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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

AT THEIR

ANNUAL EXHIBITION

HELD AT

SPRINGTOWN, OCTOBER 7TH, 1859,

BY

14 ✓
Sidney George Fisher,

OF PHILADELPHIA.

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ADDRESS.

AGAIN the mellow autumn months have come. The harvest is over. The crops have been gathered or are matured, and the result of the year's labor is known. It has been a bountiful season in all the fruits of the earth. The country throughout its wide borders has been blessed with plenty, and the toils of the farmer have drawn from the soil wealth, which has revived the drooping energies of all other pursuits and inspired confidence in a prosperous future, after a period of calamity and depression. The toils of the farmer; the commerce, the manufactures, the varied business of the nation, depend upon him.

I was glad to receive the invitation of "The Montgomery County Agricultural Society," to meet you here to-day. I knew that I should address practical farmers; men whose hands are familiar with the plough and the pitch-fork, though they cultivate their own land; who know something more of the soil and its crops than by paying for the labor of others; who know what earth means, what grass and grain mean, by actual work, the only way of getting real knowledge of anything. Men who are in contact with the reality, who are engaged in the hand to hand struggle with nature, to subdue her, to find out her secrets, to make her forces their servants, and her wealth their inheritance. There is an old proverb which says, "The roof fights with the storm, but those below know not of it." The comfort, the elegance, the luxury of life come out of the land. They are brought out of it by the labors of the farmer. What those labors are, you know well enough. But those who dwell in towns, who fare sumptuously and go richly clad every day, who accept as a

matter of course, as if they grew spontaneously, the abundant meals, the woollen and cotton cloths, the rich carpets and beautiful stuffs that adorn their homes, they do not understand so well how it is that they enjoy these things. How much hard work is necessary, how much wet work, hot work and cold work, to fill the shops and markets of a great city. They are like the cabin passengers in a steamer, who lie luxuriously on their sofas, without thinking much of the engineers, the firemen and stokers and sailors who bear the heat of the furnace and face the tempest. Yet but for these, the passengers would have no cabin to lie in, would not indeed be at sea at all.

Work—yes, there is a good deal of hard work on a farm. But it is pleasant, manly, healthy work in the open air, in the free fields and woods, amid the beautiful scenes of nature. Labor is the primeval curse and the necessity for labor, the inexorable condition of humanity, to toil to live, has its bitter aspect. But without this necessity there would be no labor nor any of its beautiful and noble results. Where nature is prodigal, man is idle, as in tropical climates, where the people live in savage indolence, content with the supply of their animal wants, obtained without toil. Out of this curse of labor therefore springs a blessing to temper its hardship. Who would wish to live without work, work of the hand or work of the brain? What a dull thing would be an idle world. It is not idleness that society requires, but plenty of well rewarded work for all its members and the ideal state for a civilized people, is that in which diversified occupation is furnished for every sort of talent, in all spheres of effort, from the humblest hewer of wood or digger of the soil, who has nothing but his body to work with, up to the artist, the philosopher and the poet, who give to life its highest dignity and charm, by the discovery of truth and the creation of beauty. Labor is its own reward. There is the reward not merely of bread or profit, but pleasure in the work itself; pleasure in action, pleasure in the result, the thing done. The higher the labor, the more important is the result and the greater the enjoyment. Intellectual work is the most delightful, and its productions the most precious. Just so much as the mind labors with the body is the dignity and pleasure of labor increased and its achievements enhanced in value.

As society advances, labor becomes more and more blended with thought and knowledge, and we see the effects of this union in the triumphs of industrial art which distinguish the present time ; in the steamer, the railway, the telegraph, and the machinery that works for us with the strength of millions of men. The present condition of the world is founded on science and its results. Civilized society rests upon machinery and the knowledge that made it, and if deprived of these, would soon return to barbarism.

In no department of industry is the value of scientific knowledge and improved machinery more apparent than in agriculture. When farming was ignorant and rude, so were farmers. They worked with the body only, and that sort of work could not supply even their physical wants. They were clowns. Their houses were hovels, their food was coarse, unwholesome and scanty, their raiment scarcely sufficed for warmth, did not suffice for decency and cleanliness. The earth refused to give them her riches, gave them a bare support, wrung from her with incessant and cheerless toil. The farmer was a slave, the victim of the priest and the soldier, and in some of the wealthiest parts of Europe, where now the land is covered with abundant crops and the abodes of wealth and refinement, a wretched and barbarous population could scarcely subsist.

It is not however only in rude and ignorant times that agriculture is rude and ignorant. Various causes may depress it below the level of the rest of the people, and farms and farmers may be poor and wretched, whilst wealth glitters in courts and capitals, and armies return from fields of battle with flags of victory. An eminent writer thus describes the country population in France in the beginning of the last century, the brilliant age of Louis IV. "We behold, throughout the country," said La Bruyere, "a set of ferocious looking creatures, both male and female, dark, livid and scorched by the sun, bound to the land where they dig and grub with untiring pertinacity: their voice has a resemblance to that of man, and when they rise on their feet they exhibit a human countenance; they are in fact men. At night they retire to dens where they live on black bread, water and roots." Do you recognize this picture? Is there anything like it in Montgomery County, in Pennsylvania? Yet

