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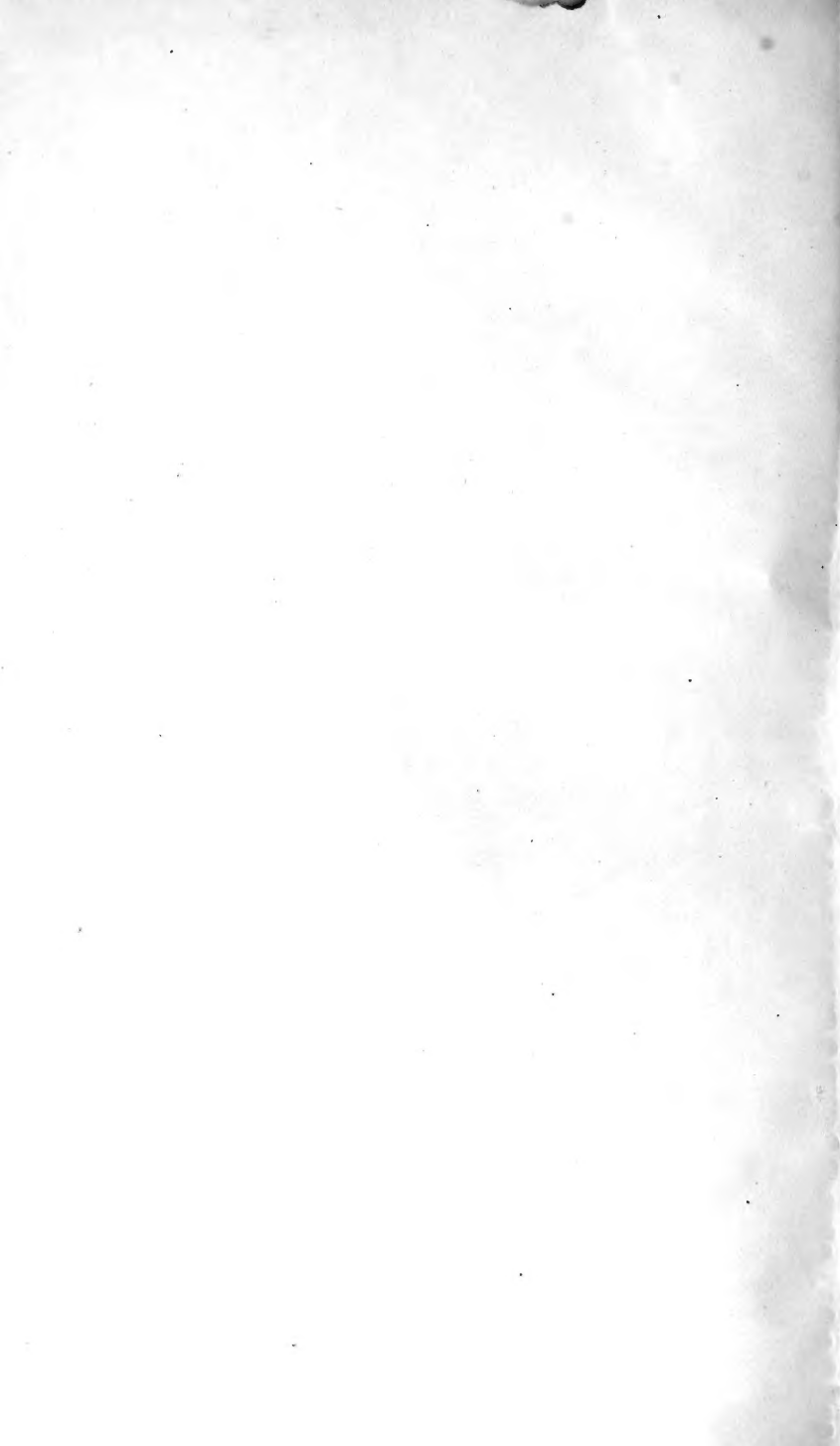
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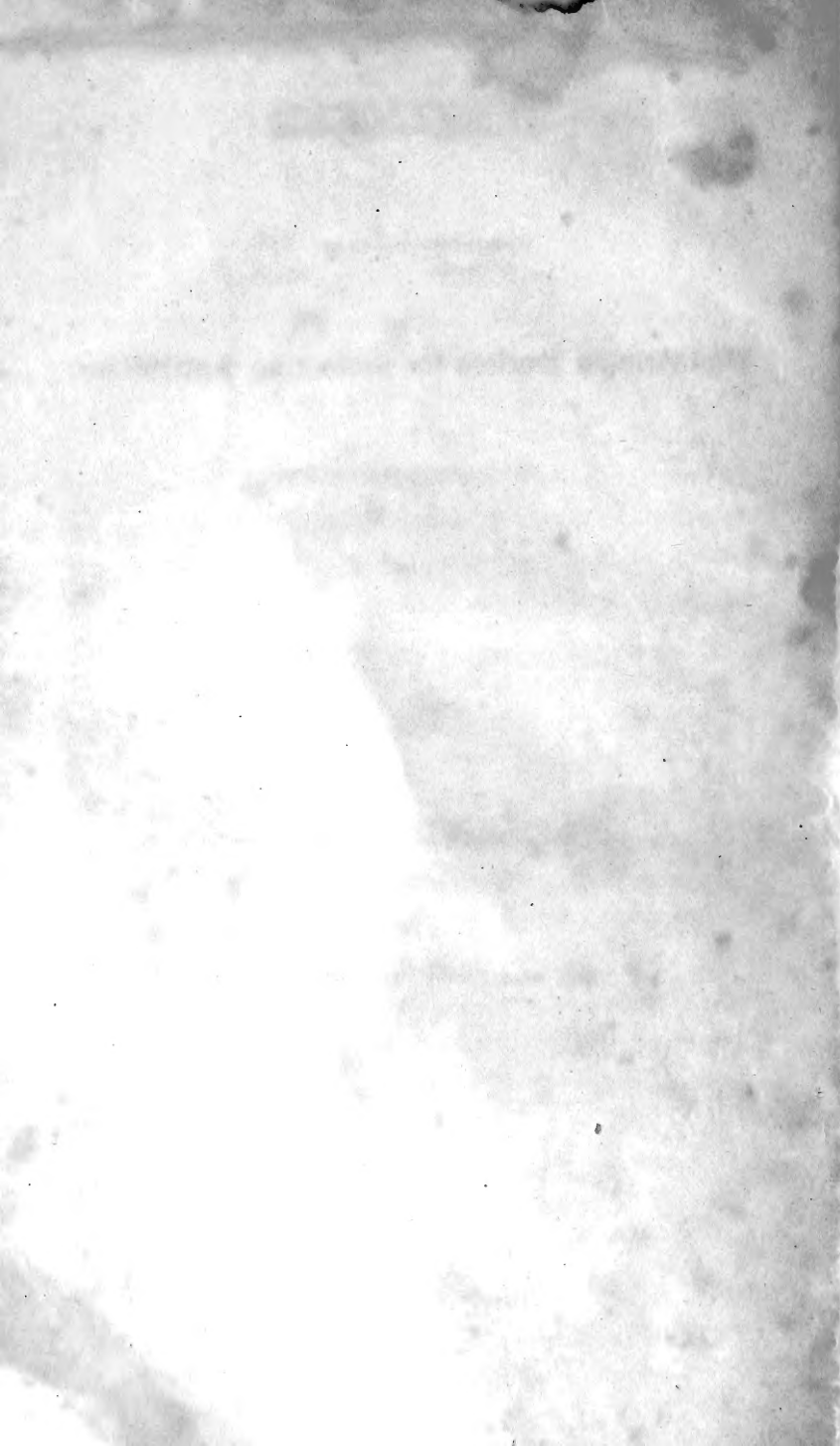
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.









ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture,

AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING,

ON THE

TWENTY-THIRD OF JANUARY, 1823,

BY

RICHARD PETERS,

ITS PRESIDENT,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

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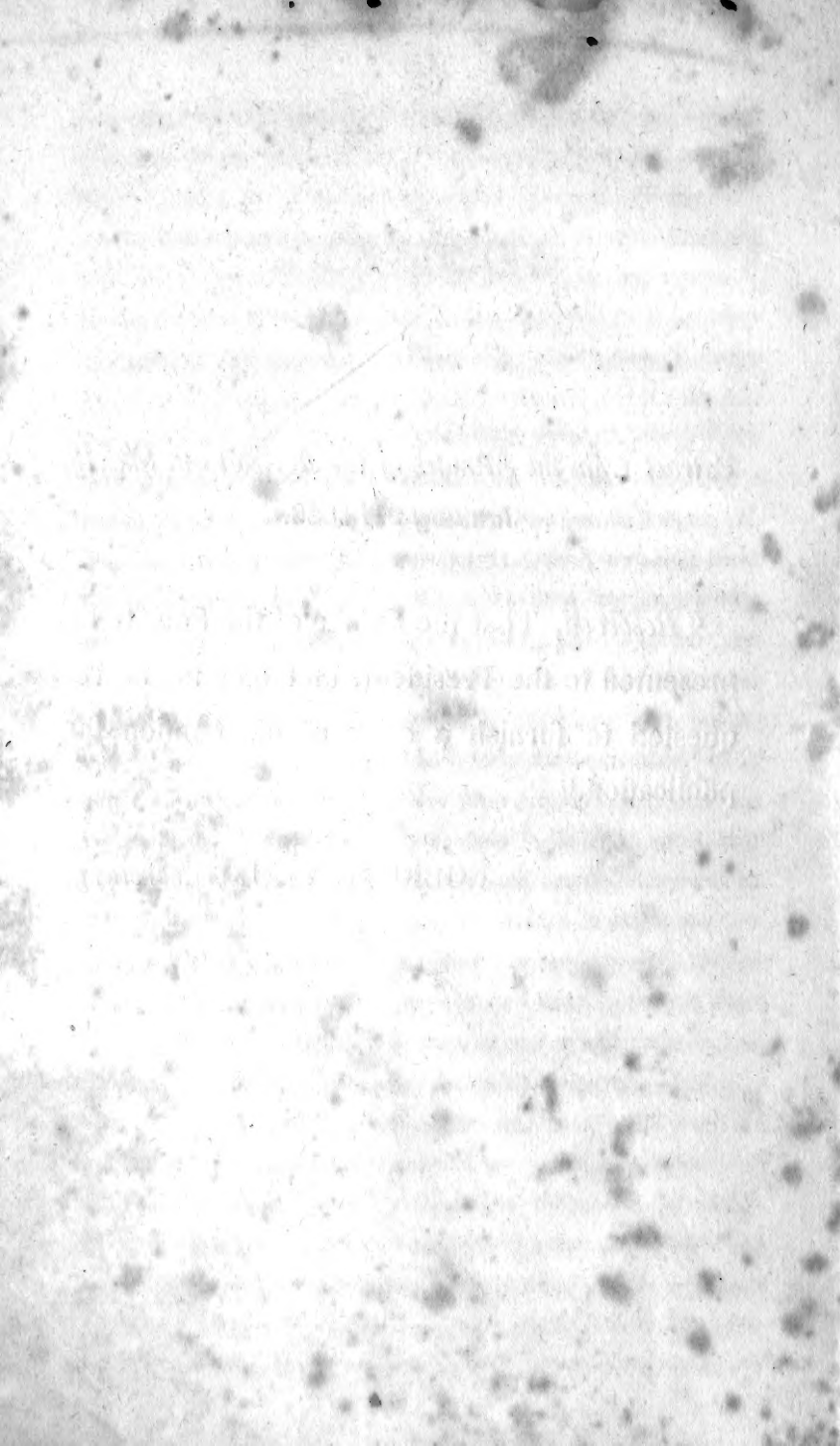
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*Extract from the Minutes of the Agricultural Society,
January 21, 1823.*

“Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the President, and that he be requested to furnish a copy of his Oration for publication.”

ROBERTS VAUX, Secretary.



ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY,—

IT is not with any conviction of my capacity to throw on the subject of our institution any new lights, or to bring forward any new incitements to our zeal, that I have, from necessity, consented to pronounce a plain and narrative, and, I fear, desultory address on this THIRTY-EIGHTH annual return of the season in which our Society commenced its disinterested and useful labours. It was formed in 1785, by a number of the most respectable citizens, whose views were not biassed by any selfish motives; for few of them had any *direct* interest in the subject. Their objects were purely patriotic; and calculated to serve the interests of *Husbandmen*; without any prospects of emolument or even *fame* accruing to themselves. They perceived, with regret, that no such associations existed in any other part of our country; or, if in existence, no publicity was given to their proceedings. Sensible of the necessity of encouraging and informing the practisers of the art on which the prosperity of our country mainly depends, they spared neither necessary expense, nor zealous endeavours, to accomplish their ends. Their task was difficult; for their influence, among practical farmers, was neutralized by almost unconquerable prejudices. Few believed that those who did not follow the plough, could possibly advise or direct the tillers of the soil. They persevered with unremitting en-

deavours, till many among the intelligent farmers, not only in our own, but in other States, were convinced of, and assisted, their usefulness. I reverence their memory, having well known their pure and patriotic excitements to well doing. I was, then, one of the few practical farmers among them. I profited by the instructive lessons promulgated by this infant association; and gratefully returned my obligations in every way my capacity and power enabled me. Being almost the only survivor of those who first formed our Society; I think myself bound to pay my thankful tribute to the memory of my departed coadjutors and friends. To them and their successors, our country is indebted, for at least the rudiments of the agricultural zeal and intelligence which now so happily, and so generally, pervade our Union. And if, by the progress of improvement, and the increase of means—favoured by more enlightened views of the subject, among those whose prosperity was the object of their aim—their early endeavours have been outdone; their merit is not the less praiseworthy. The seed, then sown with more zeal than hope, has fallen in a fertile soil, and the harvest is abundant. Part of their original design, was to promote the formation of societies similar to their own. Long indeed was the accomplishment of this most desirable object delayed; but I have lived to see, by a kind of spontaneous and general conviction, such associations widely spread throughout our country. And if, with more means, but not with more zeal, some of them have given more brilliant and repeated instances of active exertions, than our limited resources have enabled us to exhibit; it affords to me the most pure and unalloyed delight. Through a gloomy period of apathy—among our rural fellow citizens particularly—we kept alive the fire on the altar of our devotion to the great and leading interest of our country. Many

have lit their torches at our constant, if not always lambent, flame: and the brighter they burn, the more they contribute to our most sincere satisfaction—solid, not boastful; admiring, not invidious.

It was the earnest wish of our Society, that *our* State should set the example of providing not only for the practical, but the scientific, instruction of our farmers. So long ago as the year 1794, a plan was drawn up by myself, and approved by my able and highly respectable coadjutors, “*For establishing a State Society of Agriculture;*” wherein will be found every facility for promoting agricultural knowledge, scientific as well as practical. Among such facilities was that of connecting the education of youth with the instruction afforded to those in advanced life; and thus grounding the rising generation in the knowledge of the most important of all arts, while they are acquiring other useful knowledge suitable for the agricultural citizens of the state. This plan was laid before our *then* Legislature. Every endeavour was used for its adoption: but *that* Legislature, nor their successors—with whom I faithfully laboured, when one of them—could be prevailed on to give their sanction to an arrangement so highly important. This plan will be seen in our first volume of *Memoirs*. It was printed in a small pamphlet and the papers of the day; and had it not been recorded in our volume, would have been lost and forgotten. I know this to have been the fate of a multitude of the early literary and practical, and many of them very able, productions of our Society, and its members; which were intrusted to the ephemeral and fugitive promulgations of newspapers. This misfortune induced us to collect in volumes, *our* papers; which are in general circulation and good repute. They nevertheless did great service, and assisted in laying a foundation on which the pre-

sent superstructure is built. Although our Society would have been merged in a plan so general and superior, we were content to become humble partakers in its provisions; never having aimed at taking the lead; but always ready to aid in any plan for promoting the agricultural and fundamental prosperity of our rural fellow citizens.

It is not to be wondered at, however deeply it is to be regretted, that our State legislators were thus blind to the interests and comforts of their constituents, when it is recollected that our great and wise AGRICULTURIST, as well as STATESMAN,—the immortal WASHINGTON,—failed in his endeavours to prevail on our national Legislature, to establish a national professorship of Agriculture. This would have spread, universally, a conviction that *Science* is the handmaid, most essentially administering instruction to the art, which, although the most ancient of all others, remains to this day imperfect; and too much dependant on practical facts, and the honest but often mistaken pride of individual performances;—too frequently discordant, and destitute of leading principles to guide in practical results. It is devoutly to be wished, that our Legislature would assist in the means of endowing a professorship, in the most important of all subjects on which science can be employed.—Important indeed:—for it is the source from which flows the subsistence of all other artists, and the origin of the most necessary materials of the useful arts.

I had expectations that some member of our Society, qualified for the task, would, at this anniversary, have shown the connexion between *Science* and *Agriculture*. I have been compelled to substitute mere general observations, for convincing and irrefragable proofs; which I know could be portrayed by an able and scientific advocate. I would zealously

join in offering a premium for the best essay on this subject; to induce a dissertation honourable to the writer, and incalculably advantageous to our country. No one is more firmly convinced of the all essential benefits and exemplary advantages of well directed *practice*; without which all scientific inquiries, and lessons, would be vain indeed. But modern discoveries in many branches of science, have been most undeniably instructive in Agriculture. Many of the most useful arts would linger or perish, without scientific auxiliaries. The sister profession and art of *Commerce and Navigation*, would shrink into its ancient barbarism, ignorance, and narrow boundaries, had not science directed navigators in traversing the most distant seas, and exploring unknown regions; to and from which *Commerce* now wafts her treasures, and approximates the most locally remote quarters of our globe. Let then *Science*, so pre-eminently conspicuous in the adventurous pursuits on the *Ocean*, illumine and instruct the cultivators of the *Land*; without whom *Commerce* would abortively spread her sails, and vainly dare the perils and unceasing vicissitudes of the seas. I have been led to enlarge on this subject; not only from an early wish to promote a proper attention to it; but at the request of my old revolutionary friend, Mr. *Madison*, who transmitted, as President of the Albemarle Agricultural Society of Virginia, a number of resolutions of that Society, for obtaining an Agricultural Professorship, to be engrafted on their plan of the Virginia University; and requesting the co-operation of Societies in other States, to render such professorships popular. I have not the presumption to suppose that my individual endeavours would accomplish the object; but my relation to the Society gives me the opportunity to recommend it to their favourable notice.

