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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

N. Y. State Agricultural Society,

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING.

ALBANY, FEBRUARY 12, 1868.

By MARSENA R. PATRICK.

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OF THE

N. Y. STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

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BY MARSENA R. PATRICK, PRES'T.



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A D D R E S S .

Gentlemen of the N. Y. S. A. Society:

I come before you this evening, in accordance with long established usage, to present some of the results of my observations in regard to the Agricultural interests of the State generally, and of its Agricultural Society especially, during the time I have been charged with the duties of its Presiding Officer.

CHARACTER OF THE SEASON.

The year just closed has been one of marked peculiarities, and unusual conditions of the atmosphere, as recorded in the meteorological tables kept in different sections of the State: these tables showing, at the same dates, a very large amount of rain in one part of the State, and a burning atmosphere in another. The crops of the East were only with the greatest difficulty secured, in consequence of rain, while vegetation in the West was dried up, the brick-like earth rendered incapable of tillage, and

flocks, and herds, and man, himself, were suffering for water. Never before, since the settlement of Western New York, has mother earth been known to hold so little moisture in her bosom, as in the last half of the year of Grace, 1867.

CAUSES.

Such being the case, it becomes us, as intelligent Cultivators of the Soil, to inquire into the causes of this wide spread calamity that has come upon us. Whether it is through any agency of man that times and seasons change; both seed time and harvest, and that in vast districts, the latter rains have not fallen upon the dry and thirsty earth, in their appointed seasons.

DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS.

Has the wholesale destruction of our Forests nothing to do with this sweeping over, and beyond us, of the heavy rain clouds? Can we continue to sweep away all our growth of timber, in every arable district, and even denude our rocky hill sides, and mountain tops, without incurring the penalty?

Can we expect to escape the operation of a Universal Law, that has produced uniform results, in all countries, and in all ages? Wherever

this law has been violated, sooner or later, the lands have become desolate and the cities have perished. Palestine and Syria, Egypt and Italy, and Spain—and even France, have seen their most fertile and prosperous regions, turned into forsaken wilderness, and their most productive lands, into arid, sandy deserts.

Even the short reign of our boasted Yankee Enterprise on the Pacific coast, has dried up many of the streams that found their sources high up those western slopes. Some of those slopes and mountain tops, have already been stripped of their leafy covering, and so little rain now falls, in certain localities on our western coast, that crops can scarcely be grown, where fifteen, years ago, the earth was fairly burdened with the weight of its Harvest.

The statistics of the Pump Trade, where followed up (in States west of our own, especially), show a gradual increase in the length of tubing, requiring, in central Illinois, an addition of 9 feet within the last 10 years; and in other localities, nearly, or quite, as large an increase.

Why there should be such almost universal apathy on this all important subject, I cannot understand, when the statistics of the Lumber

Trade, and of the number of acres brought under cultivation from Forests, are laid before the people every year. Statistics which show us, conclusively, that at present rates of clearing up our lands, the next ten years will sweep off all the valuable timber of *this* State, except what is found in the Great North Woods, and the most of that is of inferior quality.

Legislation should be invoked, before it be too late, to preserve that Forest, at least, and thus save central and western New York, from the entire change of climate that must follow the opening up of the Adirondac mountain region, making a pathway for the winds and storms, from Labrador and the North East, to burst upon us in all their unchecked fury.*

* As the limits of an Address, on an occasion like the present, will not permit an extended discussion upon Forests and Plantations, as affecting the meteorology of the State, I would refer any person who may feel an interest in this subject, to a few works published in this country and accessible to all; through which, if further information be desired, acquaintance can be made with foreign authorities upon all these interesting questions.

And first; let such person take up "MAURY'S Physical Geography of the Sea," for a good general idea of the great wind currents that prevail upon our continent, and of the agencies through which our springs, rivers, lakes and water-courses are supplied with water (Pages 87 & 88 and 138-140.)

Then, let MARSH'S "Man and Nature," be carefully read, especially "The Woods," (Chap. 3) for a good, general idea of their influences—electrical, thermometrical and hygrometrical—upon contiguous geographical districts. The whole book is full of instruction on these and kindred subjects.

The "Michigan Board of Agriculture," has commenced a series of observations within its own State, and the results already obtained are of great practical value. They may be found in its "Reports,"

CHANGES IN HUSBANDRY.

