops taken from the land, it will come again, and a good dressing of Guano will generally bring it on any of our old fields. It is better for the succeeding crop of wheat to graze the clover than to turn it down; its root constitutes its main value, and the benefit resulting from the land being tramped in depasturing it, is more than equivalent to the value of the top. Clover fields then, with *some permanent pasture*, and the breeding and feeding of stock, in connection with the growth of wheat and other grain, makes a nice husbandry, and we should then follow Mr. Wm. Dove's rule, "that the farmer should never go to market except to sell—he should have both a feeder's and a breeder's profit to himself." Cattle may be best suited to some locations—sheep or horses to other locations.

The time has arrived when we should go to work to breed a good stud of horses—the best that can be bred in any country. We can do it; our climate, which has great influence, favors it. A fine stud, besides constituting a large item in the wealth of a country, otherwise favorably represents it—for the horse, when in perfection, is with all people an object of pride and admiration.

The English Stud, particularly their blood stock, has greatly deteriorated of late years. The cause is to be found in their mode of breeding, by which a forced maturity is effected. They are very commonly entered to run at two years old, and have to be made up—not naturally grown—by that time. They make some muscle by cramming with oats from the time the colt is three weeks old. The breeding is now for the benefit of the sportsman—for the interest of the “betting ring,” and not for the perfection of the breed. All they want is *heels*. Their horses can no longer run four miles, and repeat, but they run a single dash of two miles, two and a half, and at the Darby and Goodwod about three miles.—They are surprised to hear that we yet have horses that can run four miles, and repeat. I am satisfied there are no horses to be found in all Europe, that can make the time the Boston stock did at Richmond the other day, running 4 mile heats, namely:—7m. 46s.; 7m. 46½s.; 7m. 49s.

We imported some of their best horses after they had introduced the best Eastern blood—the Arabian, the Barb, and the Turk—mostly before the war of the Revolution, and about the close of the last century, and this blood we now have in its purity. We have another valuable family in the Morgan and Black Hawk breed—animals of fine style and action, and showing in their lofty crests a distinguished mark of the Arabian. There are no horses that can trot with ours—that is given up. Now we should go to work and breed fine horses. They are regarded in our cities by one class, as an article of luxury, and are frequently purchased as articles of virtu, or specimens of the Fine Arts, and at extravagant prices.

The breeder must not keep them too long—it adds to the expense; the English understand this. They ought to be quite ready to go off by the time they are three years old. I would adopt the English system of maturing, so far as to feed the colt with oats the first year; that I think would not hurt him. I have seen the effect on calves of feeding them grain the first winter; they will make larger animals, and size is particularly to be regarded in breeding for our cities.—The cross of the thorough bred race horse, one of pretty good size, upon a large, roomy, common mare, will give us something like the English Hunter. To cross the thorough bred Racer on large Morgan mares, if they can be had, or the reverse—the Morgan horse on large thorough bred Race mares, should give us a noble breed. I especially commend this whole subject to our young agricultural friends. We have all a great interest in it, not only as a matter of profit, but as adding to our pleasures, supplying our daughters with the means of becoming accomplished equestrians, and enabling our sons to “witch” themselves, if not “the world, with horsemanship.”

This subject is beginning to attract attention. The great National Exhibition of Horses recently held at Springfield, will exert a favorable influence. Similar exhibitions should follow, and a generous emulation will be excited throughout the country, to bring this noble animal to the highest possible state of perfection.

Among the means that have been prominently influential in advancing the cause of Agriculture, are Agricultural Societies. We are to look to them to effect much more. It is through these Associations that an Agricultural public opinion is being formed—an organization of agriculturists effected, and a brotherhood of association cemented. We are no longer separate and isolated, but a community. That interest that should seek to overslaugh Agriculture, or oppress it with selfish and unjust legislation, will not be encountered as formerly by some “Village Hampden,” attempting to withstand the “Tyrant of his fields,” but by a public opinion,

brought to bear through our fraternity of interest and association, in a manner to make itself felt and respected.