this was the condition of the agricultural population of France a little more than one hundred years ago, at a period too of national glory, of victory and power, of luxury and refinement, of literature, art and commerce. And why were farmers and farming thus ignorant and poor, untouched by the progress around them? The reason is told in one word,—centralization. The wealth of the country went to the city, and was there spent and consumed. It went to maintain armies and war, and was wasted. It did not go back to the country in any shape. All that rough labor could produce from an exhausted soil was necessary to support the unproductive splendor of the court and the unproductive employment of the army. The artisans and manufacturers of France, whose skill and industry would have contributed more than its commerce to the improvement of the soil, were banished by the tyrannical revocation of the edict of Nantes. Centralized power had destroyed liberty, centralized consumption and expenditure had produced poverty. Population diminished, the land became poorer and poorer, farms were let at twenty cents per acre, starvation spread through the country, and a cotemporary writer thus speaks of it in 1739:—"We have the present certainty that misery has become general to an unheard of degree. While I write, in the midst of a profound peace, with indications of an average harvest, men are dying around us like flies of want and eating grass. Distress is advancing towards Versailles. The Duke of Orleans lately laid before the council a piece of bread, made of ferns. In placing it on the King's table, he said: "Sire, here is what your subjects live upon."

It had not always been so in France. A hundred years before, though farming was rude, the land was far more productive, and the rural population more prosperous and happy. The reason was that then the nobility lived on their estates, and spent their incomes in the country. Centralization had not commenced. The wealth produced by the soil was returned to it in manure, in planting, in building, and agricultural improvement; it was not all drawn to one distant point, to feed the lavish luxury of the Court and the metropolis.

At all periods the agriculture of England has been far superior to that of France, though France has a better soil and a more pro-

pitious climate. Both the soil and climate of England are unfavorable to the cereals, yet the production per acre there, is and always has been, greater than in France; and so, also, of grass, cattle and sheep. The farmers and peasantry have lived better, and at no time did their condition approach the abyss of misery and degradation, which for long periods existed in France. The reason is, that centralization, either of power or consumption, has never destroyed the liberty, or exhausted the land of England. The proprietors of the soil have always lived on the soil. The love of the land, of the free, solitary life of the farm and the forest, is a characteristic of the English race, and has from the earliest ages drawn to the country, not wealth only, but intellect and knowledge. It was so in the feudal times, when England was covered with castles and monasteries. Priests and nobles resided on their estates. There was no Richelieu to break down their power and bring them to the dependence and corrupting atmosphere of the Court. It was so when the Baronial Hall and the mansion of the country gentleman, succeeded to the feudal castle, and so it has been ever since. The wealth of the aristocracy and gentry has been spent in the country, and has thus gone back to enrich the soil whence it came. English agriculture has shared in English prosperity, and from the time when William the Conqueror, recorded in Domesday-Book, the distribution of the land among his followers, the land and the farmer and the peasant, have maintained their place, and grown with the growth of the nation. The reason is, the land was never without an owner who was not a mere owner, but a friend and protector, who loved and cherished it, and devoted to it his labor and thought and wealth.

In the early periods of English history, however, agriculture was rude enough. So late as the time of Elizabeth, three-fourths of the land was uncultivated, the product was small, the implements inefficient, and the life and habits of the farmer, coarse and unaccommodated. The progress was slow till the end of the last century, till the time of Arthur Young and Bakewell and Ellman, till the introduction of the turnip crop, and the improved breeds of sheep and cattle. Since then the advance has been rapid, until the present day of steam machinery and under-draining, of short horns and

Ayrshires, of Leicesters and Southdowns, and thorough tillage; when, as Mr. Emerson says in his *English Traits*, "a cold, barren, almost arctic isle, has been made the most fruitful, luxurious and imperial land in the whole earth."

Several causes have contributed to produce that very grand and remarkable phenomenon of this century—English agriculture; causes inherent and external, causes in the past and the present. The insular position of England and her consequent freedom from the ravages of invasion, so that the island has become a store-house, filled with the accumulated treasure of ages; the freedom of her government, securing the rights of property and preserving her from the destructive fury of civil discord; the passion of the English race for rural domestic life, which has scattered homes throughout the country, and led to the expenditure of wealth in the improvement and embellishment of the soil; the constitution, custom and law of English landed property, founded in the feudal system, and modified by the requirements of modern society, which has given to the land two owners, two care-takers and friends, the landlord and the tenant, thus securing the application of knowledge and capital, and combining union of interest with division of labor; these are the chief influences which have affected agriculture. They are, however, general causes, and have all united to produce one proximate cause, without which, they would have been powerless, and that is, local markets, the very opposite of centralization, by which French agriculture has been retarded, and at times well nigh destroyed.

The many-sided genius of the English race has not been successful in agriculture only. It has also created manufactures and commerce, which receive tribute from all the world, and pour its riches on their little island. The English love the land, but they love also the sea, the ship, the workshop, the loom, the steam engine, and by the use of these tools, they have woven a net-work of relations and dependencies over the earth, and at every haul of this mighty seine, they bring to their shores materials for their industry and wealth incalculable, and all the wealth is lavished on the land. London is a great city. It has two and a half millions of inhabitants. It is the centre of the commerce and finance of the