In coming back to your Society and its associations, after an interval of almost six years—years crowded with great events that might well have taken up a century—I could not fail of being continually and strongly impressed with the changes these last few years have made in the system and management of farms generally in the State of New York.

True, these changes had begun, with the opening of railways throughout the North and West, before the war; but war agencies, and consequences, have developed results rapid and varying as the forms and tints of the revolving kaleidoscope. As already noticed, changes have come over us from the increasing instability of the seasons, as well as from changes in the soil itself, by the exhaustion of those elements found in the soil of most newly opened countries; changes from the universal use of labor-saving machines on the farm, and changes arising from

for 1865 and 1866; articles, "Observations on the Meteorology of Michigan," and "Appendix" of 1866; also, in "Address of Prof. R. C. KEDZIE, of the Mich. State Agricultural College, before the Livingston County Agricultural Society, 1867."

There are, also, exceedingly valuable papers on Trees, Forests and Plantations, in the "Report of Department Agriculture for 1864," from J. J. THOMAS, and in 1865, from FREDRIC STARR; while, for a very able paper on the "Adirondac, or Great North Woods," read WINSLOW'S Report, in "Transactions of New York State Agricultural Society, for 1865."

the introduction of the "Factory System" for dairies.

FARM LABOREERS, &c.

Changes, too, there are in the personnel as well as the materiel employed in carrying on the operations of the farm. For he who hires Farm Laborers now, can seldom obtain native born young Americans—farmer's sons, bred up on their father's farms and *at home*, in all the minutiae of farming—such as were the "hired men" upon our farms in days of yore. Nor is it any less difficult, in most districts of the State, to obtain a farmer's daughter as the "hired girl," either for housework, or dairy.

To obtain skilled labor, now-a-days, is, in fact, one of the greatest difficulties to be contended with in carrying on a farm. Fortunate, indeed, is it for us that so many labor-saving machines were introduced before this great want had become *so* great; and that Cheese Factories, and even Butter Factories, are relieving, in some degree, the overtaxed wives of our farmers, who are dependent upon foreign help.

Do not understand, by these remarks, that I do not fully comprehend and appreciate our indebtedness for individual and national prosperity to the strong arms and stout hearts of our foreign-

born population; but that class of laborers require long and patient teaching, before they are capable of managing our machines, or handling our teams, or of understanding our system of farming generally. Yet these men are apt to expect the wages of first class American farm hands.

If to these considerations be added the fact, that as a general rule, unmarried men of that class are unsettled in their habits, roving, and without local ties to bind them; ready to leave for trifling causes, or small inducements in the way of higher wages; the question becomes a very serious one, indeed, "What are we to do for reliable Farm Laborers?"

THE COTTAGE SYSTEM.

The "Cottage System" appears to present the most favorable solution to the problem, for both the farmer and the laborer, as well as for the best interests of society generally. By the erection of snug cottages, at convenient positions for attending to farm work, and the employment of married men as permanent farm laborers, not only boarding themselves but such other occasional help as may be required from time to time, the farmer's wife is relieved from the burden of

earing for a houseful of hired men, and will, in all probability, secure, from the wife and daughters of the cottager, such female help as may be wanted in her own kitchen, or dairy.

Wherever this system has been introduced, it has given the best satisfaction to all parties; especially to the laborer, inasmuch as it gives him a home—a castle of his own; making him realize that he too is a householder and a citizen. His self-respect is increased, his manhood is developed, he acts more considerately; your interests and his become more and more identified, and your influence in moulding and Americanizing the ideas of his growing family is as potent, quite, as his own. Hitherto, only the wealthier classes of our agriculturists have adopted this system; but there seems, now, to be a necessity for the adoption of some such system by farmers of the middling class and those who own smaller farms.

FAMILY CHANGES.

The times change, and we change with them. Our habits of life and style of living change with every decade of years. Only a few of our sons and daughters inherit the rural tastes of their parents. They tread not in our footsteps, and when once they launch forth from the old home-

stead, in the quiet country, they return not again. The "Old Folks" are left there alone. But can *they* remain?