The great feature of the age—the last phase and tableau of rural life—you may say of social life—is these Agricultural Exhibitions. They represent in the numbers they congregate, almost the population of the nation. What occasion within the past year has assembled the people like the State Fairs at Saratoga, Pittsburgh, Dayton, Springfield, Illinois, Lexington, Baltimore, Richmond, Augusta and the National Fair at Springfield, Mass.? Then the County Societies throughout almost the width and breadth of the land, have had their Fairs, assembling every where the people.

The friend of Agriculture must not only be gratified with these results, but the friend of his country must rejoice at them; for he will see in the devotion of a manly, virtuous yeomanry to the great agricultural interest of the country, which they so adopt, and press forward, scorning all political intrigue, and all meaner things—the best evidence that liberty and the institutions of our country are safe with them, while corruption and venality will not go unwhipped of justice at their hands. “The hands that planted the tree of liberty can protect it while it shades them.”

I fearlessly pronounce, that no man who fails to visit these Exhibitions, can conduct his farming operations with the lights of the age, or intelligently. Here is seen in a few hours all the different breeds of Cattle, Sheep, Horses, Hogs, Poultry; all the different kinds of Grain, Grasses, Fruits; the different description of Implements, with the latest improvements; here he meets others, and the talk is of these things—of their merits and demerits—of the crops and the markets, and he goes home well posted up as to the state and condition of Agriculture in 1853, or for that year.

All honor to the public spirited men who have been foremost in the organization of these Societies. I regard them as benefactors—public benefactors. Contrast these grounds to day with the first Exhibition we held. Who can doubt the increased wealth of Maryland, through the improvement

of her live stock? The personal energy of one man has had much to do with our success. This man is on these grounds in the morning before most of us are out of our beds, and never leaves them until the gates are closed for the night. I once saw him doing even more yeoman service. It was the year of our first Exhibition on the new grounds west of the city. There was no hay for the stock—a negro approaching with a load got stalled, and some of us hunting for the President, found him with his *shoulder braced to the negro's wagon wheel*, endeavoring by the exertion of all his personal strength to help the baulky horses out with their load.—The relations of Charles B. Calvert, as the able executive head of this Society, we trust will not soon be terminated; but, happen when it may, he will probably never be allowed to leave it without taking with him some token or memorial of the high estimation in which his services are held by its members. If it be in the form of a Picture, by all means let it represent the worthy President at the *Negro's Wagon wheel*, helping forward the hay for the stock, his scarf and badges of office *well besmeared with mud*, or it would not be “life-like.”

There are other early and staunch friends of the Society that we cannot cease to remember, among them the late Judge Glenn. His professional brethren could hardly more regret his loss than the members of this Society, to whom he was endeared by the interest which he took in their cause, and the services he rendered it.

There is a great national object in connection with Agriculture that claims our attention. Our interest has not such a footing in the Government as it deserves, and is entitled to; agriculture is, in effect, disfranchised; there is hardly a record kept of it. Commerce has its agents and representatives both at home and abroad. We want a Department, or a Bureau; we want the foreign information we could obtain through it; we want statistics; we require special negotiation in reference to Guano, and other subjects connected with our pursuit.—

Such a Department should have charge of the Public Lands. As to the expense to the government, the advantage and gain to a single good agricultural county would defray it ; it is not to be thought of.

Such a Department would guard against the encroachments of other interests; it would add to the dignity of this great national interest, and it is a boon it deserves by the success it has ensured, and by the wealth and numbers that now represent it.

There is another matter of paramount importance taken in connection with this. We want a National Agricultural College. Both these subjects were agitated at the organization of the United States Agricultural Society in June, 1852. We had then every reason to believe that success could be secured to both, and have now.

The favorite plan for an Agricultural College and model farm seems to be to connect it with the Smithsonian Institute. The desire of the benevolent testator was to "diffuse knowledge among men," and to no class is it more necessary than to our youth adopting the pursuit of Agriculture—and to none could it be extended who could return fruits more likely to scatter blessings over the land.

There are in Europe according to Professor Hitchcock's report who visited and travelled over Europe to obtain information in connection with this subject, no less than 338 Agricultural Schools and Colleges, besides 14 Colleges and Universities, in which there are Agricultural Professorships, and to nearly all of which are attached experimental farms.