world. All interests tend to it and diverge from it. It is the seat of activity and grandeur and wealth unparalleled in any former age, not excepting Rome itself when at the height of its power. Yet London is not a central point in England in any sense, social, political or economical. It does not merely absorb and consume, like Paris. What it receives from the country it gives back again with usurious interest. What it receives from other nations it pours out over the country in fertilizing streams. London has royal palaces, but the Queen does not live in London. She lives in the country, where she also has palaces and farms. The aristocracy do not live in London; they go there for a few months during the session of Parliament. They live on their estates, and spend their incomes on them. The rich merchants do not live in London. They make money there, and the first thing they do with it, is to buy land to cultivate and adorn as a home for themselves and their children. The very tradesmen and shop-keepers and attorneys have imbibed the same spirit. As soon as they are able, they leave the streets for some suburban cottage or villa, more or less remote from the great city. Even the rents of London go to improve the soil. A great part of the land on which the town is built, is owned by a few noblemen, and the immense incomes thence derived are spent in the country, in building, planting, gardening, draining, and cultivating the soil. Thence Woburn Abbey, Chatsworth, Eaton Hall, and thousands of similar places. The over-arching grandeur of London is like the English sky, which draws up moisture from sea and land to pour it down again in constant and refreshing showers.

London, therefore, if a great receiver, is a great distributor, and is in this respect a type of all the towns and cities in England. English agriculture did not grow from its own resources. No agriculture can. It has its roots in the rich soil of manufactures, and a commerce employed in exporting the productions of manufactures, and bringing home wealth to the land. A foreign trade that sends away raw material, is the bane of agriculture. It acts upon it as centralization acted on France. It takes away the richness of the soil and returns nothing to the soil. The foundation, the essential condition of all agricultural improvement is manure. This can be supplied only by local markets, that is to say, by manufactures.

Arkwright and Watt did more for English agriculture than Bakewell and Arthur Young. Their inventions, and Whitney's cotton gin, by the vast and sudden increase of power they gave to manufactures, created indeed the present agriculture of England, because they filled the island with mills, mines and workshops, with populous and busy villages and towns. Everywhere throughout the kingdom, these are scattered among the farms, and contrast the smoke of furnaces, the din of machinery, the swarms of laborers, with the beauty and peaceful seclusion of parks and lawns. Everywhere, therefore, the farmer finds a market close to his farm, for those things, the cultivation of which enriches the land. The vast sums paid by the manufacturer for wages, the farmer receives, not for grain merely, but for meat, butter, milk, cheese, vegetables, all of them sources of manure. The refuse of the factories is also manure. Dispersed among the farmers in all directions, live a more numerous class which they must feed, which does not produce food for itself, but which clothes them, builds their houses and barns, and makes their tools of labor, in return for food. Out of this proximity grows that rapid exchange which stimulates activity and saves the loss and waste of transportation. Because of it, too, the farmer is enabled to grow with profit those articles that produce manure, and which cannot be transported to a distance. In the local demand for those articles, lies the secret of the success of English agriculture. Its aim is to feed a population of which one-tenth only are producers of food. Now the chief food of this population is wheat bread, the chief drink, beer. To raise wheat and barley, therefore, in constantly increasing quantity, from a cold, wet, barren soil, unfavorable for the growth of either, to supply a constantly increasing demand, is the task set for English farmers. They have done wonders. They have brought the average production of wheat from fifteen to twenty-eight bushels, and on the best farms, to forty and fifty bushels per acre, and the increase in the number and weight of cattle and sheep is still greater. How has this been accomplished? By manure. One-fifth of the land only is devoted to grain, four-fifths to crops that produce manure. Now, as you know, grain crops derive their chief nutriment from the soil, and therefore exhaust it. Forage crops on the contrary, obtain their food from the atmosphere,

and if returned to the soil, enrich it. This principle is the foundation of the celebrated Norfolk rotation, by which every grain crop is succeeded by a forage crop, which latter is fed to cattle or sheep. According to this system which prevails in the grain-growing districts, one-half the farm is laid down in permanent natural pasture. The other half is divided into five fields, and the rotation is, 1st. turnips and potatoes, a large portion of the former fed to sheep on the ground without digging; 2d. barley or oats; 3d. and 4th. clover and artificial grasses; 5th. wheat; so that on a farm of one hundred acres, twenty only are in grain, whilst the remaining eighty are devoted to crops which supply manure. But this system is possible only where there is a ready sale for the articles which these crops produce, for meat, milk, butter, cheese and vegetables. The local markets created by manufactures, therefore, are the sources of the manure that enriches the English soil.

The manure of sheep and cattle however is by no means the only resource. Lime, plaster, salt, ashes, guano, nitrate of soda, bone dust, and every other fertilizing substance are eagerly sought and applied. Nor are the crops grown on the farm the only food of cattle, but linseed meal, brewers' grains, bran, our Indian corn and cotton seed, are largely consumed and go to swell the manure heap. High profits enable the farmers to buy these substances and to combine with their operation, minute cultivation, under-draining, labor-saving machinery and commodious buildings. The amount thus jointly expended by landlord and tenant is enormous, as you may judge from the single fact, that the capital considered necessary for a tenant to possess on entering a good farm is fifty dollars per acre. The manufactures of England which thus enrich its soil, sustain also a world-wide commerce, which, employed as it is, in exporting the manufactured article and importing raw material, conduces to the same end. The most remote corners of the earth are also searched for seeds, plants, trees, animals and manures. Her ships go about the world like bees, catering for the land, and return laden with the productions of every clime. They bring horses from Arabia, sheep from Spain, poultry from China and Japan, bones, linseed and cotton seed cake from America, and guano from the Pacific. They bring also food, which even English agriculture is not able to supply in