To show that my merited eulogies on the early endeavours of our Society, are not without indubitable evidence of their truth and justice; I will, as shortly as possible, enumerate the various subjects on which they offered tempting premiums, to be given *out of their private resources*: many of them far greater, in pecuniary value, than those now usually tendered. Their plan, in this regard, will be seen by reference to our volumes: although intrinsically valuable, our design was to bestow *honourable* badges of distinction, in gold and silver medals, and useful articles, in preference to pecuniary rewards. Honourable emulation despises sordid gratifications. And yet I censure not those whose circumstances in life require pecuniary emolument. To *all*, I would give the option.

1st. For the best *rotation of crops*, a five years course—a piece of plate of the value of 200 dollars; and for the next best course, a piece of plate valued at 100 dollars.

2d. For a *complete fold-yard*, and the best method of conducting it—a silver medal.

3d. For the best method of *raising and feeding swine*—a gold medal; and for the second best, one of silver.

4th. For the best method of *recovering worn-out fields* to a more hearty state, within the power of common farmers, without dear or far-fetched manures, but by judicious culture,—a gold medal; and for the second best, one of silver.

5th. For the best methods of preventing *damage to crops by insects*, especially the *Hessian fly*, and other enumerated destroyers—a gold medal; and one of silver for the second best.

6th. For the best comparative experiments on the various *modes of sowing wheat*—a gold medal for the best, and a silver one for the next best.

7th. For an account of a *vegetable spring food*, that best

increases milk in cows and ewes—a gold medal for the best, and a silver one for the second best.

8th. A gold and silver medal for the first and second best mode of *raising Locust trees*, and the greatest quantity of ground profitably occupied therein.

9th. For the best essay on the *general use of Oxen in place of Horses*, for agricultural operations, and of *raising and selecting Cattle*, the most proper and profitable for *beef, the dairy, or draught*; enumerating the *desiderata* in the respective kinds—a gold medal; and for the next best, one of silver.

10th. For the best method of *gearing oxen* for work on farms, or travelling; and comparative experiments with oxen and horses—a gold medal for the best essay or course of experiments, and one of silver for the second best.

11th. For the best methods of *recovering gullied fields*,—the like premiums.

12th. For the *best cheese*, of enumerated weights—the greatest quantity a gold,* and a silver medal for the next mentioned quality and quantity.

* This medal was obtained by Mr. *Matthewson*, of Rhode Island; and his cheese has preserved its credit to this day, from the year 1792. If few others of the premiums have been claimed, the fault lies with our farmers; and is no reflection on the patriotism and public spirit of the early members of our Society. It is with the view of calling to the pleasing recollections of the present members, the laudable endeavours of their predecessors; that the premiums and the objects of them, are now brought to their notice. It is to be regretted that an early attention had not been paid to the use of that valuable addition to our stock, the *Mule*. In hardihood, easiness of keep, longevity, and capacity for labour, mules are highly estimable; both on the farm and the road.

Encountering the opinions of the prejudiced;—*Oxen* have always been favourites with me. When they have faithfully served the *farmer*, they may be fitted for the butcher and the tanner. It is strange that *we* should object to them as not bearing the heats of *our* climate; when, in the warmest climates, they are common; and preferred for their capacity to endure heat. In most parts of *Italy*, no horse is seen in a plough; oxen being universally

As we are now taking a review of past occurrences in our Society; it will be appropriate to include that period of its existence in which *our* parts have been cast—and *that* not vainly or ostentatiously, but with sober reflection. It behoves an individual to turn his mind often back to the transactions of his past life; as well to amend what is amiss, as to persist in commendable conduct. It is equally incumbent on a Society, to review its own history.

Owing to a variety of untoward circumstances,—among them, the long illness and death of the worthy president, Mr. *Boardley*, and the declining zeal of members who had taken an active share in its affairs,—the Society became languid, and temporarily, for a regretted period, intermitted its accustomed exertions. In the year 1805, it was revived; and I was pressed to fill its chair; to which I reluctantly and diffidently consented. A number of premiums were then promulgated for 1806; and these, with a few alterations, remain.

1. A premium of a piece of plate, valued at one hundred dollars, for “*ascertaining the component parts of arable land.*” This enters into a particular detail of the analysis and exploration of the variety of soils, poor and rich, in any of the old counties of the state; so as to discover *clays, marles, gypsum, sand, minerals, fossils*, and all substances whereof they are composed. The object is; to fertilize by a mixture of soils; in place of expensive and often unattainable artificial manures. No other elucidation of the indispensable aid required from *Science*, need be given, than the bare mention of the subjects and objects of this premium. *Physiology, Geology, Mineralogy, Chemistry*, are the powerful auxiliaries employed. Let us not confine ourselves to any one country, for our breeders of stock. Our domestic animals should partake of varieties. Every day’s experience proves that animals may safely change locality; and, from man to the lowest order, become acclimated in any country.

ries to facilitate the execution of this all important operation. *Without* their aid, mere labour, even adroitly but un instructedly applied, is inefficient and vain. *With* their assistance, wonders may be accomplished. The *geological survey*, now in progress, at the expense of the Society, will effectually promote their views in this premium.

2. *Trench ploughing*. The mode and uses are designated, and a gold or silver medal is offered according to the merit of the candidate. A course of crops on trench-ploughed ground, also entitles the candidate to the like premium. Here the philosophy of the impregnation of soils exposed to the air and light; and thus furnished with the food of plants; comes into request.

