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ADDRESS

OF

Hon. Chas. E. Phelps

OF BALTIMORE, MD.,

BEFORE THE

Oxford Agricultural Society,

On Friday, October 7th, 1870.

OXFORD, PA.:

"PRESS," BOOK, CARD AND JOB PRINTER.

1870.



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CORRESPONDENCE.

OXFORD, Pa., October 15th. 1870.

At the meeting of the Board of Managers of the Oxford Agricultural Society, on the 12th inst., a resolution of thanks to Hon. Charles E. Phelps, for his very able and highly practical address at the First Annual Exhibition of the Society, on the 7th, was unanimously adopted, and the Secretary was instructed to request a copy for publication. From the minutes.

H. L. BRINTON, Cor. Sec'y

BALTIMORE, Md., October 18th, 1870.

REV. JOHN M. DICKEY, D. D.

Dear Sir : Your esteemed favor of the 17th instant, is received, enclosing a copy of Resolutions of the Board of Managers of the Oxford Agricultural Society.

I beg that you will take occasion to assure the Board of my very high appreciation of the compliment contained in their vote of thanks and request of a copy of the address delivered on the 7th inst., for publication, and to inform them that the manuscript is at their service.

Yours very truly,

CHARLES E. PHELPS

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ADDRESS OF
Hon. Charles E. Phelps,

BEFORE THE OXFORD AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7th, 1870.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A citizen of another State, and a member of another profession than that of Agriculture, the honor has been assigned to me of addressing the first annual meeting of your Society. History records that once there existed a line of division between your State and mine. Upon the Pennsylvania side, agricultural labor was then as it is now, voluntary and compensated. Upon the Maryland side it was to a considerable extent compulsory, a lingering but tenacious legacy of by-gone barbaric ages and usages. Practically, Maryland, though a slave state, was a stronger abolition state than her free sister Pennsylvania. Up to the war of the rebellion she had voluntarily emancipated more slaves than Pennsylvania ever owned; and while that war was at its most doubtful crisis, as if to blow up with nitro-glycerine the bridge between her and the belligerent and almost triumphant confederacy, Maryland with one constitutional vote shattered the hoary fabric into ruin.

Upon the long list of casualties of the great war of the rebellion, no names are recognized as more thoroughly dead, than those of Mason and Dixon among the killed; and more completely lost, than that of Mason and Dixon's line among the missing.

Opinions may vary as to the precise day or spot upon which they fell, but none dispute the mournful fact that they and their line are gone, and gone beyond the reach of resurrection.

One thing is certain, their most mortal wound was received, as was right, in Pennsylvania's soil, and from Pennsylvania hands. Meade and Hancock,

and the slopes of Gettysburg, must in all future time answer for the fate of Mason and Dixon's line. It is therefore with great propriety that your association has, as I understand, extended its fraternal recognition and welcome beyond the limits of Chester county to the farmers of the adjoining counties of Pennsylvania and Maryland. The climate and the seasons with them, are the same as with you. The natural capabilities of the soil are without material difference. The products of the soil are identical. The system of labor is the same. There exists no longer even an imaginary line of political or social separation. Common interests, pursuits, necessities, added to close neighborhood here along both sides of this old border State line, unmistakably point to a better understanding and a closer union between the farmers of Pennsylvania and Maryland.

The sphere of usefulness of your Society is plainly not to be circumscribed by state or county lines. There is a significance in the very indefiniteness of its title, "The Oxford Agricultural Society." Here in this thriving, beautiful borough, the seat of an Institution of learning, the first of its kind not only in this country but in any country, here in the heart of a land famous for its barns, its dairies, its cattle, its crops, you have established the headquarters of the organized agricultural interests, not of a single county merely, but of a wide region. There is no limit to the beneficent influences which are designed to radiate from Oxford as the selected seat and center of our efforts at enlightenment and improvement. And there is no reason

why this enterprise, so successfully inaugurated, should not continue year after year its career of splendid but peaceful conquest, collecting and diffusing practical information, gathering a richer harvest of induction from a continually expanding field of experiment, exciting to generous emulation the tillers of far distant acres, and making permanent contributions to the Agricultural science of our race.