sufficient quantity for the people. Their little is, and is not big enough for them, but like a busy hive sends forth annual swarms into our own country, into Canada, Australia and India, thus belting the earth with the arts, the laws, the literature and the free institutions of England, and sowing broad-cast over distant continents this victorious race, which in times past has borne such fruit as Alfred and Raleigh, Cecil and Sidney; as Marlborough, Nelson and Wellington; as Bacon, Locke and Taylor; as Spenser, Herbert, Milton and Shakspeare. A race which Mr. Emerson has well described as "moulded for law, lawful trade, civility, marriage, the nurture of children, for colleges, churches, charities and colonies." Mr. Caird, an eminent authority, in his late work on "Prairie Farming in America," says, that during the last twenty-five years, the proportion of the adult population of England employed in agriculture has fallen from twenty-eight to ten per cent., not from any decrease of the numbers engaged in agriculture, but from the far greater proportional increase of trade. During the year 1857, grain was imported into England at the rate of nearly one million of quarters per month. England has thus, says the same writer, in addition to the home crop, consumed *each day*, the produce of *ten thousand acres of foreign land*. All this grain is food for men and animals. It is therefore so much manure. It helps also to support manufactures, which create a home market for the farmer. Though this dependence of England on foreign supplies of food is not without its dangers, I think you will agree with me that it is better to receive it than to send it away.

Thus we see how this mighty growth of commerce and manufactures protects the land, like a stately forest, adding annually to its own mass of stem and branch, dropping annually also its leaves upon the soil in which its roots live and find nourishment. We see how agriculture, manufactures and commerce, work harmoniously together, sustaining and nourishing each other, and that the best fertilizer is a home market, which brings the mill, the mine and the furnace to the side of the farmer.

Let us now turn to our own agriculture, and give a glance at its condition and prospects. It is obvious at once that there are many

points of difference between it and the agriculture of England. We have a territory of vast extent, whilst that of England is small. Small as it is, but a limited portion of it is fit for the production of grain, whilst large as ours is, almost all of it will produce grain, and very much is peculiarly adapted to its culture.

Another difference is, that in England the population is dense, overflowing indeed, yet only one-tenth part of it is agricultural. Here, on the contrary, the people are thinly scattered over a wide surface. Between the various settlements lie great tracts of wild land or unbroken forest. In many places extensive regions are occupied exclusively by farmers or planters. Along the Atlantic Coast are a few large and flourishing cities and many growing towns, some of them engaged in manufactures, but depending for the most part on the profits of sending the grain, cotton and other produce of our soil to Europe, and bringing back the results of European industry. In the West, along the highways of the Lakes, the Mississippi, the Ohio and other rivers, cities and villages have grown up with astonishing rapidity. These are connected by the lakes and rivers and by railroads with the sea-board, and all of them, cities, towns, lakes, rivers and railroads are eagerly employed in the great business of sending cotton, corn and wheat to the sea-ports of the East, and of distributing through the West the productions of the looms and workshops of Europe. This is their principal business, and they thrive on it. Every year new towns, railroads and steam-boats are built. The Atlantic cities thrive on it too. New York grows in opulence and splendor, Philadelphia pushes annually her squares of new streets into the country, and the others are equally prosperous. Of our whole population, about three-fourths are engaged in agriculture. Of the remaining fourth, a part is employed in manufactures and the mechanic arts, and another part, much the richer, if not the more numerous, is engaged in trade, and that trade consists in transporting raw material, chiefly grain and cotton to Europe, and bringing it back again in the shape of manufactured goods, its business being precisely the reverse of the commerce of England, which brings from all parts of the world, raw material and food, to give support and employment to her manufactures, and this

done, sends it forth again, a large value in small bulk, to be exchanged for more food and more material.

Another difference between this country and England affecting our agriculture is, that there, as already mentioned, the wealthy classes live in the country, whilst here they live in the towns. We have no class at all corresponding to the large proprietors of England, who own domains of many thousand acres, who employ vast sums in the improvement of the soil, who spend princely incomes in their luxurious country palaces, and who combine for the advancement of agriculture, with their own wealth and superintendence, the energy, the skill and the capital of an intelligent and rich tenantry.

Such is a general view of the circumstances which influence our agriculture as compared with that of England, and they are sufficient to explain the difference between the two. We see at once that all the causes affecting us, extent of territory, a scattered people, chiefly farmers, towns and cities at wide intervals, chiefly commercial, rivers and railroads, instruments of commerce and individual wealth clustered in and around the seats of commerce, resolve themselves into one great, pervading cause—a distant market for the produce of the land. And this again being translated, means want of manure. I do not mean merely lime, plaster, guano, bone-dust, and other fertilizing substances that may be carried on rivers and railroads, but manure made on the farm, the manure of the barn-yard, to which the former are merely auxiliary, and without which they do more harm than good. We are deficient in one of the three great departments of industry essential to the solid prosperity of a nation. We have in our soil and climate the foundations of a vast and varied agriculture. We have a large and ever-growing trade, foreign and domestic, but that trade being employed in transporting to the sea-board and to Europe, crops that exhaust the soil, is gradually accumulating to itself the wealth of the land. England demands our cotton and grain, the great Atlantic and inland cities demand them, ability and wealth flock to the cities, which constantly increase in size and splendor, and extend far and wide over the country their radiating lines of railroads, opening new markets, we

