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FARMING RECOMMENDED TO YOUNG MEN.

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE FARMERS' CLUB,

IN LENOX, FEB. 21, 1854.

BY REV. NAHUM GALE.

LEE, MASS.:

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1854.

Lenox, Feb. 24, 1854.

REV. NAHUM GALE:

DEAR SIR,—It gives us pleasure to serve as a Committee to present you the thanks of the Farmers' Club, for the Address this day delivered; and to request a copy of the same for publication. In presenting this request, permit us to express the belief that the Address is timely to the wants of the community, and that its publication will be productive of good.

Very respectfully yours,

LUTHER BUTLER,
A. P. SMITH,
ALEXANDER HYDE.

Lee, Feb. 25, 1854.

GENTLEMEN,—It, in your judgment, my Address will in any measure subserve the Farming interest, it is at your disposal.

Be pleased to accept my thanks for your approbation of my humble services.

With the highest respect,

N. GALE.

MESSRS. LUTHER BUTLER,
A. P. SMITH,
ALEXANDER HYDE,

} Committee.

*In exchange
Meadville Theological School
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A D D R E S S .

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

OR rather, Ladies and Lords, as I will venture to call you, not without the sanction of high authority. For the word lord, according to Adam Clark, Cotton Mather, and others, is from two old Saxon words, one meaning "a loaf," and the other, "to supply." A lord, then, is a "supplier of bread." A farmer, surely, is a lord. And, according to the same authority, the word lady means a "distributor of bread." Who can deny that farmers' wives and daughters are ladies? In applying these high-sounding titles of honor to the members, active and honorary, of a Farmers' Club, I do not at all fear of detracting from the respectability of other professions; for we are all farmers, or the children of farmers. Lord Adam and Lady Eve were the first of this profession, who cultivated a large garden somewhere near the river Euphrates.

Their descendant, Noah, at the age of six hundred, "began to be an husbandman," and the homestead becoming too small for his increasing family, some of the younger branches "moved West," and so we are here.

We can thus, you see, all trace our descent from the first farmer, Adam. This was the employment which God assigned to man at his creation. We read, "The Lord took the man, and put him into the garden to dress

it and to keep it." This was while Adam was holy. Horticultural and agricultural labor, therefore, was no part of the curse, that followed the fall of man. Adam was assigned this work in the open air, in a garden, among trees, while he was pure in heart, and in fellowship with his Creator. Such labor, then, must have been for man's highest good. It was also honorable in the highest degree; for God would not have placed the noble being, created in his own image, and made lord of the lower creation, in a degraded situation.

The placing of Adam in Eden, that lovely spot, seems also to teach, that man was designed to dwell amid such scenes, that there was a fitness in his nature for the enjoyment of natural objects of beauty. Adam was directed to "dress and keep" the garden; which should remind us that God would have even Eden improved and adorned by the hand of man. It is not true, as some farmers seem to think, that it matters not how disorderly and deformed things appear about the house, and garden and fences, provided only they can fill their barns and their cellars. God made man to enjoy an earthly paradise,—to hear pleasant sounds, to see beautiful objects, to taste delicious fruits. It is worthy of notice, also, that the first intellectual work which was assigned to Adam, was connected with agriculture. We read, "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to the beast of the field." Thus the Lord, intending to make our first father an intelligent farmer, gave him immediately something to study. He told Adam to think out appropriate names for the animals. God did not tell

him what the names of the beasts and the birds should be, but he was made to study their structure, habits, and uses, and then give them names. And if he called each by a name as appropriate as the one he gave his wife, he exercised a better judgment, and purer taste, than many do even now in naming their children. No doubt the Eden farmer spent many a pleasant and thoughtful hour in studying the lion, the sheep, the ostrich, and the hen; and then they received their names. Truly, the first farmer was a thinking man.

Passing, now, from these facts respecting agriculture in Eden, we cannot fail to notice, that nations have advanced in strength, in moral worth, in a healthy civilization, and in all that constitutes the true glory of man, about in the ratio of their attachment to tilling and subduing the earth. And, on the other hand, they have become weak and degraded; have melted away, and been scattered and peeled as they have undervalued and neglected this first pursuit of man.