Look through the small towns and country villages throughout the State, and what numbers of men you will find, somewhat advanced in years, whose whole lives, until very recently, have been spent upon their farms, where they had acquired a competence, and where they had hoped to enjoy a green old age, in the midst of scenes long, long familiar to their eyes, and associations and memories dear, almost, as life itself.

But with increasing years and failing health, unable longer to endure the toils of the farm themselves, and finding none on whom they could safely rely to manage for them, many an aged couple have been compelled to sell the dear old homestead, with its ample surroundings, and take up with a little village residence, where they *can* live alone, and be free from many burdensome cares, during the closing years of life.

The "Cottage System," to which I have referred, affords but partial relief in cases like these, alas, now too common!

AVERSION TO MANUAL LABOR.

For years past, our boys and young men have exhibited a growing aversion to honest, manly toil, to manual labor, or productive industry of any kind.

In many of our counties, it is becoming a rare sight to see a young man, possessed of an ordinary school education, with perhaps a term or two at the village academy, engaging himself in any kind of sober, manual labor.

If he does remain on the farm, in a large majority of cases, less of his time is spent behind the plow, than in a trotting sulky—more of it devoted to training fast nags than to training steers; and farm wagons are less to his taste than spider wheels and skeletons.

Speculation, mining, petroleum, patent rights—*any* thing that demands travel, and produces excitement, has a fascination for the young man that seems irresistible.

To be *in* the great busy world, and *of* it; to talk familiarly with business men, of thousands, and tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of capital, with which *self* is, in some way, connected, has a charm for the young man, who seldom remembers the vast multitudes that sink to

ruin while struggling for prizes that only one in a thousand can, possibly, obtain.

The very term "commerce," carries with it a kind of spell, and men forget that commerce often proves, by its superfluous and extravagant importations, the ruin of both individual and national prosperity. Cannot young men read this lesson from the many wrecks of splendid fortunes, this day floating in the city of New York ?

Commercial pursuits are over-valued, because they lie more upon the surface, and are open to observation ; but from statistics of only a very few years ago, and probably correct now, we know, that our annual growth of bread-stuffs, is three to four times the aggregate value of all our imports and exports combined—that even our grass crop, exceeds in valuation our whole outward and inward movement of foreign commerce.

But it is not alone the young man of some pecuniary means, that leaves the farm to engage in some doubtful, yet exciting enterprise, that will bring wealth without labor ; there is scarcely a day that passes, in village or in country, that some stout, healthy young man is not met, canvassing for some book, some map or picture ; sell-

ing some patent clothes-wringer, or clothes-pin—a hat-hook, a hat-peg, or a tooth-powder—something of which, with his robust health and strong frame, *he ought to be ashamed*, as beneath the dignity of an able-bodied man.

True, the recent war has had *some* agency in producing this state of things; for young men who have spent from two to five years in camps, have fallen into habits that are the opposite of industrious labor, and very many of our young men *were* with the army, for longer or shorter periods. But, admitting the influence of this agency to its fullest extent, it will not account for the idea, so widely prevalent, that manual labor is degrading, and that American young men should feel above it.

IS LABOR HONORABLE ?

Whenever labor ceases to be honorable in the eyes of any people, the doom of that nation is sealed.

All the lights of history are shining on the ruins of nations that degraded labor, committed it to serfs and slaves, then perished from their own voluptuousness and effeminaey. Without a sturdy yeomanry, cultivating their own lands, no nation has been able, for any long period, to re-

main free, virtuous and prosperous ; and until this cardinal principle, that "labor is honorable," resumes its sway over the minds of our people, we may well tremble for our free institutions.

It is to this hatred of labor we are to look, in a great degree, for the parentage of those crimes that make us shudder—a daily list under which the press groans. It is one great cause of those gigantic frauds upon our banks and money institutions, for the knavish speculations of government contractors and State officials, for the bribery of Legislators and the reckless expenditure of public money for private purposes, sinking us as a people, under heavier debts, and greater burdens, than are borne by any other nation on the face of the earth.

ITS INFLUENCE UPON A STATE.

Bear with me while I add a few more words on this important subject.