The farm would be an important feature with us. There is nothing indeed more necessary for us than an *Experimental Farm*. We are yearly suffering great losses for want of it. Take the following as an instance:—John S. Skinner as long back as December, 1824—29 years ago, procured two barrels of genuine Guano from the coast of Peru ; he placed it in the hands of some friends who probably paid little attention to it, and that was the end of it. Had we have had an experimental farm doubtless its inestimable value would have been ascertained, and I am not certain we should over estimate the

gain to the country by saying the discovery would have been equal to the whole expenses of the government from that day to this.

Something like what is now proposed was recommended by Gen. Washington in his last message to Congress, and so sanguine did he seem to be of its success, that he subsequently, in a letter to his friend Sir John Sinclair, apologized for the measure not having been carried, on the ground that it was during a short session of Congress and there was not time.

This plan avoids all Constitutional objections, though any extension of its operations may well be considered as covered by the clause that authorizes Congress to legislate "for the public welfare." Shall every other Government on earth but our own foster its agriculture, which is the great interest of every great nation, and ours hardly acknowledge its existence except to draw the revenue in large proportion from that class of citizens devoted to its pursuit? There are many new and great staples yet to be discovered and introduced; there is much to be done that can only be done by the aid of Government, and the time has arrived when public men catching the spirit that comes up from every part of our wide-spread country will agree to fix its heart and centre at the Capitol of the nation, thus for the first time so far as Government is concerned, giving it a local habitation and a name.

The Farmer and Nestor of Silver Spring, Francis P. Blair, Esq., in an able Agricultural Address recently delivered in Montgomery County, Md., has treated this subject with his usual ability, clearness and force, and has pronounced an argument in its favor that cannot fail to convince any man who will read it of the utility of the measure.

Mr. Blair truly remarks, "We want the science, the system and skill, taught in schools, to give direction to that energy of mind and body among our countrymen which accomplishes so much without their aid, and with it would make the superior cultivation of the soil their greatest triumph. We have self-taught men in every pursuit, and among them some eminent men; but education, which brings to the assistance of an iso-

lated individual the experience of past ages and the strength of a multitude of men exerting all their faculties in concert to promote his efforts to master the most complicated and vast pursuit in which he can engage, is certainly the first thing to be sought.”

I have failed to acknowledge the presence of the fair daughters of Maryland, as well as the presence of others from the adjoining States. Yet we have all seen them here defying the elements, with threatening clouds over head and damp wet ground beneath their feet passing round our grounds, cheering us by their smiles or encouraging us by the sounds of their approving voice ; and this is right. When their Husbands, Fathers and Brothers have come forth with all their best appointments to do honor to agriculture—why should they not lend the charm of their presence to give to the occasion greater interest and honor? Was it not Portia—Brutus’ Portia, that sent seven times to the Forum to hear how her husband was succeeding with his speech? Was it not the high bred Grecian dame Aurelia, that trained herself her son to contend for the prize at the Olympic Games, and was present in disguise that she might be near him, as she said, “to console him in case of defeat or to rejoice with him in the victory.” The most attractive scene of rural life any where to be seen is these show grounds—this beautiful amphitheatre of a fair and bright day when the grouping on the landscape includes as it always does, hundreds and thousands of these fine fair women the descendants of a landed gentry who justly appreciated the dignity of their calling and taught their sons and daughters to appreciate it too. There is an account given by Madam Riedesel, who was the wife of a German General, that was taken prisoner at the capture of Burgoyne—in her memoirs, of a visit she paid to a Maryland Lady, which, as showing what was early done, and the pride and interest the ladies took in embellishing and exhibiting their country homes, I cannot but extract.

“At the Frederick Springs,” she says, “we became acquainted with General Washington’s family, and with Mr. * * * and Mrs. * * *. Mrs. ——— was a very

amiable woman, and notwithstanding her attachment to her country, we became great friends. I visited her; the garden was splendid, and the day after our arrival she took us in her carriage to her vineyard, which was still more beautiful and tasteful, and much exceeded my expectations. We walked to the Orchard, at the end of which we ascended the slope by a winding path to the top, and all along the vines were gracefully intertwined with rose bushes and amaranths. From the top of the slope the prospect was charming, and such as I have not seen in any other part of America through which I have travelled. Not far from this place is Baltimore, which I am told is a very beautiful town, and the residence of many interesting families."