The patriarchs of good report were all farmers, or herdsmen. Lot, to be sure, went to a city to improve his fortune, but it was the great mistake of his life. He soon lost all his property, and well nigh made a moral wreck of his entire family. God took special care to make his chosen people agriculturalists. He gave in Canaan every family a piece of land, which could not be alienated. The best days of Israel were under the reign of her shepherd king, when the valleys were covered with corn, and the cattle grazed upon a thousand hills. The true glory of the nation began to depart when Solomon formed a commercial partnership with Hiram, and imported with "the navy of Tarshish," "gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks."

The best leaders of Israel, both in church and state, were selected from the tillers of the soil, and the keepers of flocks. David exchanged his crook for a sceptre; and Elisha, when called to be a prophet, was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen.

In the early years of the Roman republic, the citizens were divided into classes, and those employed in agriculture ranked first. Seven acres of land were allowed to each farmer. From the sturdy yeomanry on these little farms were selected the civil and military officers of the state. The Romans were such an agricultural people, that they named "their noble families after the bean, the pea, the lentile, vetches, and other plants; retaining the sobriety, frugality, and all the rigid virtues of a life in the fields. These are the people to suffer a censorship, in which every licentious and effeminate habit shall expose the subject to a public degradation." These were the puritans of the old Pagan world. "Cato dined upon bread baked by his wife, and turnips boiled by himself." Then, Rome was free and prosperous. In after ages, when luxury had corrupted the young men, and agriculture was despised, and given up to an ignorant and degraded peasantry, the people lost all manly vigor, and sunk down into the grave of nations. In the Eastern world, at the present day, we see a miserable, squalid, half-starved population, neglecting a soil that agriculture might make as the garden of the Lord. But the people will not till the ground, and the Government protects nothing but its own tyranny. So the valleys of the Jordan lie waste, while Israelite beggars are swarming in the streets of Jerusalem. If the East could be settled by an independent yeomanry, so that every man might sit beneath his own vine and fig tree, the land of the patriarchs would again become a goodly land,—a land flowing with milk and honey.

The importance attached to the farmer's calling in this Commonwealth by the Representatives of the people, may be seen by two facts. Since 1831, the County Agricultural Societies have received from the State treasury, for the encouragement of agriculture, more than \$125,000. And recently, a Board of Agriculture has been established, and a permanent secretary employed, to devote his whole time to the furtherance of the farming interest. What other business or profession has such favors from the State?

But it is time to leave these general remarks upon the importance of agriculture, and its influence upon national prosperity, for something more directly practical. With this view, allow me to offer, for your consideration, some thoughts upon the advantages of agriculture to young men, as a means of livelihood. I would not forget that "the profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the field." Yet, my remarks will have special reference to the sons of farmers. I would commend this occupation of their fathers to their special notice, that they may appreciate it more highly, and be less inclined to leave it for other secular callings.

1. Agriculture commends itself to young men, especially to farmers' sons, as a means of securing good health and long life.

That farmers are more healthy and longer lived than any other class, is a truth well known. From 1843 to 1851, the average duration of human life in this Commonwealth was as follows:—Farmers, 64.02; Merchants, 46.01; Mechanics, 46.12; Professional Men, 48.45: average age of all, 51.94. From this table it appears that farmers live, on an average, eighteen years longer than the average of the entire male population of the State. The open air, the vigorous exercise, the wholesome food,

the quiet sleep, the regular life of the farmer, give him a great advantage, as respects health, over all other classes in the community.

2. The pursuits of Agriculture are also favorable to the healthy action of the mind. It is a significant fact, that in our Retreats for the Insane, the occupation of the patients is always gardening and tilling the soil. This work is best adapted to restore a healthy tone to the body, and thus it "ministers" to the "mind diseased."

Farming is also favorable to the development of the sane mind. I am aware that the farmer can be ignorant, and live almost as free from thought as the plow he follows, but his occupation demands constant and varied mental exercise. To conduct the various operations of agriculture on a New England farm, there must be planning and contriving—the adaptation of means to ends. The farmer needs to observe accurately, to watch various processes and results, which conduces to the habit of thinking carefully, soberly, and with good common sense. All trades and occupations that require men to do only one thing, and bring large numbers to act under the direction of one leading mind, are unfavorable to mental strength and comprehensiveness.