3. A silver medal, or fifty dollars, for the best *cover of leguminous crops*, in preference to naked fallows. Scientific discussions on this subject will be found in the *books*.

4. For the best set of experiments for the *destruction of perennial weeds*—a gold medal. To effectuate this great object, *botanical* knowledge is highly necessary. *Botanizing*, to teach how, and at what stage of their growth, to destroy noxious plants, is as requisite, as it is to foster and promote valuable vegetation.

5. A silver medal, or fifty dollars, for an account, from actual experiment, of the profits of the best *dairy*; of not less than twenty cows. The object is to induce an attention to the breed and selection of *dairy cows*. *Medical* science, including comparative anatomy, is as necessary to the breeder and dairy farmer, as are a practical knowledge of stock and the most profitable modes of feeding them, and applying their produce judiciously.

I give the following relation of a fact, to me unaccountable, but averred to be true by a dairy farmer, of whose credit I

have no doubt. *Fiat experimentum*—should opportunity occur.

I was conversing on the uses of the *Lactometer*, and its great services in discovering the relative or positive richness, or poverty, in the milk of dairy cows. He said he had had a goodly looking cow, appearing to be a great and profitable milker; but no *butter* could be produced from *her* milk alone. He selected, urged by a sudden impulse, a good butter cow. He, merely for experiment, mixed the cream of the two cows, and churned the cream together. It produced as much butter as two profitable cows could furnish. Separately, no more butter was produced, than the one cow had previously afforded. This he tried over and over again. We do not know all the arcana of nature. There may be a congeniality in the secretions from the lacteals of different animals of the same species. We know that in other secretions, such congeniality sometimes occurs. I have succeeded by changing the male or the female of sheep and cattle, as the case required; where issue had failed from the intercourse of well looking breeders. I do not, however, pretend decisively to account for unaccountable things. I leave this fact, as I received it, for the consideration of the *learned*. Every dairywoman knows the great amelioration and increase of butter, produced by mixing the milk of fresh cows, with that of those which had been long in milk.

6. *Live fences*. A gold or silver medal, for the best experiment; according to merit. Here a scientific development of the nature and quality of *Shrubs*, would be important. The *Hawthorn* is subject to blights, and the depredations of insects. *Entomology* would teach some means of destruction of such marauders on these and the fruit trees of our gardens and orchards, as well as the plants in our fields.

The Newcastle, or *Cockspur*, thorn is, according to my observation, far superior in hardihood, defensive armory, and duration, to any other thorn. But I prefer the *Hemlock Spruce*, which I have in vigour at 80 years old. It is easily propagated; never fails of succeeding; is not subject to blasts; nor is it browsed by cattle. It remains verdant through the winter; can be clipped at a small expense; and is of as quick growth, as any species of thorn. Insects never annoy it. Most deciduous shrubs or trees are ineligible; and subject to numberless casualties.

I believe the electric fluid, has no inconsiderable share in the mischief accruing from blights, or blasts, on hedges and fruit trees. A fine pear tree was, in my early life, apparently saved from the blast usually annoying that species of fruit tree, by a pointed rod (elevated above its top), from which a wire led into the ground. Other trees had old horse-shoes, or pieces of iron hoops, hung among their branches. These succeeded for a time; but an overflow of the fluid often partially blasted the trees. Whether or not this was owing to want of points and conductors, I will not determine. In a field of peas, much blasted whilst in blossom, two spots were observed entirely unhurt. In the one an old iron mould board plough had been carelessly left; and in the other, an old iron hooped hogshead. Other causes, no doubt, operate injuriously. I suggest this as one.

The electric and magnetic fluids have more operation in the movements and phenomena of nature, than is accurately known, or believed. We are yet only on the threshold of knowledge, in relation to both these awful and powerful agents.

7. *Clearing and cropping new lands.* A gold medal for the best essay on the subject.

The possessors of new lands are generally the most deficient in knowledge, either practical or scientific. Their first operations ruin, and reduce to sterility. *Their* endeavours should be used to *retain* fertility; *our* exertions are to *recover* it. It is fortunate that agricultural societies are forming in the new counties. We should not only wish them well; but assist in all things they require. I have recently received flattering accounts from newly-formed societies, of their zeal for improvement; accompanied by a request that we would advise and correspond with them. They will soon need no teachers, other than their own intelligence and experience.

8. *A Veterinary Essay and Plan.* A gold medal. We have had from Dr. *Rush*, and our Vice President, Dr. *Mease*, valuable discussions on this subject. It is lamentable that no *Veterinary Institution* exists in this country. Our domestic animals are destitute of any scientific aid; and are left in the hands, when accidents or diseases assail them, of quacks and impostors. Nothing would more contribute to agricultural prosperity, than a school, or professorship, and a practical theatre, to teach comparative anatomy, and veterinary knowledge: This is a subject well worthy the serious attention of the Society. Here is an extensive field for medical science, and its branches; essential to farmers and breeders of stock.

9. Last, but not least, is a silver medal, for HOUSEHOLD MANUFACTURES. This is an important subject indeed; and I am happy in believing our early patronage of it, has contributed to its present gratifying and extensive prosperity.

If this detail of our endeavours to serve the interests of agriculturists should be deemed tedious; it nevertheless has its uses. It is an *exposé* of the engagements we have made, and how ill we can suffer any diminution of our funds. It is also an attempt, however feeble, to show how mistaken are our

farmers, when they suppose that mere practice is all sufficient. *Farmers* need not be *Philosophers*, or *Savans*, in the branches of science auxiliary to their occupation. But they should treat with respect, and profit by their lessons, those who promulgate principles. Their art may thus be regulated by system; in place of being left to the experience, as it is called, of uninformed, however worthy, practical men; who disagree, too frequently, in their practice; and often attribute to superior management, what has occurred from good luck, and accidentally favouring circumstances. Far be it from me to speak slightly of practical farming, or farmers. I have endeavoured, through a long life, to serve their interests, and promote their prosperity. I wish to eradicate their *prejudices*; which are now, happily, fast wearing away.