As shewing the interest English Ladies take in Agriculture, I cannot but relate a casual interview I chanced to have with an English lady, in going up in the Express train from London to York. Her husband had bought a book at the stand as we were about starting, and remarked to her that "it was one of her favorite American Authors—Hawthorn." I casually observed, "I was pleased to see young American authors found admirers with English ladies," when the conversation turned on books and authors. But I said to myself pretty soon, "this is a literary lady—probably her husband is an Editor or Reviewer, and she uses the "scissors" for him; at all events, I must retreat from this discussion about authors, modern poets, and poetry. What should a farmer know critically of such things? If I was only in those fields—if the conversation could be made to turn upon crops, or cattle, then I should feel quite at home." I finally pointed out a field of wheat, and remarked it was very fine. The lady carefully observing it, said: "Sir, I think it is too thin—a common fault this season, as the seedling was late;" "those drills," she added, turning to her husband for his confirmation, "cannot be more than ten inches apart, and you see, sir, the ground is not completely covered—twelve, and even fifteen inches is now preferred for the width of drills, and two bushels of seed to the acre will then entirely cover the ground, on good land, so you can hardly distinguish the drills."

If the Goddess Ceres had appeared with her sheaf, or her cornucopia, I could not have been taken more by surprise. A lady descanting on the *width of wheat drills, and the quantity of seed!*

‘I will try her again,’ said I, ‘this may be a chance shot,’ and remarked in reference to a field of ploughed ground we were passing, that it broke up in great lumps and could hardly be put in good tilth,—“We have much clay land like this,” she replied, “and formerly it was difficult to cultivate it in a tillage crop, but since the introduction of Crosskill’s Patent Clod Crusher they will make the most beautiful tilth on these lands, and which are now regarded as among our best wheat lands.”

The conversation turned on cattle ; she spoke of the best breeds of Cows for the pail, (the Ayrshires and Devons,) told me where the best Cheese was made—Cheshire—the best butter—Ireland—where the best milk-maids were to be found—Wales—“Oh !” said I, “I was mistaken ; this charming intelligent woman, acting so natural and unaffected ; dressed so neat and so very plain, must be a farmer’s wife, and what a help-mate he has in her ? She is not an extravagant wife either, not an ornament about her—yes a single bracelet clasps a fair rounded arm—that’s all.” The train stopped at York ; no sooner had my travelling companions stepped upon the platform than I noticed they were surrounded by half a dozen servants—men and maids—the men in full livery. It turned out to be Sir John and Lady H. This gentleman I learned was one of the largest landed proprietors in Berkshire, and his lady the daughter of a Nobleman, a Peeress in her own right ; but her title added nothing to her, she was a noble woman without it.

It is a part of our task to excel in Horticulture, in which female taste and skill must aid us. We must embellish our homes ; we must make them sweet and pleasant homes. The brave old oaks must be there ; the spacious lawn with its green sward—and the fruit orchard, and the shrubbery, and the roses, the vines festooned and trained about the walls and

balconies—even the birds will think *that* a sweet home and will come and sing and make melody, as though they would “teach the art to imitative man.”

Such a home will be *entailed* to our children, and to their children—not by statute laws of entail, but by a higher law, the law of nature—through the force of sympathy—the associations of childhood,