are told, to the farmer, but drawing from the land its fertility, and returning nothing to the land. Sending its carbonates and phosphates, and ammonia, to enrich the soil of England. Even the sheep and cattle that supply our great cities, add comparatively little to the fertility of our farms. They are fed for the most part, the sheep on hills and in regions unsuitable for grain, the cattle on the permanent blue grass pastures of the West, and on the boundless ranges of the prairies, where the land costs nothing, where food for one half the year costs nothing, and for the other half, merely the labor of cutting the grass. Many thousands of them are actually fattened on the road to market. Do we not see in this, that fatal centralization of wealth caused by a distant market which impoverished the agriculture of France? Paris drew from the French soil its wealth, and returned nothing to it. England and our cities are doing the same thing for us, over regions much larger than France, and more fertile. I cannot illustrate this process of exhaustion better than by an extract from the work of Mr. Caird, already mentioned :

“The valley of the Mississippi above Cairo, comprising Illinois, Wisconsin, Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota, embraces probably the greatest tract of fertile land on the globe. Its total extent exceeds England and France together with the kingdom of the two Sicilies ; it is more than equal to Prussia and the whole Austrian empire. This vast territory is not only intersected by numerous lines of railroads which give it direct access to Montreal, New York and Philadelphia, but on the north by means of the lakes and the St. Lawrence, and on the south by the Mississippi river, it possesses a continuous water communication with the Atlantic. Nothing can illustrate more forcibly the vast natural resources of this splendid country, than the history of the grain trade of Chicago. An Indian village in 1820, this place has become a great city, with upwards of 120,000 people, with wharves and granaries for miles along the river, and with streets, public buildings and churches, that may vie with those of London itself. Chicago is actually the centre of more miles of railway completed and in operation, than London. Yet it is only twenty years since the first shipment of some forty bags of wheat was made from it, and in 1857 its exports amounted to 18,000,000

of bushels. Chicago and all its wealth are in fact a property created by profits arising *in the mere transference from hand to hand* of the surplus produce of but a small part of this wonderful country. Looking to Illinois alone, of which Chicago is the commercial capital and outlet, this surplus, great though it be, is capable of being increased ten-fold, as only one-tenth of the fertile lands of this State are yet brought under cultivation."

We have here in a few pregnant sentences the whole story, and a very wonderful story it is, which would afford matter for a longer speech than I shall trouble you with, indeed for a volume. Add to Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Detroit, Buffalo, Milwaukee, and other inland towns; add also, New York, Boston, Baltimore, Mobile, New Orleans, and in a less degree, Philadelphia, which have all grown and are growing rich from "the profits arising in the mere transference from hand to hand," of the produce of the soil, add to these, also, the enormous capital invested in railroads and steamboats, and you have a combination of the causes operating upon our agriculture. Now what are they doing? Taking out of the land its fertility, and sending it away at the rate of millions of bushels annually. Is the land improved by this process? It is well known that it is growing poorer every day. It must become poorer, and the result must be precisely that which has happened, the produce per acre of grain constantly diminishing because of the exhaustion of the soil, the gross amount constantly increasing because of new lands brought annually into cultivation. New railroads are every day extending their long arms further west, to reach the ever receding horizon of new land, to bring it into market, to feed fat with its produce, our trade and the manufactures of England. The government gives away this virgin soil at a nominal price, alluring settlers to it, scattering the population over still widening spaces, weakening its energies by dispersion, adding ever to the cost of transportation, and leading on and on to a farther west and to the Pacific, the van of this great army of farmers, which like other armies, but unlike most other farmers, finds before it fertility, and leaves behind it desolation. It is a remarkable and significant fact, that whilst the wheat crop of England has increased during the last twenty years from fifteen to thirty bushels per acre, it has in Ohio

diminished from thirty to fifteen. It is more profitable for the owner of a worn-out farm, to abandon it and take up new land from the government, the price of which he can pay by the first crop of wheat he grows, than to remain where he is. He must do this or improve his old farm, and how can he improve it without manure? No Norfolk rotation is possible for him. He cannot sell butter or milk or cheese or vegetables. He cannot send these to New York or to England. He cannot feed cattle, for his exhausted soil cannot compete with the prairie. A slow and expensive process is necessary before cattle would pay as well as even his diminished grain crops, and "while the grass grows the steed starves." And he too, must starve, if he remains on his farm. He therefore leaves it and the associations of home, and the friends of youth, for the great West, there to exhaust more land. This process explains the rapid formation of new States, and what is called the wonderful prosperity of the West, that is to say, the rapid rise of rich towns and rich railroad companies, founded on the toils and privations of the farmers, who are called the adventurous and hardy pioneers of civilization. It explains also the stagnation and decay of some of the old States, all of them indeed where manufactures have not been introduced—the "old fields" of Maryland and Virginia and Kentucky, the steady decrease in the productiveness of Ohio and Western New York, and the deserted plantations of Georgia and the Carolinas. Deserts are forming in many parts of our wide interior, by reason of the same cause which produced deserts in the heart of France, which has reduced to poverty the country on the Danube and the Black Sea, whence England, too, draws food for her people, and manure for her land; which has exhausted and impoverished India, from which England takes cotton as she does from us, to be returned again as cloth, leaving behind it the stimulated ingenuity, the employed labor, the created value, and the manure, of which it was the source.