Much has been written, and much has been spoken, particularly on occasions like the present, of the importance of agriculture to the welfare of mankind, and of its dignity in the scale of human pursuits. The theme, like its subject, is a boundless one. It is at once the oldest and the newest of arts. The processes, by which are extracted from the soil and atmosphere the materials for food and clothing, are patented every day in a thousand improved forms, and yet they are essentially the same processes, producing precisely the same results, as those which were rudely practised in pre-historic times, nebulously with myth and fable. Men ploughed, and sowed, and weeded, and watered, and digged, and fertilized, and reaped and thrashed, and winnowed, and gathered into barns, ages before the Hebrew shepherd boy superintended the colossal granaries of Egypt, or a vineyard was planted by the surviving Patriarch of the deluge. Very recent discoveries in the lakes of Switzerland, Italy and Germany, in the bogs of Ireland and the peat mosses of Scandinavia, have brought to light the rude implements of a primitive agriculture, buried and forgotten, long before European history commenced. Fragments of pottery, hatchets, scythes, sickles, horse-shoes, bridle-bits, plow shares, grind-stones, the relics of races and periods as to which the oldest history is silent, have been within the last ten years disinterred from beneath the tombs of uncounted centuries. The skill of the antiquarian has exhausted itself in vain in assigning to the successive ages of stone, of bronze and of iron indicated by the archaeological strata through which he has burrowed in search of these mysterious relics, some known data by which the latest of them could be connected with the most ancient historical or traditional times. No author of antiquity refers to these relics, or to the generations whose presence on our globe they attest. An acute observer, and copi-

ous narrator, Pliny, spent his country life upon the banks of one of these Italian lakes, and died in ignorance of the fascinating lore secreted beneath its waters. No ancient chronicle, no legend, no tradition extant in Pliny's time, in the first century of our era, could have suggested the faintest trace of these primeval predecessors of the Gauls, Helvetians and Etruscans. They had long before his time perished from the memory of man.

And yet we are as well assured that these forgotten generations once lived, as we are certain of the existence of our own grand-fathers. We have in our hands as convincing and conclusive evidences of the fact, as if their own depositions had come down to us properly authenticated. We not only know the fact that they lived, but we know how they lived. The science of archaeology has succeeded to a partial, it is true, but marvellous degree, in reconstructing the shattered and forgotten fabric of their clumsy civilization, by a similar analysis to that by which the genius of Cuvier from a fossil tooth or fragment could reproduce the entire frame of a mastodon.

We can see to-day the identical vessels in which they stored their milk, the dairies in which they pressed cheese, the porringers from which they took their soup. Weapons of war and of the chase they certainly possessed, but none have yet been discovered among the relics of these primitive populations as murderous as the needle-gun, or the mitrailleuse with its forty death-dealing barrels breathing the gentle spirit of modern civilization, inspired by the lessons and examples of nineteen Christian centuries.

The utensils of husbandry which have been found are of various patterns, in stone and metal. Those of stone are assigned to the earliest period; those of iron, to the latest. The intermediate period is called the age of bronze, and the implements belonging to it have been found in a remarkable state of preservation. The composition of this metal is copper and tin. No zinc is found in the bronzes of this period. Utensils of horn and bone, and earthenware are common to all these periods. Not only have these lost generations of antiquity bequeathed to us their old farming tools and crockery, they have even left us samples of their bread. The bread has been kept safe and sound through several thousand

years by being carbonized like the peat in which it was found buried. It was reported to be good bread, but somewhat stale. I have not heard that any butter has been sampled as yet. With respect to the bread it is curious that the very grain of which it was made has been recognized. Some has been found of millet, and some evidently of wheat, the flour being unbolted and imperfectly ground.

There are many parts of the earth where the art of agriculture to-day is very little advanced beyond the point attained in those pre-historic ages. I have myself seen in the plains of Lombardy, a man ploughing with a single beast, harnessed before a crooked stick, which appeared to tickle the earth's skin about hard enough to make it laugh. In the same classic region, not far from the banks of the Ticino, where Hannibal, after his descent from the Alps, first encountered the Roman legion under Scipio and routed them in a pitched battle, I saw with my own eyes, a man, a woman, and several children in a field by the roadside, driving a cow round and round over what looked like a large sheet spread upon the ground. Upon inquiring the meaning of the singular exhibition, a sort of one cow circus, I learned that it was an agricultural family of the period engaged in threshing out their crop of rape seed. These people and their predecessors have been ploughing and threshing in precisely the same way, upon the same spot, from the time of Hannibal's invasion, and doubtless long before.