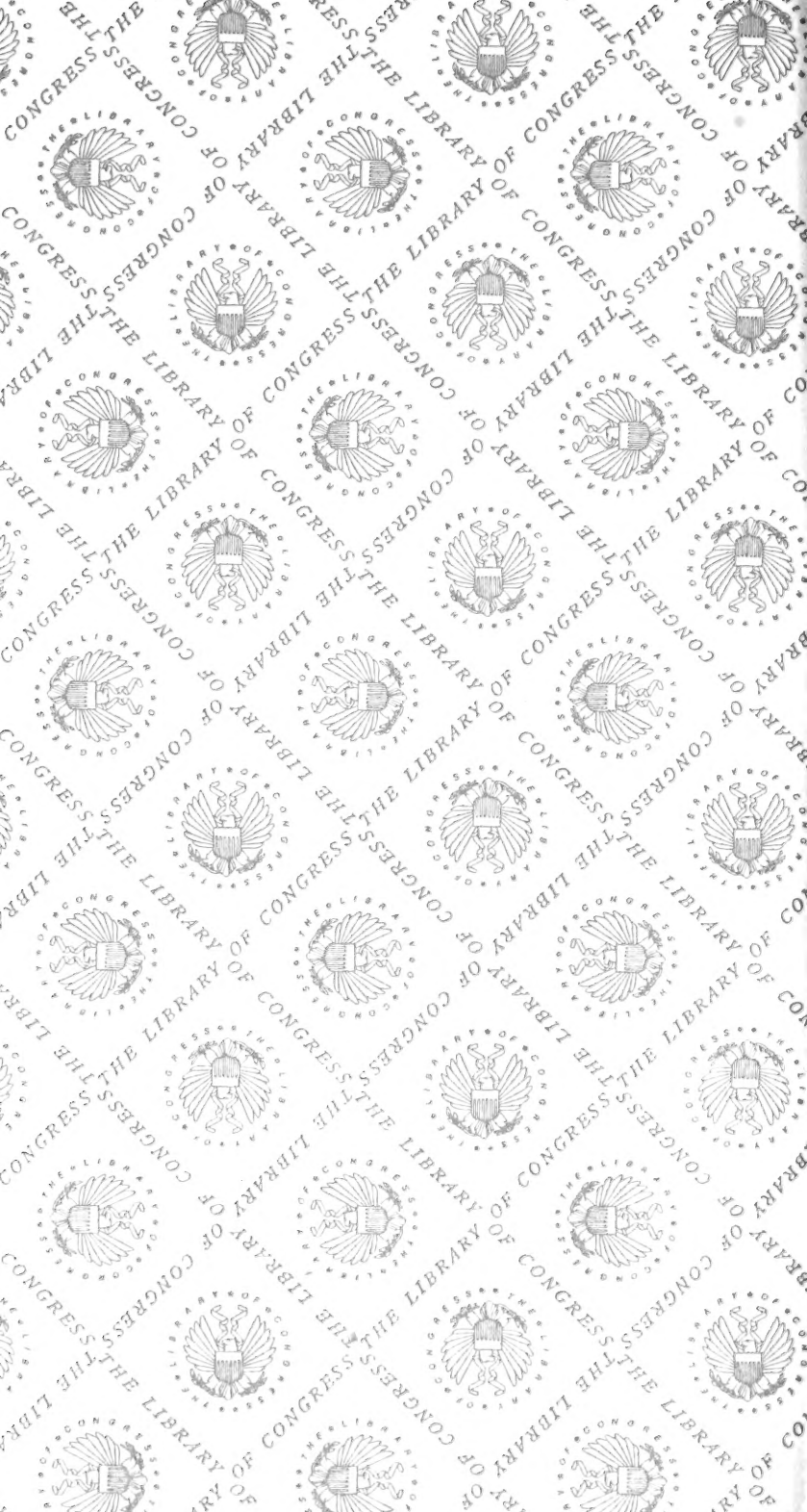
“The Orchard, the Meadow, the deep tangled wild-wood,
And every loved spot which our infancy knew,

These will hold them to it—these early memories—which we should take care to deepen with a binding and indissoluble tie.

Talk not, then, O you fathers and mothers! to your sons of forensic fame—of senatorial halls—of the distinction of professional life, or of the gains and emoluments of commerce. It is not for our class, surely, to furnish more recruits to this hazardous service in which so many of the youth of the country have already been lost—lost to any useful purpose of living—themselves miserable from that hope deferred that makes the heart sick—or disappointed of the objects of life have become overwhelmed by bankruptcy and ruin. *Give to your Sons the pursuit of Washington*, who gloried in being a FARMER; the field and the council chamber he sought from duty, but his Farm at Mt. Vernon, where he wisely directed the plough from choice and pleasure.

“Wide—wide may the world feel the power of the plough
And yield to the Sickle, a fulness delighting,
May this be our conquest, the Earth to subdue,
Till all join the song of the harvest inviting,
The sword and the spear
Are only known here

As we plough, or we prune—or we toil void of fear,
And the fruit and the flower all smile in their birth
All greeting the Farmer the Prince of the Earth.”





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