I need not recite to you the benefits derived from the exertions of our Society in obtaining the law establishing County Societies through our State. These Societies are multiplying; and I hope every county in the State will find the advantages of such associations. In aiding the Society in this measure, I failed not to portray the many important results flowing from such associations. Among them, was that of public exhibitions to excite emulation, and draw together the resources of one or more counties, in showing specimens of the best stock of domestic animals, agricultural implements, domestic manufactures, the products of farms, and all incitements to excellence in husbandry. I gave expectations of our Society, with the assistance afforded by the county funds, taking upon them the task of displaying and encouraging such exhibitions. But as a late meeting of our Society have determined otherwise; without meaning to censure that determination indecorously; I must take the liberty to express my individual opinion, not only from long conviction, but consistently with the

assurances I gave to my friends in the legislature, who interested themselves in introducing the clauses in the general law, and the supplement thereto, in relation to our Society. I must, therefore, in justification of myself, declare that my sentiments in this regard are unchanged.

I have seen, in a public print, an extract of a letter I wrote, (for much correspondence is thrown upon me by my connexion with this Society) in which, in effect, I say, that "I deem such exhibitions more promotive of the rapid improvement of our Agriculture, in all its branches, than volumes written on the subject." I must presume that our local situation alone was the objection; and that no general reflection was intended to be cast on such exhibitions. Yet, in and near the large cities of Europe; where a public exhibition and an agricultural society are inseparable; such displays are common. Their novelty may, at first, excite inconvenient curiosity; which would evaporate, when repetitions rendered them familiar. Nothing is required but good regulations, to prevent all the alleged evils complained of. The worst symptom of insensibility to their importance is, that they are, most unwarrantably, considered by many, (who look only at, and often magnify, some much regretted and too common accompaniments to public spectacles, and by no means peculiar to these exhibitions,) as mere ostentatious displays of rural pageantry; instead of being viewed, as they are,—evidences of, and stimulants to, improvement and prosperity. All these objections could be obviated, by regulations our own organization warrants. And by our own organization, the supplement to the county law authorizes us to proceed. I am persuaded that great good would arise, were it deemed suitable to our situation, that all the inhabitants of our city, young and old, should view such exhibitions of agricultural improvement. Impres-

sions would be made, by tangible objects; far more durable and striking, than the most eloquent verbal or written discussions. The solemn truth, (not sufficiently felt or regarded,) would be indelibly established;—that without agricultural improvement, their houses would become tenantless; their commerce and their manufactures would be annihilated; and their deserted streets, covered with weeds. If, however, such proofs of rural prosperity *must* be removed from their inspection, in the vicinity of the city, they will be accompanied by my sincere good wishes for their success, wheresoever they shall be located.

Our city has, in the course of human vicissitudes, descended from its former rank in the national scale of *commerce*. Wealth, enterprise, industry, and a numerous and highly estimable population, are yet within its bounds. Nothing is wanting, but a proper direction to be given to these sure and powerful achievers of prosperity, to raise it to its merited station. Let *Agriculture*, the basis of its commerce, manufactures, and all its useful arts, be stimulated and encouraged by the impetus afforded to ingenuity and labour, by the means conveyed by roads, canals, and the improved navigation of our numerous, capacious, and powerful rivers and streams. The tillers and proprietors of our soil are multitudinous, intelligent, diligent, and worthy. They require facilities to the transportation of their commodities, to render them, and us, eminently prosperous. *Our State* is exceeded by no other, in fertility and capability for agricultural riches. The best portion of our territory is yet indifferently cultivated, or a wilderness. It may be converted into a garden, by encouraging its population, and rendering access to our city, safe, prompt, and certain. In the changes of fortune too frequently occurring in populous cities, the most cautious

cannot always avoid reverses. Exertions to improve our worn lands, or to afford access to our forests, will furnish an asylum to misfortune; or open to spirited emigrants from the uncertain pursuits in a city, a scene of active and profitable employment. And thus property hitherto unjustifiably and reproachfully neglected, will be brought into almost incomputable value.

The interests of our city are inseparably united with those of our rural fellow citizens. Let us co-operate in joint endeavours for mutual benefit; and the products of our soil will centre in our hitherto busy and splendidly thriving *Emporium*. We shall then be only engaged in profitable traffic in our own productions; and shall not again be visited by the novel, mortifying, and reproachful phenomenon, of grain raised by the cheap labour of the *serfs* of northern Europe; and sold advantageously in our emphatically agricultural country.

Among us, there are members of all professions. Let every one contribute to the instruction of the husbandman; on the products of whose labours we all subsist. In all agricultural countries, both ancient and modern, the genius and talents of the greatest and most eminent men, were devoted to enlightening and informing the tillers of the soil. Among the *Greeks*, and *Romans*, their greatest generals signalized themselves in the fields both of *Ceres* and *Mars*; and their orators and statesmen eulogized, promoted, and protected, the labours and prosperity of the husbandman. Their poets immortalized their verse in rural imagery, and didactic lessons for farmers. *Virgil* will instruct even the agriculturist of this day. *Hesiod*, *Pliny*, *Columella*, and other writers of ancient times, yet live in their agricultural works. The feasts of *Ceres*, and even the orgies of *Bacchus*, were incitements to increase the

products of the plough, and the culture of the vine. In their games and amusements, and in their revels, the ancients venerated and encouraged the labours of the field; and placed among their deities, tutelary guardians of the cultivators of the earth. All these fabulous personifications, are only strong emblematical indications of the elevated character in which Agriculture was held among ancient nations. We read their history; recite their poetry; admire their heroes; and study their tactics and warlike feats. It will be more to our advantage, to partake of the enthusiasm, with which they idolized the first among the arts of peace.

But modern instances can be given, for the imitation of every profession and calling, in our day.

To *Lawyers*, Lord *Kaimes* is a bright example; and, long before him, *Fitzherbert* intermitted his labours in *black letter*, to treat on agricultural subjects, with ability and zeal. And *Evelyn* added *law knowledge*, to his other great and singular acquirements; displayed in his justly admired *SILVA*, and his other agricultural, philosophical, and yet celebrated works.