As Agriculture is the most ancient of arts, so it is the chief corner stone of civilization. This statement may possibly at first sight seem too broad, and in conflict with the terminology of the word "civilization" itself, which as well as the kindred term "urbanity" appear to imply a contrast between the polish and refinement attributed to the populous life of cities, and the rustic isolation and independence of the fields. A moment's reflection, however shows; that even from that point of view, the position is well taken, and literally correct. Without agriculture, and indeed an advanced stage of agriculture, there could be no cities, no towns.

Their very existence necessarily implies a systematic and provident culture of the surrounding country upon which they can depend with unfailing expecta-

tions for their subsistence.

And this condition as necessarily involves the idea that the efforts of the husbandman have advanced beyond the point of a mere provision for the wants of himself and his family, to the accumulation of a surplus wealth. With this surplus he feeds the city and at the same time gains an exchange in her markets. Agriculture therefore must have become an art before cities were possible.

Commerce has been frequently called the great civilizer of mankind. It is certainly difficult to over estimate the importance of this noble department of human industry. Whether foreign or inland, by caravan or trading ship; by trireme or steamer, by conestoga wagon or railroad, it has in ancient and modern times diffused among mankind the comforts and appliances of an improved life, stimulated industry and enterprise, communicated knowledge, enlarged and liberalized the intellect. More than all this the crowning glory may probably be ascribed to commerce of having given letters to the race, and made thought and genius immortal. The Phenecian mariners and merchants who were the pioneers of coastwise and ocean commerce, finding memory too short for their multiplied transactions, committed them to symbols which are still perpetuated in the alphabet of Homer, Shakespeare and Schiller.

But though commerce has done all this and more, though she has found the magnetic needle, colonized old and discovered new continents, though she has given to science that magnificent revelation of the true form and motion of the planet that has led to the astounding discoveries of Newton, Kepler and La Place, she is after all but the common carrier of agriculture. The raw material and the manufactured fabric which are the interchange of commerce, are to a very large extent the direct product of the soil, or else that product combined with skilled labor, which though not agricultural depends immediately upon agriculture for support.

From this casual reference to manufactures, it is natural to pass to a somewhat closer attention to the relations between that branch of industry and the one which it is the object of your Society to foster. To prepare the soil for the seed, it must be broken up. A repeated stirring of the soil is required to keep down the

weeds. The matured crop must be cut, hauled, threshed, and hauled again. Without implements, therefore the farmer is helpless. Hence the dependence of agriculture upon the mechanic art. It will be of course understood that the agriculture here spoken of is the progressive art practised by civilized men, and not the mere manual drudgery of extorting a simple subsistence from the soil by those who manufacture the clumsy tools they till with. In that phase of agriculture which preceded the division of labor, when the husbandman made his own plow out of a root or branch hardened in the fire, and his own spade or hoe out of a flint stone, such as are found in the Indian mounds of this continent, and his own sickle out of the same rude material, or from the more artificial metallic composition of which specimens have been found amidst the relics of the age of bronze, the husbandman might with strict propriety be called independent, and it is in that phase, and in that sense alone, that agriculture may be regarded as an independent pursuit. But it is when most independent, that husbandry and the husbandman are in the most abject condition. After expending much valuable time and much hard labor that should have been devoted to the cultivation of the soil upon the preparation, or repair, or renewal of his implements, he finds those contrivances so imperfect that with all his diligence in their use no fruits of his industry result beyond a meager sustenance. It is only when the skilled artisan begins to make the farmer dependent upon him for time-saving and labor-saving utensils, that agriculture begins to advance as an art, with capacities for indefinite progress and perfectibility. The use of these improved appliances, enabling the farmer to make twice the crop in one half the time, not only gives him leisure for reflection, observation and comparison of experiences with others similarly engaged, and opportunities for projecting new modes of cultivation, but provides him with a surplus capital on which he may venture to make experiments, acquire additional land, hire the labor to till it, contribute his quota to the defence of the state, the maintenance of public order, and the support of religion, and finally to surround himself with these comforts and embellishments which tend to dignify, elevate and adorn the social and civili-

zed man.