It is a wonderful and ingenious operation, this, by which farsighted and politic England manages to extract from all countries that will permit it, their richness, leaving to them the husks and chaff. A farmer of Illinois wishes to get a piece of cotton goods: he takes his wheat or corn to Chicago, and thence paying toll and

profits to railroads, merchants and ship-owners by the way, it is sent to England. It is there exchanged for cloth made in England out of cotton sent all the way from Mississippi, to supply a similar want of a planter. The piece of cloth comes back again to Mississippi, or goes to Illinois, the grain that bought it having made a journey of several thousand miles, and the cotton of which it was made, two journeys, at vast cost and labor. Now a plain man would think it a simpler way to make the cloth at once in Mississippi, or to send the cotton the shorter distance, to Illinois, and there make it into cloth. It would save a great deal of trouble, and it would also give both to farmer and planter, a market where they could sell not only their cotton and grain, but crops also as profitable, now unsalable, and which would manure their land. This to be sure, would not be of much importance to the farmers of Illinois whilst their soil is yet unexhausted, but if such markets could be established in Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, and Western New York, which bore once the same relation to England and the East, that Illinois now does, the Norfolk rotation would become immediately possible for them, and fertility would return to their worn-out fields.

But for these boundless tracts of new land, instead of a rich, we should under this system have become a poor people. Our commerce has been fed by new land, which it has constantly exhausted. Our wealth is concentrated in the sea-ports and the inland cities along the rivers and railroads, and the land immediately surrounding these and the few manufacturing establishments that do exist. There only, agriculture flourishes, the produce per acre increases, a variety of crops are grown, rural taste and embellishment appear, the land rises in value, and farmers surround themselves with the comforts and refinements of life, because there alone are local markets and sources of fertility.

It is said in reply to all this, that foreign skill and labor work for us at a lower price than our own, and it is cheaper and therefore wiser, to get from abroad the comforts and luxuries it produces. We have cotton and wool and coal and iron here, and labor asking employment; nevertheless, we are told, it is better to get cotton and woolen goods and iron wares from abroad, because they do not cost so much money. But do we pay nothing for these things but

money? Do we not pay also the fertility of our soil? Do we not pay the stagnation and monotony of our industry? Are cotton and wool of use only for cloth, coal to burn, iron to make plough-shares and railroad tracks? Have they no relations to man's higher nature in the labor and strength of mind and body they require and develope, and are not these, once excited to effort, the prolific causes of production, of wealth? Has not this dead matter the virtue of tasking man's powers, and thus increasing his intellectual force; of gathering together communities and forming social ties, thus furnishing that variety, collision and emulation of pursuits, topics and interests, which open a sphere and a reward to every talent? And is not this civilization? Is it not the source of wealth and refinement, of literature and art, of all that increases comfort and ease, and the pleasures of intellect and taste? Is not this the civilization of England and the best parts of Europe and America, or will you seek it among the scattered and lonely farms of the Mississippi valley, the log cabins of the West, the exhausted plantations of the South, or on the banks of the Danube or the Black or the Baltic Sea?

There is, however, one consolation under these circumstances, that with all this land, we are in no danger of starvation. We have a goodly inheritance, and cannot easily be ruined even by folly and extravagance. There are in the great West, millions of acres yet untilled, and on the limitless prairies countless herds may roam for many years to come, without an enclosure. We have therefore a large fund yet to draw upon, to increase the number and size of our cities, to multiply our railroads, and after a while to set in motion mills, factories and furnaces. These centres of population are markets for the farmer, and if every year they draw more and more wealth from distant land, they every year also increase the area of improved land around them, by the demand they create for the crops that supply manure. Our manufactures, after a long struggle, have obtained a foothold, and causes are in operation at home and abroad, to secure for them a sure progress, if a slow one. The number of the people engaged in other pursuits than agriculture, steadily increases, and this, combined with the diminishing crops from western land in cultivation, and the lengthening distances that

must be traversed to reach new land, favor the farmers of the Atlantic States. The increase of our crops, more especially of wheat, does not keep pace with the increase of our population. Prices of grain are to-day high, notwithstanding a most abundant harvest and the absence of a foreign demand, so high that it cannot be sent abroad to pay for imported goods. Grain may therefore be profitably grown wherever manure can be obtained, and our soil requires far less manure to produce the same returns, than the soil of England. So that the very barrenness caused by the successive cultivation of cheap, rich, new land, and the abandonment of the old, tells in favor of agriculture here, and manufactures are slowly but steadily following in the track of a reckless and improvident commerce, to renovate the wastes it has made. Wealth is stored up for the future in the land of the Atlantic States, just as it is in their mines of coal and iron, though the fruits of both may be gathered by another generation. Our country has large provision for posterity, in the spaces enclosed by its gigantic outline of two oceans, of broad lakes and long navigable rivers. On the shores of these are to be set like gems, hereafter, wealthy and luxurious capitals, the seats of refinement and the arts, and resplendent with the achievements of advancing science. At every favorable point, mills and mines will gather their busy crowds, and send forth on the rushing rail-car the useful and beautiful productions of ingenuity and taste. The tracts of fertile soil, vast as they are, around and between these, on this and the other side of the Alleghenies and beyond the great Mississippi valley, will be filled with rich farms and farmers and decorated estates, supporting and supported, giving and receiving, and completing that twisted, triple cord of agriculture, manufactures and commerce, which makes a nation a unit, self-sustaining and independent. Is this a dream of the imagination? It is even now assuming definite form. It may be retarded or marred for a time by unwise legislation or by civil strife, but it lies in the future as surely and securely as New York with its Central Park and Fifth Avenue laid there, in the hour when Hendrick Hudson first sailed up the noble river that bears his name.