The weaver who tends a power-loom needs but little mental work to keep his hands employed. Another builds his mill and his loom, buys his wool and sells his cloth. If his loom is out of repair, he stands idle till another's skill puts it in order. All he has to do is to watch the threads of the warp, that they keep in place, and fill the shuttle with the material which forms the woof. This business is the same thing to-day that it was yesterday,—the same this year that it was last. Now put this weaver on to the land, and let him learn to do all kinds of farm-work,—to raise all kinds of produce,—to

adapt his crops and his culture to the various soils of his farm, and the varied seasons as they pass,—let him find his own market and make his own bargains, and will not this mode of life make him more of a man?

A few years ago, we were told that there were twenty trades in making a pin. In the division of labor, every pin passed through twenty hands before it was ready for the market. What must have been the grasp and expansion of a man's intellect who was the twentieth part of a pin-maker? In Europe, large companies of men are employed in making children's toys. One paints dolls' eyes. Ever since he can remember, he has done nothing else,—he knows how to do nothing else,—he expects to do this one thing to the end of his life. This is the mighty work that calls forth his intellectual powers! His thoughts, his plans, his cares, and his anxieties, so far as his business is concerned, are all centered in this object,—to give the fascinating languor, the bewitching ogle to the eye of a child's doll!

How different the work of the farmer! He lives in the laboratory of Nature,—interesting phenomena are continually passing before him,—he is called to change his thoughts, his plans, and his labors, as the seasons come and go. If his mind is not developed, the fault is not in his occupation.

3. Again; Agriculture commends itself to the young man, because it is favorable to virtue. It is well known that an agricultural population is the most free of all classes from the vices that call for the exercise of civil authority. Rural districts are seldom visited by the disorderly and the lawless, who disturb the quiet of the street and the dwelling. And where do morals that are of good report most flourish? Is it not where the farm-

house peeps forth from behind green trees, in the valley, or crowns the verdant hill-side ?

The influence of land-holding upon character is highly salutary. The man who builds a cottage, and lays out his garden around it, and plants there trees and shrubs, thereby gives bonds to society for his good behavior. By owning land, he becomes a substantive in the community. He has a deeper interest in the preservation of good order—in the promotion of the public good.

It might be easily shown that a farming community have not the temptation to vice, or the facilities for practising it, that they have who dwell in the crowded street. In our rural districts, then, we must look for the lingering of a puritan morality; and when virtue flees from the fireside of the farmer, she departs from the abodes of man.

“ God made the country, and man made the town ;
 What wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threatened in the fields and groves.”

4. I am persuaded, also, that Agriculture might be shown to be a lucrative employment, if books were kept, and the profits of farming accurately calculated. One farmer tells us that “grass will yield thirteen per cent. on the investment.” And corn, at fifty cents a bushel, can be raised with six per cent. profit on the capital, after paying all expenses.

The first Report of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture presents some statements from farmers, as to the profits of their business, which are very contradictory; and show that they all cannot be based on an accurate induction of facts. One says “the profits of farming are

very small; very many of the farmers say that they are not over one per cent., but I have ventured to say as high as two or three." Another practical farmer gives it as his opinion, "based upon his own experience," that the profits of farming are "ten per cent., after paying all expenses and labor." Another farmer shows that pork can be fattened at a profit of "more than eleven per cent. on the outlay." "There can be a profit," says another, "of seventy-five per cent. realized on native fowls."

Taking all the answers returned as to the profits of all branches of farming, "the average in the State is a little over four-and-a-half per cent." These returns show, beyond a question, that most of them are mere guesses.

To induce you, if possible, to investigate this subject more accurately, I will present a few items from the Census Returns. According to these,

The Farms in Massachusetts in 1850 were worth \$109,076,347					
Farming Implements,	-	-	-	-	3,209,584
Stock,	-	-	-	-	9,647,700
Total,					<hr/> \$121,933,631

This is the capital invested. The annual value of agricultural products in Massachusetts, as estimated by a careful farmer, from the Census Returns, cannot be less than \$16,000,000, without reckoning the value of the wood grown, which must be a large sum.

It cannot be denied that figures may deceive, but they are full as reliable as guesses. Compare the profit of farming with that of other occupations, and what are the results?