It was stated in the outset, that agriculture is at once the oldest and the newest of the arts. Within the last fifty years, it has made more progress, than during the three thousand years before. For much the larger portion of this improvement, it is indebted to the wonderful mechanical inventions that have distinguished this half century beyond any other period of history. Men are now living, who have seen the old strap plow, or wooden mould board, superseded by the steel clipper, and the shovel and the hoe laid down before the rotary spader and the cultivator. Since the organization of the Patent Office, more than a thousand patents have been issued in America for improvements in plows and cultivators alone. Very few of this number it is true have been generally approved, and most of them are practically worthless, except as approximations and suggestive possibilities which only await the next step in the march of inventive genius to realize new and brilliant conquests of mind over matter. It is to this transition period that we must for the present assign the idea of the steam plow, as practically available to American tillage.

In like manner, a living generation has seen the hand sickle, the scythe, the cradle, the rake, the flail and the open cylinder, give place to machine reapers and mowers with self-raking and binding auxiliaries, to threshing machines, with separators, winnowers and straw carriers. These cunning combinations of wheel and lever which subsidize the muscle of the animal creation and substitute brute power for its equivalent in human labor, are mainly the inventions of American machinists, and within the last quarter of a century have revolutionized the system of agriculture not only of our own country, but of the civilized world. There were according to the census of 1860, two and a half millions of farmers in the United States, employing nearly 800,000 farm laborers. It has been estimated, and in my opinion the estimate falls considerably below the truth, that agricultural machinery has added the labor of a million more able bodied men. What a tremendous reinforcement to the military power of a nation, this substitution of mechanism for muscle, has been illustrated by the late civil war, which withdrew from industrial pursuits, chiefly agricultural, in the northern states alone, nearly two

millions of men; and yet more acres were tilled, and more bushels were harvested by the farmers who staid at home than in years of profound peace.

But after all, important as is the art of the mechanic to agriculture, there is one thing even more indispensable. Armed and equipped as the farmer might be with all the appliances and enginery of mechanical skill, he would be the most helpless of beings unless bread were in his soil; for if bread is not in the soil, no invention that human enginuity can devise can get bread out of it. In the economy of nature there is no waste, no destruction, no annihilation of elements, but a constant flux and reflux.

Let us consider this for a moment. There is no species of property, which we are accustomed to regard as so peculiarly, so exclusively and so indefeasibly our own, as the property we hold in the flesh that covers our bones.

We commonly look upon it as personal property of the highest order, and yet it may be logically and philosophically demonstrated that no greater fallacy could possibly be entertained, and that our individual tenure of that identical flesh, and of the bones inside it, so far from being a fee simple, undivided interest, is not even a life estate, out the merest temporary tenancy, and that upon very transient leases. Pythagoras held the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, the fundamental error of which, doubtless, was a heathenish confounding of the material with the spiritual part of man. Had Pythagoras stopped at the transmigration of bodies, his philosophy would have been nearer the literal truth. These mortal vestments of ours, are but the cast off clothing of other men and animals, both the living and the dead. Of them we might say with quite as much sincerity, and probably as much truth as the arch hypocrite, Iago, said of his purse—"who steals my *flesh*" "steals trash. 'Twas mine, 'tis his and has been slave to thousands." These atoms and particles of carbon and hydrogen and oxygen and nitrogen in which we robe ourselves to-day in all the pride and plenitude of personality, have come down to us from ages far beyond the flood, each with its own unconfused identity and distinct biography.

Hoary with an antiquity of unrecorded centuries and cycles past the power of numbers to compute, yet fresh with

immortal youth, eternal and indestructible save by a fiat as Omnipotent as that which created them, these atoms and particles with all their properties and qualities, their chemical affinities, their attractions and repulsions, their gravitation, their polarity, their luminous, calorific and electric vibrations, have through an infinitely varied series of combinations and dissolutions, decompositions and recompositions, supplied the material for all the generations of vegetable, animal and human life. Not an atom of them is lost, nor its place unknown to Omniscience.

One day in the brain of Shakespeare, the next, ascending in vapor to the clouds, the next falling in rain upon the sod; it may then be caught for a few years in the bony frame work of a grazing ox, and patiently awaiting the mouldering of its skeleton upon the soil, may pass through a grain of wheat to flash in the eye of beauty or strike with the arm of power.

And thus what was grass yesterday is flesh to-day, and what is flesh to-day will be grass again to-morrow. Such has been the constant order and sequence of nature ever since and long before Isaiah wrote "All flesh is grass." But it is no part of this inexorable law that the second crop of grass shall necessarily grow upon the same spot with the first. It is just as likely to sprout up on the opposite circumference of the globe, or to waste its verdure upon some unpeopled isle in mid-ocean. The labor of man is necessary; that labor at once provident, intelligent and unceasing, to control these accidents of nature, and to guide its dissolving fluxing and fertilizing elements to their proper destinations.