Whenever we find a country divided up into small estates, each and every owner working his lands with his own hands, we find a brave, patriotic and free people, enjoying competence and domestic comfort with manly dignity. So it was in the earlier days of Roman power, when seven acres of land was the quantity fixed by law, for

each citizen. Aye, and under that law, and on a seven acre homestead, was reared up that grand, old, historic character, a Roman citizen—that man before whom kings grew pale; and nations trembled, when he left his plow to buckle on his sword!

Would you look at the reverse of this picture, and mark the results of degrading, honest, manly, free labor? You have but to travel a few hundred miles south, where the original system of very large estates, requiring a numerous tenantry, induced a resort to slave labor, and—you know the rest.

Let us, then, as farmers, cultivators of the soil, and intelligent citizens of a great nation, bear in mind the relations *we* sustain *as such*, to the government under which we live, and the nation of which we form a part.

It is an axiom in political economy, that countries are not cultivated in proportion to their fertility, but in proportion to their liberty;* and to this axiom, I may be permitted to add two or three other principles of political philosophy.

(1.) That property in the soil is the natural foundation of power, and consequently, of autho-

* Montesquieu, *Spirits of Laws*, Book 18, ch. 3.

rity; the sovereignty of a state being an inseparable attribute of property in the soil; and the terms "property" and "dominion" being, according to Lord Bacon, convertible terms.*

(2.) That agriculture constitutes the basis of happiness and prosperity in a state; being, of necessity, the great pursuit of man, and the nurse of the human race.

(3.) That inasmuch as national authority, and power, and dominion, are based upon that pursuit which gives food to all the human race, agriculture is, beyond all doubt or questioning, the most honorable as it is the most ancient of all professions.

CHANGES OF MARKET.

I have dwelt so long upon this subject of labor, that time will not permit me to speak of the changes in the husbandry of our State, growing out of the new demands of the market, and the introduction of crops different from those raised a few years ago, before the sceptre of New York, as the great wheat producing State, was transferred to the regions farther west; changes, too, arising from the facilities afforded by rails and

* See Harrington in "Oceana," Lowman in Civ. Gov. Heb., chap. 2, and John Adams in "Defense," Letter 29.

steam for placing fruits and vegetables of every kind, and milk, and eggs, and butter, and cheese, and meat, and poultry, and fish, daily, upon the tables of the consumers in the great cities, fresh from the hands of the producer, who lives far back, hundreds of miles it may be, in the country.

CULTIVATION OF SMALL FRUITS.

Year by year, hundreds and hundreds of acres within our State, are added to the area already under cultivation for supplying the market with small fruits—the currant, the raspberry, the strawberry, the blackberry, and, to a still greater extent, the native American grape, in almost numberless varieties; grape growing having become, in fact, the leading interest in several districts of the State, and destined to extend far more widely as grape culture becomes more generally understood.

PISCICULTURE.

Fish breeding, too, though in its infancy among us, is attracting the attention of intelligent, enterprising, practical men, with whom success is certain, if legislative action can be obtained to protect their fish preserves from poachers.

DAIRY AND SHEEP.

I need not speak of the great Dairy interest, now so thoroughly identified with the agriculture and husbandry of this State; nor of its wool growing interest, while our many superb flocks, of almost every variety of sheep that can be named, challenge the admiration of judges and breeders from every sister State.

THOROUGH-BRED STOCK.

Still less needful is it to refer to the success of our breeders of thorough-bred neat stock. Their representatives are pointed to, with pride, in every State and territory. Even Old England herself, the mother of them all, gracefully accords to American Dukes, and Countesses, and Maids, the highest honors of the Short-Horn Peerage, and welcomes to the stables of royalty, itself, the Durham herd from Geneva.

RINDERPEST.

In this connection, it gives me pleasure to state that the disease among cattle known as "Rinderpest," which recently made such fearful ravages among the herds of Britain, is believed at present to exist, as an epidemic, only in the province of South Holland, having entirely disappeared from the British Isles, after causing the loss, as offi-

cially stated, of 335,838 head of cattle, of which 56,911 were slaughtered by the authorities commissioned to stamp out the disease.

The weekly return of the Royal Commission, for the week ending 14th September last, exhibited the first clean bill of health, and this being followed by others showing entire freedom from the disease, an order in council was issued, to take effect on the 15th October, modifying previous orders relative to the landing of foreign cattle.

No cases of Rinderpest having shown themselves after about the 10th of September, an order in council of the 18th November, revoked all restrictions on the importation of cattle from the Netherlands, the province of South Holland excepted.

