

AGRICULTURAL ADDRESS;

BY ADEL GASEDY, ESQ.

Delivered before a Meeting of the Members of the Susquehanna Agricultural Society, at the Court House in this Village, on Tuesday Evening of Court Week.

Fellow Citizens:—It gives me great pleasure to meet so many of you on this occasion. It shows at a glance, the great interest manifested by the citizens of Susquehanna. And this pleasure would be the more heightened did we not distrust our own abilities to perform the task now before us. But gentlemen we shall rest upon your indulgence. My speech from a farmer would hardly be looked for, and we would cheerfully have assigned the duty to some more competent person, could we have heard them say it shall be performed. But believing as we do, that the subject has already received, too little attention, we wish to awaken the citizens of our county to a proper sense of their interest in a more exalted view of the dignity and honor of their vocation. Agriculture in a highly improved state, must be the means, which next to the righteousness which truly exalts a nation, and will contribute to its enduring prosperity. All trades and commerce depend on this great art as their foundation. The cultivation of the soil and of plants was the earliest occupation of man, it has in all ages been his chief means of subsistence, it still continues to furnish employment to the great majority of the human race. Of the importance of Agriculture in a physical, moral or political point of view, I need say little to you. If with the wisest, the richest, the most powerful nation, Agricultural pursuits have ever been esteemed the most honorable as well as the most useful employments of man, how much more should this be the case in a country like ours, where the situations, Government and People depend essentially upon their successful operation. Indeed, Providence seems to have decided in the great question of preference so long debated by political economists. We are, and must continue, if we expect remain free and prosperous, emphatically an Agricultural People. And does not self interest, as well as patriotism, combine to incite us to the improvement of our system of husbandry. What nation has ever been celebrated for its advancement in civilization and the arts, in which the marked encouragement of Agriculture has not been limited. And yet what country on earth deeply interested in its success, has shown as much attention to it than our own. England, as you know, has been called a garden spot, and such it may justly be called, when with a territory not larger than New York or Virginia, it can support a population nearly equal to that of the whole United States. Now to what is all this to be attributed, but to the superior production occasioned by superior cultivation, the additional fact, that they cultivate more land than they can manure and improve. Measures are the strong moving power in agricultural operations. They are the great steam engine which drives the mill. Good and clean cultivation is important, but it will avail little without a fertile soil, and this fertility must be secured, or kept up, by a copious application of manures. For these contribute directly, and indirectly, to the supply of nearly the nourishment which plants receive, it is these, produced, chiefly from the decay of dead vegetable and animal matter, which most powerfully to give new life and vigor, and thus the apparently purged mass, of very material which is converted into so many beautiful forms of nature, and the brilliant flowers spring up from decay of old forms, and thus a continued session of destruction and renovation is set on through an unlimited series of years. But in all improvements, in all enterprises, the great truth must not be forgotten, success is not to be expected without energy, and industry. We must sow in good and cultivate well in Summer if we expect an abundant harvest in Autumn. Agriculture now takes its rank among the noble and elevating pursuits of industry. It is the mark of ignorance, it is the mark of modern times. It is sustained by free institutions, it is the result of laws, because liberal. The enfranchisement of so many, the elevation of the masses go hand in hand with the intelligent, diligent and prosperous cultivation of the soil. If agriculture owes much to the beneficence of free institutions, liberty, not less to agriculture. Where do we see the calm discretion, the disinterestedness which must sustain a representative government, but to the great community cultivators of the Earth. Consequently, many cherish a profession which more any other prepares man to receive the blessing of his race in this world, a Government. We must cherish it by, by virtue, by intellectual cultivation, by connecting it with science and the noblest of all, with everything which can elevate the soul. A higher general cultivation, a nobler appreciation of the blessings of mind will undoubtedly set us on this subject. May the time be not distant. This will lead to inventions, to commerce, navigation and things which contribute to the martial prowess of nations. It is no higher vocation on earth than but it can only be accomplished by giving all the thought and action of which is capable, industry, discrimination and which have been given us. This will lead to the intellectual faculties, and pave the way for those higher moral influences which are so necessary to our progress. Order and system are requisite in all farming. No man can do well without a proper arrangement of his field work, causing each to follow in proper order. Neither can any man prosper for a want of system, any more than a man can be tolerated in this coun-

try, where such abundant sources of knowledge are freely proffered. The true system requires effort of mind, and so does every vocation where man is called, if he will perform his whole duty.