As to the profits of manufacturing, it is known that forty of the principal manufacturing companies in New England, with an aggregate capital of \$33,000,000, divi-

ded less than seven per cent. per annum for the ten years previous to 1849: while thirteen of the companies, with \$8,000,000 capital, made less than five per cent.; and many smaller establishments either lost money or failed.

Gen. H. A. S. Dearborn, for nearly twenty years collector of the port of Boston, made the following statement in an address, at an Agricultural meeting in the State House, in 1840:—"The chances of success in trade are much less numerous, and are more uncertain, than men generally believe, or are willing to allow. After an extensive acquaintance with business men, and having long been an attentive observer of the course of events in the mercantile community, I am satisfied that, among one hundred merchants and traders, not more than three, in this city, ever acquired independence. * * * Infinitely better, therefore, would it be for a vast portion of our young men who leave the country for the city, if they could be satisfied with a farmer's life. How preferable would it have been for many of those who have sought distinction in cities, if they had been satisfied with the comforts, innocent amusements, and soothing quietude of the country."

In Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, it is stated, that of one hundred traders on Long Wharf, in 1800, only five remained at the end of forty years. The rest had failed, or died destitute. It is further stated, that "of one thousand, having accounts at the Massachusetts Bank, in 1800, only six remained in 1840. All the nine hundred and ninety-four had failed or died in poverty." "Out of one hundred estates settled at the Probate Court at Boston, ninety were insolvent."

Nor are mercantile pursuits any safer in other cities. "It is asserted that but one eminent merchant has ever continued in active business, in the city of New York, to

the close of a long life, without undergoing bankruptcy, or a suspension of payments in some one of the various crises through which the country has passed." "In Philadelphia, the number of merchants that have succeeded in business, taking a period of twenty-five years, is estimated at one per cent.; and in New York at two per cent. only."

Admitting that some of these statements are "newspaper facts," still they have been made by respectable periodicals, and by men of extensive information and undoubted veracity, and have not been contradicted from any quarter.

This is the business of "glorious uncertainty," for which boys are leaving school before they are half educated, and farms on which their fathers would rejoice to make them independent. It is not long since a firm in Boston "advertised for a clerk, and at the end of twenty-four hours, there had been two hundred and eighty-seven applicants."

Now how is it with farmers? Do they succeed no better? An intelligent gentleman tells us, that out of eighteen cases of bankruptcy, and eighteen of insolvency, which had come to his knowledge, only one individual was a farmer, and he paid one hundred cents on a dollar, and had something left. Not a bad failure, surely. The Hon. Mr. Denny, of Westboro', some years since, examined the bankrupt list in the office of the Secretary of State, and found, among the eleven hundred and twelve bankrupts in this Commonwealth, during eleven months, only fourteen were called farmers; and he found, on inquiry, that three of the fourteen did not fail by farming, and he doubted whether any of the number did. Another gentleman tells us, that out of one hundred farmers in the circle of his acquaintance, there has not been a failure for forty years. Can this be said of one hundred men in any other business during an equal number of years? The

opinion has been publicly expressed by a man of sound judgment, that, "Take two thousand young men, and let one thousand attend to farming, and the other one thousand attend to mercantile business, and in twenty years the farmers will, in the aggregate, accumulate the most property." The Hon. Mr. Calhoun, late Secretary of State for Massachusetts, gives it as his opinion, that "farming business is more profitable, if carried on with spirit and enterprise, than any other business; and that a larger proportion of farmers succeed in their business than of any other profession."

The profits of agriculture are so certain and constant, that, in a series of years, it has the advantage of the lucky and unlucky years of other business. When the commercial crisis comes, and telegraph wires tremble from city to city with the sad tidings of wrecked fortunes,—when the principal and the indorser, the insurer and the insured, go down together by some sweeping fraud or fire, the farmer's feet stand firm on his broad acres. The solid earth beneath him has not slid away. His stock in his barn is at par. His bank of loam pays large dividends. He sleeps soundly, for come what may in the tumultuous world of business, his title is good to solid capital, extending down four thousand miles, till he meets the boundary of the tea-field of his neighbor the Chinese, and upward to the top of the atmosphere, at least forty-five miles.

Well may a man in this condition live twelve years longer than his fellow-citizens of other professions. The history of every town in the Commonwealth may be examined,—statistical tables may be compared,—the testimony of the best judges be taken,—the results of observation be consulted, and the united verdict of all will be, that farmers, as a body, have more independence, better health, longer life, fewer vexations, more leisure time, and

more real comforts of life, than any other class of equal numbers.