Happily for us, the Rinderpest has never crossed the Atlantic, and is entirely unknown on this continent. That this immunity from cattle plague is largely due to the vigorous measures adopted by both the General and State governments, there cannot be a doubt; while the appointment of a Commission by the Legislature of this State, fully empowered to crush out the disease at the instant of its appearance, has had a

tendency to calm the excited minds of stock owners, and allay the fears of persons interested in this department of husbandry.

Here, as in England, frequent false alarms are raised, and "Rinderpest" is reported, by the press, as prevailing in certain districts. In every case, however, when examined by a Commissioner, or by a competent surgeon, gastric fever, Texas murrain, pleuro-pneumonia, or cerebro-spinal meningitis has been identified, and the alarm has ceased.

ABORTION.

The subject of Abortion among Cows has engaged much attention from the Executive Committee during the year; but as Professor John C. Dalton, of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, to whom the whole investigation was committed, is to address you this evening, himself, it is not necessary for me to say anything on this very important subject. An appropriation will be asked of the Legislature to continue the investigation so successfully initiated.

FLAX COTTON.

The appropriation made by the State for perfecting machinery to cottonize flax, not having been claimed by any party to whom the Board

could award it, under the terms of the law, the Treasurer of the Society, acting under the direction of the Board, has returned the money to the treasury of the State of New York.

TRIAL OF IMPLEMENTS OF TILLAGE AT UTICA.

There are many of the operations of the State Agricultural Society, for the last year, of which I do not propose to speak at length, as a detailed Report from the Secretary, in behalf the Executive Committee, has been to-day presented; and a Report from the Hon. John Stanton Gould, Chairman of the Board of Judges on the Trial of Plows at Utica, will be ready for publication within a few days.

In regard to the latter, I feel warranted in saying; that if the results of the Trial of Harvest Implements at Auburn, in 1866, have been of incalculable value to the interests of agriculture in all countries, the Trial of Implements of Tillage, at Utica, in 1867, if less brilliant in display, may prove to be even more useful, in its final results, than that of 1866.

The call of the Society, through its Executive Committee, for "a plow for stubble land, which will cut a furrow twelve inches deep, and not less than five inches wide, drawn by three horses, and

raising the lowest soil to the surface of the furrow," was deemed, by most persons, an exhibition of ignorance on the part of those who put it forth—a demand for an implement, involving conditions that could not, by any possibility, be combined in one and the same plow.

But the inventive and constructive mind of Governor Holbrook, of Vermont, triumphed over seeming impracticabilities; and he was enabled, from his life-long study of the principles involved in turning up and mellowing the soil, to bring before us a plow, differing in many respects from all other plows, moving forward with comparative ease, yet bringing up, from hitherto undisturbed depths, new farms, to mix and mingle soils with the old.

For his civic virtues, his statesmanship and patriotism in the dark days of our country's history, the Green Mountain State conferred the highest honors in her gift, on this, her favorite son; but, if I mistake not, this *plow* will be his enduring monument, when all his political honors are forgotten.

To use his own words, from a note to me on a kindred subject; "good plowing lies at the foundation of civilized life, and when you sift the whole

thing down, civilization cannot advance far, in other relations, beyond the advancement in tillage of our good mother earth. The plow must be the foundation of all good tillage"—a sentiment to which every true farmer will respond "amen."

Besides the Holbrook plow, there were other plows of great merit exhibited, as well as cultivators, harrows and other implements of tillage, full notices of which will be found in the forthcoming Report.

EXAMINATION OF MACHINES, IMPLEMENTS, &C.

In this connection, permit me to make a suggestion which, though it may not be convenient to act upon at present, may afford matter for reflection, and elicit plans for action at some future meeting.

To any one who is an observant visitor at our State, County or Club Fairs, and Exhibitions of Farm Implements proper, as well as machines and implements *indirectly* connected with Agriculture, it is painfully evident, that no proper examination *can* be made of such entries, in the limited time given, and under the pressure committees must, of necessity, at such times act; even admitting their competency as judges.