The principle that underlies and regulates this effort, is the simple one of justice. It recognizes in nature, not the slave of man bound to yield at his supreme mandate its unearned bounties, but his ally and copartner, requiring only the simple justice of an equivalent for what she yields him.

There is neither magic nor mystery in good husbandry. There is simply the plain downright justice of giving back to the soil the fertility of which it has been cropped. The best of farmers is he who takes heavy crops from his broad acres, and leaves them better than he found them.

It is in this aspect especially that agriculture, within a recent period, has been elevated from an art, and has attained the proportions and dignity of a science.

Science has to deal with facts—with the confirmed results of observations and experiments; and from a patient, methodical classification and analysis of those results, to rise to the investigation and discovery of principles and laws. Without facts to start with, established facts, facts varied and qualified by every possible condition and mode, facts tested and multiplied by every possible experiment, there can be no generalization, no induction, no discovery of law and consequently no prediction of science. Agriculture for several thousand years has made but little progress as an art, and as a science has only begun to exist within the memory of living men; and why? Because the contributions of new facts were few or none at all; because there were no organized systematic efforts to elicit such contributions or to collect these results, because each successive generation plodded on in the beaten path marked out by its predecessors, and rode to the mill with grain in one end of the bag and a stone in the other to balance, for no better reason than because somebody's grand-father had always ridden in the same way before him. The first step in the direction of elevating agriculture to a science of discovery and prediction was taken when the first agricultural society was organized. There are now nearly 1400 agricultural and horticultural societies, state and local in correspondence with a department of the National Government at Washington specially dedicated to the agricultural interests of the country. Journals and periodicals devoted to the same interests exclusively, now circulate a number of copies larger than the aggregate circulation of all the newspapers of every kind printed at the commencement of this century. Besides the agricultural Journals proper, nearly every newspaper printed in the city or country, whether daily or weekly, habitually assigns a liberal and leading place in its columns to agricultural topics. In addition to the state and local associations whose annual exhibitions of cattle and horses, sheep and hogs and poultry, and of farm and dairy, orchard and

garden products, with premiums offered for successful competition, have become the great rural exchange of our people. There have sprung up in many localities farmers clubs with more frequent meetings for interchange of views, comparison of experiences, and informal discussion of matters connected with their profession. Some of these clubs are kept up with so much interest and spirit that their proceedings are regularly reported for the public press, and read with eagerness and profit, by intelligent farmers throughout the country.

Such associations are of the highest value, and ought in every way be encouraged. Like everything else of real worth, they are not to be had without effort, nor properly sustained without continued exertion. They do not come of themselves. Farmers are not naturally gregarious. The very necessities of their occupation tends to scatter and isolate them. Deployed over the face of the earth at distant intervals, each one finds sufficient employment for his attention upon the acres that surround him; and the farmer's work you all know is never done. It is true that occasionally they are drawn together by law, politics or religion, but neither the church, the barbecue nor the court house can be converted into schools of agricultural improvement. Agricultural colleges with experimental farms attached, have been recently established, but they can accomplish no more for this special department than any other college, for any other learning which they teach; they can lay the foundation for an education, not complete it. This is pre-eminently the age of co-operation. Everybody else is combining, organizing, disciplining and drilling.

The farmers must do the same thing, or they will be left behind, imposed upon and victimized. Without these advantages of mutual aid, organized and disciplined movement which characterize the age we live in, the farmers while they imagine they are only attending to their own business, and letting well enough alone, will by and by discover that they are being driven, and sold, and fleeced like their own sheep. Take your great railway corporations for instance. They are really dependent on agriculture for the life blood that feeds them. Their lucrative freights, the enormous profits in which their bond and stockholders

participate, are nothing but the coiled sweat and toil of the farmers. But what has combination done for these great lines of communication? It has made them practically masters of the situation. Though the farmers out number and might out vote all other interests combined yet, because they have neglected to concentrate their strength, they are bound hand and foot all along the lines of these gigantic corporations, which extinguish all competition, silence all oppositions, control the legislation of great states, and in some instances the administration of justice itself. The struggles of these great rival lines to secure the contested through traffic, and thus make their monopolies still more complete and crushing, are carried on in merciless and arrogant disdain of the hapless way-freighters, at whose cost the unprincipled warfare is waged. The time has come for the farmers of the country to organize in self-defence against the ruinous tactics of these audacious coalitions. It is time for them to understand and assert their power, and with all the force of their numbers' intelligence and influence combined in disciplined and persistent effort demand the necessary legislation to remedy these abuses of monopoly. If state legislatures are powerless to correct the evil, then let Congress exercise its constitutional power, over commerce between the states, and enact a uniform tariff of freights, so much per ton per mile the whole country over, and thus put local and through freights upon the same equitable basis, and let through freights find their natural outlet over the shortest routes.