Notwithstanding these truths, agriculture is very unpopular with young men. Old Massachusetts has agricultural tastes and habits. Young Massachusetts loves to trade and speculate,—“operate,” as the phrase is. There are many young men who would not take as a gift a good farm in the vicinity of a large town, and obligate themselves to cultivate it through life. They will not live on a farm upon any conditions. Young men, who might begin farming at the age of twenty-one, with a competence, even at that early age will quit the soil as if the miasma of death arose from the turf. Leaving their grey-haired fathers to break down under their weight of cares, young men, in the delirium of hope, desert the farm, and rush into some business already overdone, and well-nigh ruined by competitors. They will run any hazards, incur all risks of health, and life, and moral character, in desperate enterprises, air-born speculations, and reckless fortune-hunting, rather than endure the moderate labor, and receive the certain gains of the husbandman.

But it is time to inquire for the causes of this aversion to agriculture, on the part of young men, even those who are sons of farmers.

1. The retirement and quiet of the farmer's life is one reason why it is not agreeable to many young men. There is not enough noise and excitement on the farm to suit their tastes. There is not company, and talk, and sport enough there, to make the evenings pleasant. There is a great love among the young for the localities and pursuits connected with the din of the street, and the hum of the shop,—with the fun and frolic of the merry company,—with the novelty of city sight-seeing, and the luxury and dissipation of life “in town.” This kind of life, where one

can be relieved from the burden of himself,—can enjoy the evening theatre, and the Sabbath ride,—can be carried along life by relays of novelties and change of entertainments, holds out great attractions to many a youth, impatient it may be of wholesome parental restraint, and eager to quaff life's cup of pleasure while it sparkles at the brim.

2. Another cause for this aversion to farming is found in the regularity and slowness of its gains. There is a passion among young men to become suddenly rich. Propose to a young man a business that is sure, yet promises only moderate returns, and he is one of a thousand if he will engage in that business. He has heard of fortunes made in a year, or in a month, and he is looking for such a ticket in life's lottery. Many are making haste to be rich. Young men seem to think they are doing nothing to any purpose unless they are coining money. They are impatient to "operate," and what charms for them have the "old oaken bucket," and the "deep-tangled wild-wood?"

Can we not perceive a change, within a few years, in the minds of young men, respecting the accumulation of property? When some of us were boys, young men served long apprenticeships,—"gave away" many years to learn a trade, and were contented to begin active life when "out of their time," in a moderate and safe way. The foundation of many fortunes was thus laid, and what is more, the foundation of a good business and moral character was laid at the same time. But now, young men are in such a hurry, that they cannot stop to learn a trade, or to gather the fruits of farming upon a young man's capital. They want to begin where their fathers end. They must have a fortune at once. Formerly, many were well satisfied with a business that supported a family,

and added a little annually to their capital. How few at the present time look upon such a condition as prosperity. "Ten thousand a-year," "a heap" of gold-dust, is the prize that fills the eye of "Young America."

Farming can promise no such rapid accumulation. Its returns are comparatively moderate, as an offset to their certainty. Farming has no great prizes to be scrambled after, or to be gambled for. It is a "slow and sure" business, promising an honest livelihood this year, competence by and by, and independence when grey hairs begin to thicken. From such a business many young men turn away with disgust. To think of being industrious and economical for a number of years before they can be rich, is a thought that chills their hot blood. With them it must be something or nothing, and that speedily. "Make or break," is their business motto. Hence the rage for speculation in Eastern lumber, Western land, city lots under water, fancy stocks, and gold digging.

3. Still another cause for the unpopularity of farming, and one more honorable to young men, has been assigned. "It is the neglect among farmers to make their homes pleasant and attractive." A writer in an agricultural periodical has expressed some thoughts on this subject, which are worthy of serious attention. He says,—

"Everything about the farmer's home exerts a controlling influence upon the hearts of the young. In the city, a thousand things attract and interest: in the country, home is, or should be, the point of attraction,—the load-stone of life, and there the affections should be made to centre, and the social virtues congregate. However humble the dwelling, if it have a pleasing form, good proportion or symmetry—qualities which add nothing to the cost of building, depending solely on the good judgment and taste of him who builds: and if the grounds about

are tastefully planned and planted with trees and flowering shrubs, with some of our charming climbing roses and vines interspersed; depend upon it, you have a strong hold upon the boys,—they will seldom wander from such a home, except to plant one for themselves. Where these attachments to home are wanting,—where there is no external sign of beauty to awaken love in the young, there you may look for a dislike of farming and rural life.”