Add to this the fact, that every year very many

inventions and improvements are patented and then lost sight of, for the want of ability, or tact on the part of the patentee in bringing them before the public, and we are forced to the conclusion, that we know very much less than we ought to know of the *real* value—the actual merits and demerits—of a great many machines and implements that have passed through the patent office, even though some of them *may* have received from various societies, including our own, first class premiums.*

It has occurred to me, that by the employment of a suitable person as an expert, to examine and report to a committee of practical and scientific men,* on all new, or not thoroughly tested machines and implements pertaining to agriculture, (whether presented to the Society for examination, or sought out by such expert, through agents, manufacturers or the patent office), all necessary data might be obtained for instituting competitive trials and critical examinations under the direction of this committee of judges, at little expense to the Society, or to competitors.

Every report of the expert to this committee,

*The Bureau of Experiment, if you please, recommended by my immediate predecessor in his address last year.

(after being passed upon by the committee and the committee's remarks indorsed thereon,) would be placed on file in the Secretary's office for reference, and by this means, a vast amount of reliable information would be gathered up, from year to year, and made available to the Society.

I will not occupy your time by an enumeration of the many advantages that might, as it seems to me, be derived from the employment of some such expert, engineer or machinist; nor of the errors, frauds and impositions against which he would guard *us*, but will leave the subject with the Society for future discussion, if it be deemed worthy of notice; and it might be well, perhaps, for the new Executive Board to bear this suggestion in mind, while the revision of the premium list, (now in the hands of a committee,) is in progress.

FAIR AT BUFFALO

The 27th Annual Fair of the Society, held in the city of Buffalo, notwithstanding some untoward circumstances and many fears, was a decided success, taken as a whole; and in some of the departments the display far exceeded that of any former year; especially was this the case in the Departments of Implements and Machinery.

Probably such a number and variety of machines and implements, directly or indirectly connected with husbandry, and of such great excellence, were never before brought together in any place; and it was a matter of universal regret, that the brevity of the time allotted, rendered it absolutely impossible for the judges to give each article the thorough examination it should have had, that its real merits might be made public.

Notwithstanding the untiring labors of the Society's Engineer, and several of the Ex-Presidents, many articles were, of necessity, but cursorily examined.

Until some such bureau as has been suggested be organized, or a special examiner appointed, might not the Society's Engineer, acting under the special instructions of the Board, take with him a short hand clerk, begin his examinations before, and continue them after the close of the fair, making his report at the next meeting of the Executive Board?

As very full accounts of the fair, in all its departments, have been published, and are on file in the archives of the Society, I pass by any further details, that I may say a few words, before I close, upon the general workings of the society.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO A CHANGE OF THE SOCIETY'S
POLICY.

In looking back at our requirements for the Fair held at Buffalo in 1857—a Fair which at that time had never been equalled, and but rarely since—I have been led to examine, with much care, our present system of management, and to ask in all sincerity, whether the system which worked admirably during the infancy, youth and adolescence of the Society, is competent to meet the yearly increasing demands of this great institution, now in its full maturity, and the pride of our State?

First of all comes up the question, Are the provisions now made for the shelter and protection of property on exhibition, such as to assure exhibitors of its safety?

2. Are the arrangements annually made for the erection of temporary, rough-lumber buildings, (of necessity frail and unsubstantial,) in keeping with the character and dignity of a Society representing this great State?

3 Is the present system, in any true sense, economical, judicious or comfortable; whether for the Society, for exhibitors, or for the public?

4. With the yearly increasing demand for more extended accommodations, will the cities of our

State continue to meet our requirements; labor, lumber and material increasing in price, from year to year, as well as in the amount required?

It is not of the past I speak, nor of systems that were adapted to the past; it is of the *present* and of the *future*. The times have changed and our people have changed. Those inducements which twenty, fifteen, ten years ago, caused the citizens of our most desirable localities to put forth spirited efforts to secure the Fair, no longer exist in more than one, or at most, in two localities. To confine the exhibitions under the existing system, to these one or two places only, would be to localize the Fair, and to neutralize the Society's influence.

In traveling over the State and conversing freely with a large number of the most intelligent friends of the Society, within the last year, I find a very general idea prevalent, and gaining strength, that by changing the system now pursued, for one that will give *permanent buildings* in three, four, or five centers, where the Fairs *shall be held in rotation*, all the benefits we now derive from the present system will be retained, and many advantages gained; such as stability, eco-

nomy and the fostering of emulation in the districts where the Fairs are located.