What greater benefit on our country, could the most eminent of our *Physicians*, *Anatomists*, or *Surgeons*, bestow, than by following the example of some of the celebrated professors of these learned occupations in Europe; and assist in the establishment of the all important *desideratum*—a *Veterinary Institution*? Zoological, botanical, chemical, and mineralogical information, could be plenteously afforded by medical men; who are generally well acquainted with such subjects.

The most eminent *Chemists*, *Philosophers* and *Naturalists* of our time, have gained merited celebrity, by promulgating agricultural principles; analysing the materials for

fertilizing the soil; and developing the qualities and structure of plants.

Who are more bound to assist the husbandman, than *Merchants* and *Manufacturers*; whose occupations so indispensably depend on the produce of his toils?

Let not these highly respectable characters allege, that because they are not farmers, and are residents in a city, they cannot enlighten and assist the husbandman; without whom they would have no city to inhabit!

A FARMER led our revolutionary armies to victory.—“His like, ’tis true, we ne’er shall look upon again.” He unsheathed his sword to defend the plough, and the myriads sustained by its products. Our cities, subdued in succession, were restored from captivity, (our own among them,) by the patriotic assistance of *Farmers*; when their inhabitants were either banished, disaffected, or paralyzed. Have you not countless obligations to return, on this account, to the descendants and successors of those departed patriots? They were not exclusively meritorious; but I had the best opportunities, both personal and official, of intimately knowing, that without them our efforts would have been feeble indeed, on many critically important occasions.

The farmers of our State now require more advice and encouragement, in the present situation of public and private circumstances, than heretofore. The objects of their labours must be varied and multiplied; so as to be rendered suitable to our own, and the attitude in which the affairs of the world are placed. Their gains were never equal to the amount supposed; and they were acquired under the penalty inflicted, for wise and wholesome purposes, on our first parents,—“the sweat of their faces.” I was born and have long lived among farmers; and have intimately known their concerns. The

great body of them now need every encouragement which science and intelligence, promulgated by those who are versed in literary and philosophical researches, can furnish: and it frequently happens that those require the most incitement and instruction, who deem themselves the least in want of them.

In the lifetime of our ever venerated General *Washington*, I relieved him from much of the pressure of his agricultural inquiries and correspondence; and received the highest of all rewards—his cordial and affectionate acknowledgments. I, at his request, procured an accurate census and statistical account of the produce of farms, during a precedent period of seven years, in this State. The average of *wheat*, per acre, was then ten bushels and about a peck. Although the surface since cultivated is widely extended, and there are instances, (some of them I have myself, occasionally, but not frequently, had,) of 30 to 50 bushels to the acre, yet I do not believe the average of acreable quantity, is now half as much greater; though the aggregate, by the extent of cultivated surface, is wonderfully increased; and our farming is, in many parts, though stationary in others, highly improved. It is to ameliorate the style and system of *farming*, and not individually to serve the personal interests of *farmers*; beyond citizens engaged in other branches of labour; that I urge the attention of this and every other Society. When their gains were at the highest, 'tis true, too many partook of the *mania* of the day; entered into schemes, supported by seductive accommodations; lived beyond their circumstances; and thought prosperity would never end. Even for this aberration, they are entitled to the forgiveness of their multitudinous copartners in the common *delirium*. Labourers and mechanics graduated *their* gains according to the prices of products; and pared away apparent agricultural profits.

On a calculation of interest on capital, remuneration for labour, and unavoidable expenditures—not generally deducting for casualties too frequently occurring—the far greater number of even industrious farmers would, at the period I mention, have been brought in debt. Living on their own farms, and working them by their own personal labour, and that of their families, rendered them prosperous. Especially when the members of their household were willingly confined to the employments of their parents,—the daughters preferring their domestic fabrics, to the gewgaws of the shops; and the sons, contentedly attached to the labours of the field, and not seduced into hazardous adventures in the lottery of commerce; nor encouraged to loiter in what are called the learned professions; in which *comparatively* few become either learned or eminent—however fortunate, dazzling, and attractive, some instances may be.

For us,—let us continue our exertions to preserve the character, at home and abroad, we have earned by long continued, though not always successful labours. The honourable rivalry excited by similar associations around us, should urge us to redouble our diligence. I have reminded you of one unfortunate slumber,—let us not sleep again. Among you, there are talents, intelligence, and capacity, adequate to all the purposes required in our institution. If we cannot accomplish all the objects of our wishes, let us perform what we can. Nothing is wanted but a small portion of your time and attention, to sustain and increase the usefulness of our Society. Some of you, however meritoriously, afford more time and assiduity in keeping in check, and providing for, the drones and vicious in our community, than are required for promoting the prosperity of the worthy and industrious objects of our regards; and at the same time forwarding your own in-

terests and comforts A small share of your time and means, most worthily, but too often indiscriminately and unadvisedly, applied in charitable exercises of philanthropy,—which I am far from being disposed to censure; and even your countenance and presence at our meetings;—would wonderfully aid in encouraging, instructing and stimulating, those who want only a wholesome direction, to enable them to help themselves. If such propensities were more universal, charity would be confined only to the helpless and meritorious; and pauperism would be rare. Our intelligent and worthy departed member, *William West*, distinguished as an almost self-taught, and prosperous farmer, had an apothegm, in a great degree sound and monitory, in relation to instructions and excitements in Agriculture:—“He who would teach farmers *to help themselves*, and introduce new and practical modes, or improvements additional to what were already but partially known, would do more good, than he would accomplish by giving *alms* all the days of his life.” *Farmers*, however, of all others, are the least in need of *alms*. But, by more system and intelligence in *farming*, they would, by employing the idle subjects of *charity*, prevent the necessity of unduly exercising that godlike virtue.

Our Society is capable of “doing much good,” in every way; and especially in co-operating, for this purpose, with the associations of our agricultural brethren, in this, and other States. For agriculturists are all members of the same family, wheresoever sectionally resident.