4. To these causes I will venture to add one more. The young man on the farm is apt to think, that if he is a farmer, he shall not receive that consideration from others that he can secure in other business.

If this were so, I could not find it in my heart to censure a young man of refined sensibilities and noble aims, for desiring to leave an inferior position in society. But it is not true that the young farmer is neglected, and looked down upon by those whose good opinion and whose company is worth having. Let the young man on the farm possess intelligence and moral worth; let him cultivate the social qualities that fit one for society, and there is no social circle so good, that he will not be welcomed to it,—no post of honor so high, that he may not aspire to it. True, the young man on his father's farm may not at once find himself duly appreciated by those who “learn the art of talking rather than of thinking;” but let him be patient, and my word for it, he will find his level, and so will others.

Dr. Hitchcock, of Amherst College, once said to farmers, “Fluency in conversation is often in the inverse ratio of the amount of ideas in the mind; and men often talk much, not because they are full of thoughts, but because they are destitute of them, just as a stream bubbles most which has the least water in it.”

A young man may get into notice too soon, ripen too

early, live too fast. The man at sixteen is in danger of being a boy all the rest of his days. Many receive all the consideration society has to bestow, and have all the influence they are ever able to acquire, before they are twenty-five. Still, a mistaken view of what it is to rise in the world, doubtless turns many from the plow to other callings.

These, and some other causes of minor importance, are making the farm unpopular with the sons of farmers. The rural districts slide into the village,—the village in turn helps to swell the large town, and the town pours its population into the metropolis, which, like the ocean, swallows up all its tributaries, and is never full. The changes that are taking place in many rural towns of New England cannot but be noticed by the observing; and cannot fail to start sad reflections in the minds of the thoughtful.

Look at Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella, according to Prescott, “evidently relied on agriculture as the main-spring of national prosperity.” But Spain has degenerated, and agriculture and character have gone down together. You will now find “extensive districts smitten with the curse of barrenness, where the traveller scarcely discerns the vestige of a road, or of a human habitation, but which then teemed with all that was requisite to the sustenance of populous cities in their neighborhood.”

The land of our fathers, though eminent in the art of agriculture, has undergone some changes in her rural population that must affect unfavorably the farming community. It is said that the soil of Old England, a hundred years ago, was owned by three hundred thousand proprietors. As Goldsmith sings, in his “Deserted Village:”

“A time there was, ere England’s woes began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man.”

But the few have since bought out the many: and now the soil of England is owned by only thirty-two thousand landlords. On an average, each has three hundred and five acres. The children of former landholders are now laborers on the very estates their fathers owned. No wonder that ignorance, poverty, and vice, prevail to an alarming extent. Let us take warning.

There are parts of New England even now to which the poet's words, with a slight variation, will apply—

“Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,—
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
 And desolation saddens all thy green.
 One only master grasps the whole domain,
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.”

In some towns, the number who own the soil is diminishing. Farm is joined to farm. One buys out his neighbor, and sending him to “the West,” or to “the village,” puts a tenant into the vacant house. He who kept twenty cows last year, keeps thirty this year, and hopes soon to keep forty; while foreign laborers, in the field and in the house, take the place of native-born sons and daughters.

Where farms are not thus run together, when the old farmer dies, his children sell the homestead to a stranger, who is too often inferior to the former occupant; and he, in turn, will probably sell to one socially, intellectually, and morally inferior to himself. The result of these changes can be seen at a glance. The supporters of gospel institutions become few, disheartened, and perhaps penurious. The rural church, once well filled, is almost deserted, while the fields and woods are roamed over on the Sabbath by those who “remember” the day only as one of visiting and carousal. The school dwindles, social

life degenerates, and all the dearest interests of society suffer. Improvement is out of the question, because all that is capable of improvement is elsewhere.