I have said that a local market is a fertilizer. Before I conclude

I must mention another fertilizer, without which indeed the former can have no existence, I mean a good government. In a most interesting and instructive work by a French gentleman, M. Leonce de Lavergne, published in 1854, on "The Rural Economy of Great Britain," the author dwells with much emphasis on civil dissension and political misrule as causes of the depression and poverty of French agriculture. He speaks too with enthusiasm of the "liberty without revolution," under whose cherishing guardianship England presents such a delightful scene of rural prosperity. Liberty without revolution,—do you wonder that a Frenchman should long for that, should look with melancholy admiration on all nations blessed with it, when you think of the history of France for the last seventy years, during which liberty has never been obtained even by the bloody sacrifices of revolution, and the horrors of anarchy have ever been succeeded by the cold, dark, selfish, soulless, heartless tyranny of a Napoleon I. or a Napoleon III. Liberty without revolution, that is to say, with order and security, without which industry and the arts cannot prosper. Security for life and property, freedom of thought and speech and action, enjoyed in peace and tranquillity through long centuries, under just laws; these, my friends, will make wheat grow, even on a barren soil. No wonder then that this generous and enlightened Frenchman should prize them when he saw the wheat fields of England, when he walked among the green hedge-rows and looked on her happy rural homes, her quiet parks and lawns, where no invader's foot has trod, where nothing more formidable than the staff of a policeman has been seen for so many ages. No wonder, too, when he was describing those scenes of tranquil industry and plenty, and thought of his native land and its rich resources of soil and climate, that he should quote with approbation the saying of another Frenchman, the wise and amiable Montesquieu, who declared that, "It is not fertility, but liberty which cultivates a country."

It is a common saying that we never know the value of our eyes till sight is impaired or lost. Habitual blessings are accepted as things of course, without much thought about the causes on which they depend or the possibility of change. We, in this country, have been so long accustomed to the advantages of freedom and security,

to the tranquil living under our own fig tree, that we are too apt to be inspired with a blind confidence that these things require of us nothing but to enjoy them, and that they are to last forever as our destiny; like the heir of a good estate, who having been used to ease and comfort from childhood, often forgets that these depend on certain lands and houses and mortgages, accumulated by the thrift and industry of his ancestors, which he must carefully keep or face the hard trials of the world like other men. The blessings of order and liberty are as easily lost as property, and when lost as difficult to regain and disastrous change in national happiness and prosperity, from political causes, is ever liable to occur under all governments. To be convinced of this, we need only look at the history of Europe and its present condition. The continent has been for ages and now is a battle ground for ambitious, jealous, wrangling nations and monarchs, who cannot live together in peace and harmony. Each has designs against the others, and therefore all must be fully armed and equipped for self-defence. The whole land bristles with fortresses, and in every city and village is seen the uniform of the soldier, marking a class separated from the peaceful occupations of industry, its hopes and pleasures. Everywhere, mingling with the sounds of labor is heard the ear-piercing fife, the roll of the drum, calling up images of danger and bloodshed or rousing the passions that lead to both. Standing armies are a necessity of European society, and standing armies are incompatible with liberty. They are the tools by which despots forge the chains of a people and gratify their own, and too often a nation's greed for glory or gain. Created for protection, they lead constantly to aggressive wars to acquire territory or to support a dynasty or to maintain the balance of power, ever liable to be lost by the encroachments of the strong or the victories of military genius. What do we see in Europe now? All nations armed to the teeth, regarding each other with suspicion and suppressed animosity, and one despot, an adventurer and revolutionist, flushed with recent success, the arbiter of their fortunes. Wielding the power of an impetuous, passionate and intellectual nation, holding the reins of an eager, brave and obedient army, he stands with his hand on a half-sheathed sword, red with recent battle, a threat and a danger to surrounding States, who watch

his words and looks as the oracles of their destiny. Whether the work of slaughter shall begin again, and the miseries and devastation of war be poured like a destroying flood over the fairest scenes of modern civilization, depends on the plans and purposes of this one reserved, scheming and brooding mind, upon the will of one man. He is armed, all others must therefore arm, and amid this universal arming and the passions it engenders, what chance is there that peace can be maintained. These defences are more destructive than even the devastations of actual conflict, terrible as they are. A French statistician has recently computed that the annual war expense paid by the producers of Europe, including the value of the labor withdrawn from industry, amounts to eight hundred millions of dollars. Think what an impulse this enormous sum thus yearly wasted, would give to agriculture, manufactures and commerce, to science and art. How much land it would drain and irrigate and plough and plant. How many mills it would set in motion, how many ships it would send around the world to diffuse among all countries the gifts and productions peculiar to each. Think, too, of the terrible conscription by which these immense armies are maintained, tearing the young from home and its affections, from all useful and profitable pursuits, and of the narrow and barren lives of all these soldiers, condemned to the daily drill and slavish routine of a camp, that they may be converted into human engines of destruction and take rank in the estimation of despots, with improved cannon and Minie rifles, as instruments wherewith to play the royal game of war. Add to these evils the scenes necessarily caused by all this costly preparation; the wasting march of troops, the sack of cities, the burning of villages, the wide license given to rapine and violence, and it is obvious that the balance of power in Europe is an expensive thing, in value wasted and destroyed, in production prevented, and in ruined hopes and happiness.