In *Great Britain*—heretofore accounted the pattern, and normal school, of Agriculture—a sad and sincerely lamentable reverse is experienced. The temptations, from their incessant wars and their ever-craving demands, to increase their supplies, by expending vast capital on their worst lands,

have visited them with sore distress. Insupportable taxes, tithes, and high rents, unknown among us; and the decay of agricultural profits, with consequent idle labourers; have been the parents of pauperism: and even *peace* brings no blessing in its train. *Here*, we have only, by exertion and skill, to renovate our old farms, and, without unreasonable application of capital, to bring into productiveness our best lands, yet unoccupied. They will place in ease and abundance, not only a great portion of our present numbers; but also the additional increase of population, by generations yet unborn. We of the present day, owe to ourselves and our posterity, all our exertions, to establish principles and approved practice in Agriculture; and facilities to convey its products to markets. We shall thus entitle ourselves to the blessings of the present and future generations; who will honour us in the enjoyment of the tangible proofs they will experience—that we did not live for ourselves alone.

Our locality in a great commercial city, gives to our Society opportunities of adding to our domestic stores; and communicating the productions and information of the *old*, and distant parts of the *new*, world. Our foreign correspondence is respectable; and many advantages may be derived from it. Even a few of you taking a constant interest and a meritorious pride in our affairs; not interrupted by frequent listlessness and mere occasional and cold attention, but enlisting them as the agreeable amusement of your leisure,—often less usefully, however innocently, occupied,—will sustain the character and continue the beneficialness of our Society. Most of you are in the vigour of your faculties, and capacities for corporeal and mental exertion. I have long witnessed the result of such exertions. Approaching to the close of my humble endeavours, I can only rely on the zeal which should ani-

mate your perseverance, and participate in the enjoyment of the labours you are capable of performing.

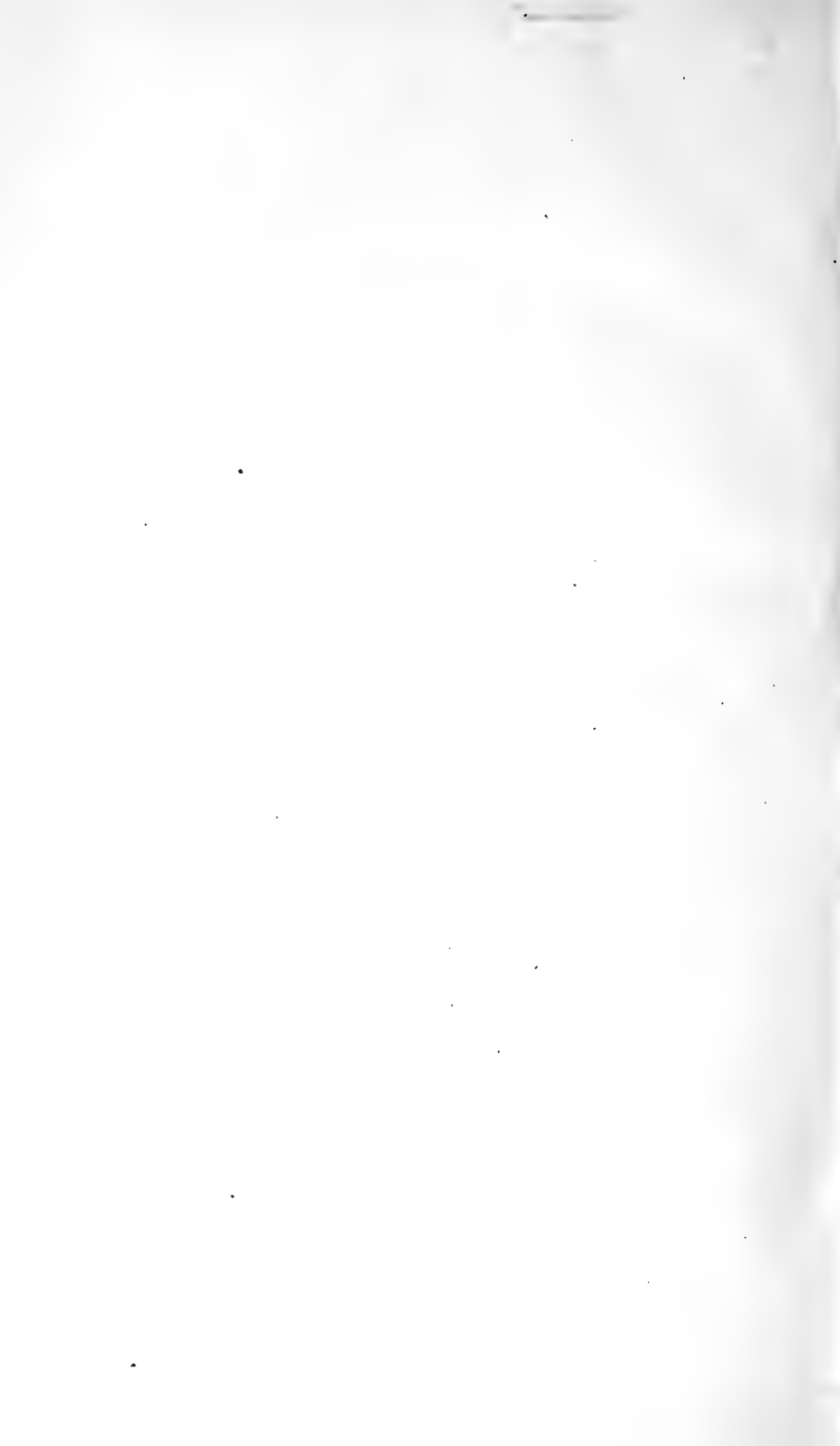
You will always have my best and heartfelt wishes, and every assistance I can afford.

I must apologize for thus detaining you in an attempt to preserve, as beneficially as I am capable of, our annual custom of addressing you with sincere congratulations on the commencement of another year for the exercise of our labours, in a new and auspicious era of agricultural zeal and intelligence. We have passed through many unpromising periods, without the satisfaction we now enjoy. A general spread of enlightened conviction pervades our Union, that Agriculture necessarily and justly claims the support of every friend to our country, as the basis of the public safety and prosperity.

My ardent desire that the Society should continue in the ways of well doing, and my respect for their request, have alone induced me to occupy so much of your time;—if unprofitably, my motives must furnish my excuse.













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