And is there no remedy for these evils? It seems to me there is, at least a partial remedy. We are educated into our opinions and tastes on many subjects, why, then, may not education work a change in the opinions and feelings of young men in relation to farming? Education, rightly directed, would not fail to modify the views of the young respecting life,—its object and its blessings, and the means of securing them. Beginning at the right place in the process of education, it does not seem impossible to induce young men of good talents to remain on the soil which their ancestors cleared, and which was the scene of their own youthful sports.

Cannot the young be taught to regard the objects of education something more and nobler than to teach them how to compete with rivals in a profession crowded almost to starvation; or to elbow their way into business ruinously overdone? “I hope,” said one to Rothschild, “that your children are not too fond of money and business to the exclusion of more important things. I am sure you would not wish that.” “I am sure I should wish that,” replied the banker, “I wish them to give mind, and soul, and heart, and body, and everything to business; that is the way to be happy.”

This is the doctrine practically taught in many families of our land. Let this pernicious error be early discarded; and let rational and scriptural views of life be taught, “line upon line,” by precept and by example, in that first and best school, the family. Let farmers teach their sons as John Higginson taught the second generation at Salem: “If any man among us make religion as twelve and the world as thirteen, let such an one know he hath neither

the spirit of a true New England man, nor yet of a sincere Christian." "I confess," says a modern writer on Political Economy, "I am not charmed with the ideal of life held out by those who think that the normal state of human beings is that of struggling to 'get on;' that the trampling, crushing, elbowing and treading on each other's heels, which form the existing type of social life, are the most desirable lot of human kind, or anything but the disagreeable symptoms of one of the phases of industrial progress."

What youth, with a true Puritan education, can be "charmed" with such an "ideal of life?" Who can regard it as the "highest style of man?"

If we would keep a desirable number of young men on the green fields, we must teach them also to have resources within themselves,—to love to think, to see a charm in the wonderful and the beautiful of nature.

It is a remarkable fact, that men of liberal education, for the most part, are fond of agriculture. Many clergymen have cultivated land,—some, it is to be feared, at the expense of their mental culture and professional study. Others, when no longer able to work efficiently in "God's husbandry," have wisely retired to small farms,

"To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose."

"I, who am old and emeritus," says Martin Luther, "would prefer now to take an old man's pleasure in gardening, and in contemplating the wonders of God in trees, flowers, herbs, and birds."

Many physicians love to experiment on the soil; and almost all our eminent statesmen retire to some rural retreat, to spend the noon-day leisure of active life, and

the evening of old age. Witness Mount Vernon and the Hermitage, Ashland and Marshfield.

In view of such facts as these, can it be doubted that the sons of farmers,—youth of noble minds, rich in social and moral worth, may be educated so as to love the hills and valleys of Hampshire and Berkshire? Is there no power in the teaching of the family, the common school, the academy, and the college, to deck with beauty the velvet lawns, vocal groves, purling brooks, and silvery lakes of Western Massachusetts?

We must insist, too, on the dignity of farming, and its importance to the community, if we would make it popular with farmers' sons. No young man of generous impulses and high aims will wish to spend his days in an inferior calling.

Let it be impressed upon the young, that, by the verdict of mankind, agriculture is the most dignified employment in which man can engage. We have seen that,

“In ancient times, the sacred plow employed
The kings, and awful fathers of mankind:
And some, with whom compared, your insect tribes
Are but the beings of a summer's day,
Have held the scale of empire, ruled the storm
Of mighty war, then, with unweary hand,
Disdaining little delicacies, seized
The plow, and greatly independent lived.”

Nor has this ceased to be true. Our Presidents, when their term of office expires, generally retire to farms, and their laurels do not fade on their green fields. But what should we say of an Ex-President, who, on leaving the chair of state, should open a grocery store, or a broker's office in New York? The incongruity between the dignity of the man and his business, would provoke in us all

more than a smile. But these men, whom the people delight to honor, may raise corn and potatoes, "Durham cows" and "Berkshire swine," and be as "honorable men" as when they lived in the "White House" at Washington.

Who can doubt that the farmer's calling is honorable? He sustains the industrial interest, which Napoleon regarded as "the soul and first basis of the empire."