Now whence arises the necessity for this balance of power, this equipoise of strength, so that one nation may not endanger the safety of others; together with all the treaties, alliances, diplomacy, intrigues and wars of which it is the source. It arises from the political separation and close neighborhood of different nationalities and races. It is caused by the want of that union which we possess;

of political union under one government; of common interests and hopes, purposes and destiny. Of union, not centralization; of authority emanating from all and controlling all where the interests of the whole are concerned, but acting harmoniously with separate and independent authority, exercised on local interests and objects. Were it possible to give to Europe a Federal Union, combined with State Sovereignty like ours, its thrones and despots and armies and wars would vanish like phantoms of the night. Destroy our union, and thrones, despots, armies and wars would arise, like evil spirits summoned by an avenging angel. The Union is the golden chain that links our cup to perennial fountains of peace and power, of wealth and greatness. But disunion;

“The children born of it are fire and sword,
Red union and the breaking up of laws.”

Liberty without revolution,—Lavergne has well said that this is the thing needed for the land of France. It is needed for our land too, for what is disunion but revolution, and where would liberty find a refuge on our soil, if the Union were destroyed. It is a better fertilizer than even barn-yard manure, a more efficient machine than Hussey's Reaper or Fawk's Steam Plough.

The people of Massachusetts have recently erected with appropriate ceremonial a bronze statue of Daniel Webster, in order that succeeding generations may be as familiar as this which is passing away, with the form and features of a man who did good service to New England and his country, and conferred honor on both. His speeches and writings will go down to those generations. They will become acquainted with his mind and his thoughts. It will be a pleasant thing for them to see, so far as the artist can make them see, what manner of man he was in outward show. Daniel Webster was one of those rare productions of nature called a great man. Great men are not needed for the common purposes of the world, and therefore are not so plentiful as good mechanics, lawyers, financiers and farmers. Webster had two qualities which distinguished him from the crowd of politicians who manage the ordinary business of the public. He had an intellect able to perceive the great truths or laws which rule the destinies of a nation. He could see also

that these truths are commands and disregarding the subordinate and the expedient, the schemes and intrigues of parties and sections, he called with a voice of power on all men, to follow the truth and obey it. He had also a soul that could grasp great things, and disdain small ones. The nation, and not a part of it—its future, with all its mighty hopes, not partisan purposes, the returns of the last election or the chances of the next, were the interests that spurred his ambition and roused his powers. There was nothing petty about him. The proportions of his mind were grand and massy, like his own granite hills, and his eloquence was simple and strong, but rich and full, as the tones of an organ. In harmony with these great qualities of Webster, was his love for nature, and for a farm and a farmer's life. He was the son of a working farmer, and had many a hard struggle with fortune before he stood in the Senate the victorious champion of the Constitution—before he reached the fame which fixed upon him the gazes of all men wherever he appeared. He loved the farm, its labors and simple pleasures, and the farmer, too, and clasped the brown hand of toil with the cordiality of a brother. No one here can look with a more appreciating eye than he did, on a field of grain or a yoke of cattle. He was prouder of his crops than of his speeches, and preferred in his heart, his triumphs at Marshfield, to his glories in the Senate. He had his faults, and grave ones. We must admit this with sorrow, for the memory of the great men of a country is a precious inheritance, and we would have them without blemish or stain, if we could. We must take them, however, as they are sent, and our regret for their weakness and failings, need not hinder our love and reverence for what of good and noble they possessed. Imperfections and shortcomings are common enough, but great talents, great purposes, great public services, are not common, and when the character of Webster, with its look and lineaments and attitude of nobility and power, rise before my mind, I for one, would rather turn from its feet of clay, to gaze upon its towering and majestic head.

Like all great men Webster had a mission. His career and labors had a meaning and object. And what were they? The idea which guided his life, which runs through all his public acts, and on which

his speeches were strung like gems, was, that this country is one nation; that its people are one people; not separate nations or a divided people. One people and one nation, living under a Constitution wisely and justly framed to establish civil rights and republican liberty, for them and their posterity forever. This was the meaning of Webster's public life. He was the expounder and defender of the Constitution, he represented the idea of nationality. He did not represent the North or the South, the East or the West, but the Union. When we think of what this country is, of its range of climate and soil from the Tropics to the Northern Lakes, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. When we think of its possible future, of that vast area covered with cities and towns and farms and plantations, and all the triumphs and wealth of advancing civilization. When we think of it as one nation, a great empire, a united people, living in peace under one government and equal laws, when we try to imagine this as something that is to be, that can be if wisdom and will be not wanting, was it not a grand and glorious idea, worth living for and worth dying for? It was the ruling idea of Webster's life. To realize this glorious vision, he thought and toiled and spoke as few men of his day or any other day could speak. It was his life-purpose, and he gave to it the strength of his life and the prime of his days. Therefore he is justly called a great man, and the people of Boston when they set up his statue in their city, paid him a merited homage and honored themselves.

I came here to speak to farmers about farming, and I hope no one will think I have wandered from my subject when I allude to Daniel Webster and the work he set himself to do. That work, if it can be accomplished by those who succeed him, has intimate and important relations with farms and farmers and their prosperity. It is for that reason I have spoken of Webster and his great task, and not forgetting either my topic or my audience, I think I cannot better finish my little speech than by the concluding words and sentiment of his greatest speech,—“Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”

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