But there are other combinations almost equally formidable and oppressive to the farmer. although not legislated into the shape of bodies corporate. Why is it that there are times when the consumer has to pay extravagant prices for the necessaries of life, while for the same staples the farmer, who produces them can barely get a living price for his labor, and sometimes not even that? Let me not be misunderstood, I am about to make no onslaught upon the great trading classes of the country. The commission merchant is as necessary to the farmer as the mechanic, as necessary as the railroad. The farmer cannot be his own huckster, he must reach the consumer through middle-men, and these

middle-men are as fairly entitled to their reasonable profit as the farmer to his. It is only when the miller, the merchant and the broker from capitalists become speculators, and from speculators conspirators to take advantage of the necessities of both the producer and consumer, that a disturbing and dangerous element is introduced, which affects most disastrously the agricultural interests of the country. There is a class of opulent farmers whose accumulated wealth enables them to hold back their crops, and who are thus beyond the reach of the unprincipled intrigues. But the great majority are not capitalists, they are fighting the battle of life with all their forces in front, they have no reserves to call into action, or to fall back upon, when the pressure of onset is felt. No matter at what sacrifice, their crops and their cattle must move to market, forced down artificially though it be by the manipulations of confederate speculators, or visions of judgments, mortgages and the sheriff's hammer, haunt their dreams like spectres. Their humble barns are emptied sadly, mournfully and with tears, at prices which bitterly suggest the unrequited toil, hazard and privation of the year's labor which keep the children at home from school, and the mother in her old dress and bonnet. His little crop has gone into the plethoric warehouse of the speculator who can afford to await his own time and price, and his cattle are the property of a ring of monopolists. Bread and beef are still dear to the consumer, though the farmer has realized but little in producing them.

Here is a problem which legislation has grappled with time and again for centuries, and has at last given up in despair. The old common law misdemeanor of forestalling and regrating have long since become obsolete. Writing more than a century ago, Blackstone informs us in this connection that: "Combinations among victuallers or artificers to raise the price of provisions, or any commodities, or the rate of labor, are in many cases severely punished by particular statutes, and, in general, by statute 2 and 3 Edw. VI c. 15, with the forfeiture 10 l. or twenty days imprisonment, with an allowance of only bread and water for the first offence, 20 l. or the pillory for the second and, 40 l. for the third, or else the pillory, loss of one ear, and perpetual infamy.

In the same manner, by a constitution of the Emperor Zeno, all monopolies and combinations to keep up the price of merchandise, provisions or workmanship, were prohibited upon pain of forfeiture of goods and perpetual banishment. 4 com. 159.

If any laws of a similar tenor still exist upon the statute books of any of our States, they are practically a dead letter. Nobody ever heard of a Grand Jury indicting any of those operators, although they are as well known in every community as if they were marked under the old statute of Edward VI, with a cropped ear.

It is a question for serious consideration whether this evil, which legislation has proved utterly powerless to cope with, cannot be at least in some measure remedied by concert of action amongst the farmers. There seems to be no good reason why farmers should not be able by co-operative agencies to protect themselves from extortion and plunder as effectually as laborers and artisans. Factory operatives in Great Britain have formed themselves into joint stock companies with shares of moderate amount; and have for a long time, and with great success, carried on co-operative stores from which they draw their family supplies at fair prices, and realize the profit upon their own custom in the shape of handsome dividends. Not only stores, but large manufacturing enterprises have been established, and successfully worked upon the same principle, the laborer and the capitalist being united in the stock holder. Following out the same idea it would seem practicable for the farmers of a neighborhood to start a co-operative ware-house with sufficient capital to make advances upon produce deposited in pledge, which would give the farmer the benefit of the rise in price when he should choose his own time to sell, and at the same time, place him in funds to bridge over the anxious intervals. The interest upon those loans with storage and profit would pay all expenses if honestly and judiciously administered, and yield a moderate dividend. A good Board of Directors of the most substantial and reliable farmers in the concern, a frequent inspection and audit of accounts and frequent meetings of the stockholders would secure both an honest and judicious administration of the funds.