It may be said, that this subject has already been acted upon by the Society. True; but the last time it was before the Society, was *twelve* years ago; and could any one foresee, twelve years ago, what and where we are now? And what was that action?

In 1853, a very able Committee, composed of eight members, viz.: Elon Comstock, of Rome; Charles S. Wainwright, of Rhinebeck; Antony Van Bergen, of Coxsackie; James McDonald, of Salem; Paris Barber, of Homer; Thomas B. Arden, of Beverly; and Hugh T. Brooks, of Wyoming; was charged with the duty of examining the whole subject, and presenting the results, in the form of a Report, at the next Annual Meeting.

That Report may be found in the Transactions of 1853 (though read at the Annual Meeting in 1854), and every argument *then* adduced in favor of a change, is clothed with still greater power *now*. Even Canada, which then gave her voice in favor of the migratory system, abandoned it, some years ago, for permanent locations. Whenever the question was referred to Committees, or

to County Societies, the vote was for permanent locations.

In 1856, at the Annual Meeting, the subject was, for the last time, called up, and the present system re-affirmed.

There are various other modifications demanded in the working of our Fairs; in the classification of entries, and closing of the entry books; in the attendance and duties of Judges; in the expenses of officers composing the Executive Board; in the arrangement of the Library, so that it may be made available for reference by any farmer desiring information on specialties in agriculture; all, however, so intimately connected with, and dependent upon the main question, "Shall we continue our present system?" that it seems unwise to discuss them until that question shall have been decided.

I have made these suggestions in regard to a change of our system, out of respect to what appears to me a strong public sentiment, pointing unmistakably in that direction; and I leave it with you, gentlemen, to be disposed of as you, in your wisdom, may deem best; satisfied that you will, in the future as in the past, make it your

study to promote the great interests represented by this Society.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It is from this consciousness of the high purpose by which the Society is animated, and the strength of that bond which unites its active membership in a common brotherhood, that in its service, individual sacrifices are so generously made, and the most arduous labors are cheerfully given.

To the gentlemen of the Executive Board, with whom I have been so pleasantly associated during the past year, I desire to express my hearty acknowledgments for the aid and support so promptly rendered, at all times; and especially do I desire, gratefully to recognize my obligations to the gentlemen in charge of Departments, for their thoughtful kindness and delicacy in lifting from my shoulders many of the burdens I could not well have borne.

May they find ample reward for their labors, year after year, in witnessing the increased prosperity of the cause for which they have so faithfully borne the burden and heat of the day; and when in their turn, they shall stand where I have stood the last year, may they, too, find in those

on whom they shall lean, not only wise counselors and strong men, but younger brothers, endeared by common toils in the same broad field, and by ties that years have rendered strong as the ties of blood itself.

My last, but not least weighty acknowledgments, are due to the venerable Secretary who has been the father of us all—who for twenty years, has been the faithful Mentor to every President, and the strong pillar of his support; the wise counsellor of our inexperienced officers, and the discreet manager of the affairs of the Society. To this Society, next to his God, he has consecrated the best years of his life, and we owe him a debt we can never fully repay; but, so long as it shall please “Him in whose hand is the breath of all mankind,” to prolong his days, may “that good gray head that all men know,” never be missed from its place at our Council Board.

GOV. KING.

From the active, stirring scenes of the present, let our thoughts turn for one brief moment, to “the memory of joys that are past, pleasant, but mournful to the soul.”