Shall I now sketch a course of life, which it seems to me might be made attractive to a young man? A son of a farmer, in good circumstances, attends school in the winter till he is seventeen. If he has the advantages of a High school or Academy, at that age he can be fitted for College. He spends four years in his collegiate course, at an expense to his father of a thousand dollars. The young man, at twenty-one, is graduated. He is a scholar of respectable standing,—has a well-disciplined mind and a cultivated taste. He is familiar with Geology, Chemistry, Botany, and kindred sciences. Having no decided adaptation for professional life, he retires to his father's farm. He reads and writes on agriculture. He analyzes soils, and applies his knowledge to the improvement of land. The increased productiveness of the farm soon creates a fund to pay the expenses of his education. He plants fruit trees. The hedge soon circles his paternal dwelling. He teaches the honeysuckle to creep over the front-door. The huge rock, from which he jumped so often, when a boy, is soon covered with a grape vine, whose purple clusters astonish the neighbors, who have not yet ceased to laugh at "book farming."

A colonade of elms or maples rises along the avenue, which leads from the road to the old farm-house, now repaired and painted. The evergreen here and there, through the long winter, reminds the family of beauty

departed from the face of Nature, and gives promise of its return. The book of History, the Review, the Newspaper, make the winter evening short. The healthful labors in the open air, the application of knowledge to trees, and flowers, and soils, and stock, gives wings to summer hours. With a sound mind in a sound body, what can prevent this man from enjoying life as well as is consistent with his highest spiritual good? Nothing, surely, but a wicked heart, which will spoil even the joys of Paradise.

But it is not the whole of life to live. We should have some higher aim than merely to have a pleasant home and enjoy life. The question, therefore, is pertinent, Might such a young farmer, as has been described, be useful to the community? Eminently useful, beyond a doubt. Every town needs just such men. Most rural towns are suffering, to-day, in all their dearest interests, for the want of men of this character. Such an intelligent, thoroughly-educated farmer could take the oversight of schools, and thus relieve overburdened professional men. A clergyman recently told me, that he spent sixty days in one year, acting as school committee. The educated farmer might do a part, at least, of this work. He might act, too, as a justice of the peace, and thus be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well. Upon such a gentleman, "Farmers' Clubs" and "Young Men's Associations" might call for a lecture; and thus relieve some metropolitan divine from the pressure of seven hundred invitations to lecture, in a single winter. Such a man would honor his native town as their representative to the "Great and General Court;" or he might be a Senator, to whom the title of Honorable would not be misapplied. He could do his own thinking at the seat of Government, and perhaps help others, not to their

injury or to that of the Commonwealth. We need, in our halls of legislation, men of this character,—men of honest ends and comprehensive views,—as the Germans would call them, “all-sided.”

One or two such farmers could be useful in every school district. They would build up and adorn society. They would be free from small prejudices,—would take sound, comprehensive, and far-seeing views of interests relating to schools, the town, the religious society, and public affairs in general. If such a man were a true Christian, as he should be, he would be a pillar in the Church. He would gather around him a class of youth in the Sabbath school, and many a young man would “rise up and call him blessed.”

As I view the matter, such men would be worth to a town more than the cost of their education at the public charge. It would be a good investment for a town to keep two or three promising youth at school and at college all the time, provided they would return at the age of twenty-one, and settle on farms in their native town.

But it is not to be presumed that the education of farmers' sons will, in many cases, be carried so far as this; though many might be thus educated, if farmers thought so, and appreciated a thorough education according to its true value. Yet, supposing the son does not go to college, let him discipline his mind and cultivate his taste in the academy; let him attend the lectures of Professors of Agriculture; let him study long enough to develop a fondness for learning, a thirst for knowledge, a love of thought. Keep the son at school till he has acquired a little relish for retirement and for reading, and has corrected his false notions of life; and a part of our young yeomanry will remain at home,—will make their fathers' places good, yea, more than good.

This secured, much will be done to raise agriculture in the public estimation, and to improve the intellectual, social, and moral condition of the whole community. It is time for the farmer to magnify his calling. By earnest efforts after knowledge, by a deep interest in public improvements, by having a large heart and a liberal hand, he must show himself a man.

The New England farmer occupies a high and responsible position; let him remember that corresponding obligations are upon him. Let him watch the first symptoms of degeneracy among the tillers of the soil, and apply the most effectual remedies that his wisdom can devise; lest some poet, moralizing on the decay of society, shall sing over these hills and along these valleys,

“ Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.”

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