Other features might be united in this plan, such as that of a Mutual Insurance company, and a Mutual Building Association. Mutual Insurance Companies have long been established and are well known in all parts of the country. Building, Benefit or Homestead Societies have been recently multiplied in cities and towns to an astonishing extent. There are several hundreds of them in the city of Baltimore alone, in which all classes of the community are more or less interested, but principally mechanics and working men. They are based upon the same principle as the co-operative societies or unions already referred to, and result in making the tenant his own land-lord. The system by which this is accomplished is a very ingenious and artificial one, too elaborate in all its detail to be explained at length without tedious prolixity, but simple enough to be perfectly intelligible to the plainest understanding.

The sum and substance of it is to enable the stockholders by the payment of small weekly sums, not larger than the amount he would otherwise pay for the rent of his dwelling house, to redeem at the expiration of a term of years the mortgage held by the company upon the house, which he has purchased with the means advanced by his Building Society, and which thus becomes his own property instead of reverting to a landlord. The advantages of such a system, to the individual, as well as to society are obvious and important. The prospect of acquiring a home of his own is an ever-present incentive to exertion and frugality, and the payment of these weekly dues to the Building Society diverts hundreds of thousands of dollars from the corner dram shops. They are in fact the best Temperance Societies.

There is no reason why the advantages of such a system should be confined to the city or to the mechanics, and indeed it has already begun to be introduced among the farmers in some parts of Maryland. Through such agencies, farmers of moderate means might be enabled to put up improvements on their land of a better class than they would otherwise attempt. Their application to the condition and necessities of the rural districts would of course involve some modification of details, which are arranged with special reference to the dwellers in towns, but the underlying

principles and results would be the same and the outlines of the system identical.

I have one more suggestion to make of a practical character before I conclude. I take it for granted that in selecting for your orator on this occasion, a member of the bar, you have not expected to be enlightened much on the subject of farming. As every man in America is a natural born statesman, so every man thinks he is a born farmer, and no matter what his occupation may be, expects some day to retire from business and run a farm by way of recreation. But I can assure you that so far as I am concerned, I have not come here with the slightest idea of instructing you as to the proper rotation of crop or of teaching the ladies of Chester Co., how to put up butter. I have nothing to say about manures, soils, plows or reapers, I have no new fertilizer to advertise in this market, and am not the agent for anybody's patent horse medicine. Nor do I appear here in any official capacity, nor as a public functionary, either actual or potential, either in present or possible future tense. I am here in response to your call in my exalted capacity of a private citizen. As a member of the legal fraternity I take credit to myself for greet forbearance, and some modesty in having refrained, on so eligible an opportunity, from enlarging upon the indispensable importance of the legal profession to agriculture. I think it could have been made clear that farmers, so far from being the independent persons they are sometimes supposed to be, are in fact wholly dependent upon courts and lawyers, and courts are only lawyers sitting down instead of standing up. The strength of a

chain is only the strength of the weakest link in it, and if only one link in his chain of title can have a flaw picked in it by a lawyer, the farmer will find a Bill in Chancery or an Ejectment suit going through his possessions not quite so quickly as a steam plow, but a good deal more effectually.

Seriously, however, my friends, the remark with which I conclude is the close and intimate communion with nature in all her aspects and phases and phenomena, by which the cultivators of the soil are favored beyond all other classes of men, and which ought to inspire and teach to look "through Nature up to Natures God." The man whatever his occupation may be, whose highest aim is to feed and fatten his mortality is not fit for an agriculturist, except in that sense in which swine are agriculturists. With him, as with them, it is simply root pig and die. The profession of the husbandman is a favored one, its tendencies are naturally, to him who remembers that he has an intellect and a soul, elevating and noble. From that profession, more than all others combined, are drawn the rich imagery, the similes, the illustrations, the parables of Holy Writ. I feel that I cannot more profitably part from you than in the exact words of one of those impressive lessons in which the apostle Paul has swept into the track of his glowing and resistless logic the whole philosophy of agriculture.

"Be not deceived ; God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Gal. VI—7—8.

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