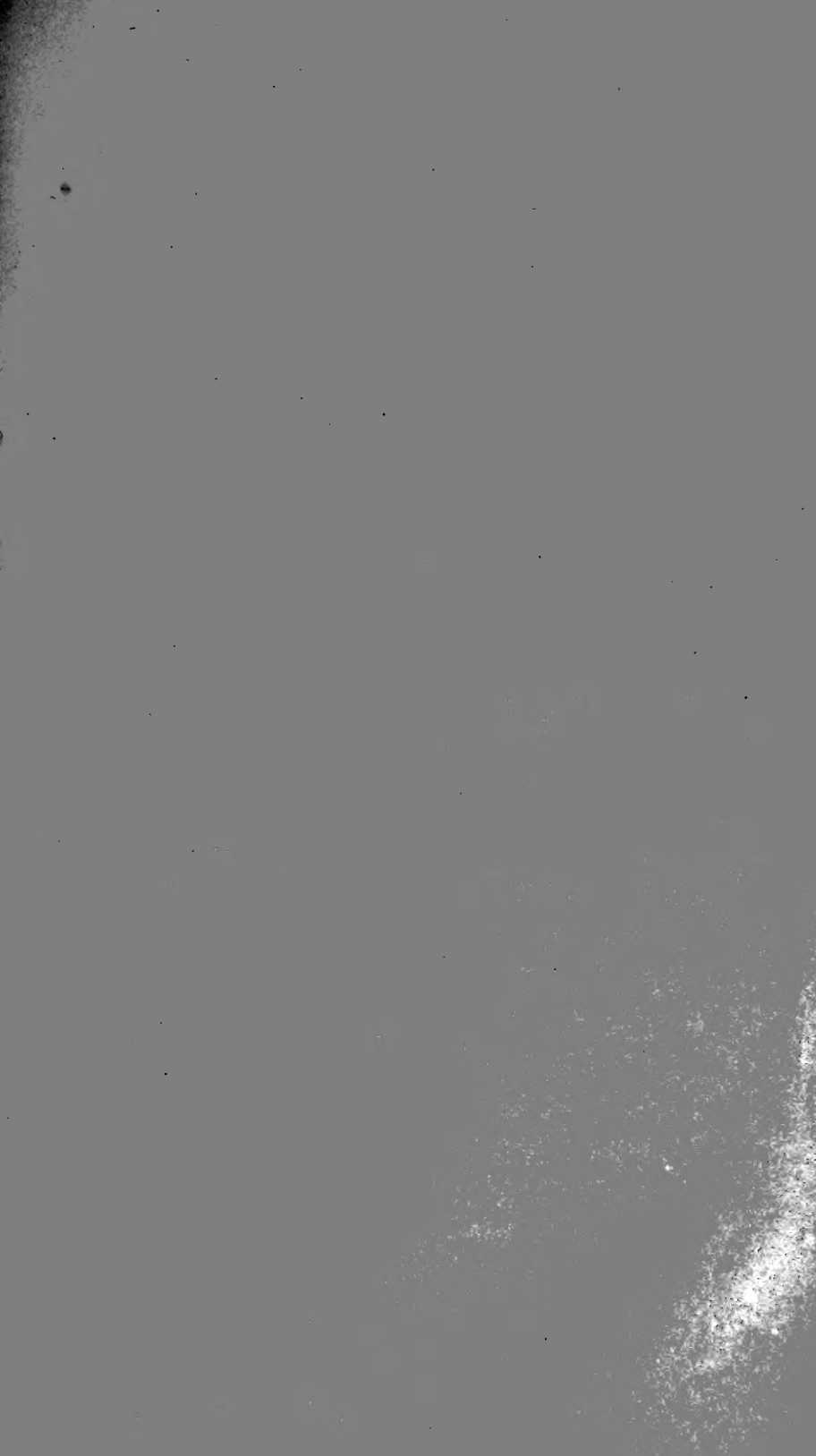
Since our last gathering here, one noble and

dignified form that was wont to move among us has passed away, and these Halls which knew his step so well, will echo to that step no more, forever. Everywhere, that presence, grand in its simplicity, was hailed with gladness, and to this Society, that presence was a living benediction. Of all its friends and patrons, none more truly loved this Society, and none have been more truly loved, or more deeply mourned. In that quiet church yard by his old homestead, and on that spot he had himself selected long years ago for his own resting place, John A. King sleeps his last sleep—Aye, and he sleeps well!

“Green be the turf above thee
 Friend of my better days,
 None knew thee but to love thee
 Nor named thee but to praise.”

Gentlemen of the Society :

My last official duty remains to be performed—a very agreeable one to me, inasmuch as it enables me to express my own gratification that you have been so fortunate as to secure for the Society as its official head for 1868, a gentleman whose rural tastes and love of practical agriculture have bound him to us through all the years of an active and successful business life in the great city. I have the honor to introduce to you, Thomas Hall Faile, of New York, as the President elect of the New York State Agricultural Society.



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