None have more need of the exercise of mind than those who till the soil. Every department of science is embraced in a proper fulfillment of our duties; and so wide-spread and essential are their claims upon our minds, that without system, no man should enter upon a farmer's life. It guides every project, and order presides over every department of his farm. For all classes of society, there is certainly instruction in the application of science to agriculture. It is the most profound which has yet been attained by the far reaching efforts of the human mind—to all the products of our industry, to the soil, the crop, the animal—has been reserved for the age in which we live. It is not claiming too much to say, that more progress has been made in this direction within the last twenty years, than in any previous century. From the origin of our race, almost to the present time, the path of the husbandman has been clouded in darkness and doubt. From the sowing of the seed to the gathering of the harvest, mystery attended every step. Not so now: the scientific analysis of soils and manures, and of vegetable products, explains not only the workings of nature and the practice of art, but opens an inexhaustible field of new combinations and novel results. Let it be our aim at once to make them part of the current knowledge of our country. It is such enterprise as this that must place our country on a substantial basis.

Though farming holds out no deceiving hopes of large fortunes to be speedily realized, it furnishes, if pursued with economy and industry, in the first place, a certain shelter with unailing means of comfort and independence, to those who apply their intellect as well as diligence to the cultivation of the soil. And in what branch of industry can intellect be more advantageously employed for promoting individual happiness and national welfare?

And now, Gentlemen, permit me to point out to you the true design of our Agricultural Society. It is not the sole object of our Society to reward those who bring to our fair the finest animals, or to remunerate those who with skill and industry raise the largest crops. These are but the means, and part of the means, by which it is hoped to achieve higher and wider ends. We wish by association, by comparison, and by a generous emulation, to diffuse among ourselves and the mass of the agricultural community, the results of experience, the lights of science, and the productions of art. It is desired to afford every encouragement to the full exertion of that capacity for invention and improvement which has already enabled our country to compete with all the world in such matters. The efforts of the society to increase the industry and cherish the genius of our countrymen, ought to stimulate the good feeling, the national pride of every citizen who loves his country, to lend his aid in carrying into the fullest execution, the noble object in view. With this signal illustration before us, we cannot lack confidence in any efforts wisely directed to a good end. With motives which cannot be impeached, with objects which can nowhere be condemned, asking no special privileges, requiring no exclusive immunities, seeking only to elevate and render more effective that labor from which man is destined never to be exempt, we may surely here, if anywhere, call to our aid the great power of association and combinations. It is assuming too much to say that he who sows the seed and reaps the harvest, works not only with the plow and with hoe and with scythe, but that he yields far beyond the laborer in any other branch of industry or art, the elements of power and nature. There is certainly no pursuit in which so many of the laws of nature must be consulted and understood, as in the cultivation of the earth. Every change of the season, every change even of the winds, every fall of rain must effect some of the manifold operations of the farmer. In the improvement of our various domestic animals, some of the most abstruse principles of physiology must be consulted. Is it to be supposed that men thus called upon to study and to observe the laws of nature, and labor in conjunction with its powers, require less of the light of the highest science, than the merchant, or the manufacturer; or is it to be believed that men who go weekly, almost daily, to different occupations, changing with the almost unceasing changes of the seasons, and whose business is to bring to maturity of products, exercise less of the highest intellectual faculties of man, than the laborer who day after day and year after year, follows the unchanging manipulations of art. Happily for the interest of the farmer the history of our country abounds in evidence that this great misconception of the nature and tendency of agricultural labor no longer exists. Far be it from our thoughts in anywise to undervalue the importance of mercantile and manufacturing pursuits. Too highly do we esteem them as promoters of civilization and indispensable purchasers and consumers of the surplus fruits of agricultural industry itself. The Merchant, the Manufacturer, the Lawyer, the Physician, and all professional men when just and liberal as well as intelligent and enterprising, may be classed among the nobles of our race. And here let me remark, I cannot too strongly urge upon your minds a fondness for agricultural science. Let every farmer take a good agricultural paper, which will store their minds with every species of information connected with the culture and management of farms and gardens. It will beget in your sons a fondness for agricultural pursuits, and implant in their minds, good moral and virtuous principles, which is the first stepping stone to success; and what so truly adorns the character of every young man. Let those who have not carefully reflected on these matters now maturely consider their great importance. In this country, with just laws justly administered, where the popular voice can promptly

correct every oppressive enactment, where with common schools and an untrammelled press, knowledge circulates as freely, almost, as the air, it would be surprising and not less creditable than surprising, if agricultural improvement did not keep pace with the progress of the country in every other respect. For one I have no fears on this point. I believe that our progress with or without agricultural Societies, though greatly accelerated by them, is to be decided and rapid.

Agriculture, like learning, has had its dark ages. It has risen to great perfection, receded, and rested for centuries without any apparent improvement. The history of the world abounds with evidence that the cultivation of the earth was at an early day carried to a high point. In China it is well known that for centuries a degree of skill has been exhibited in the preparation and application of chemical and vegetable manure, that is not even now equalled in any part of Christendom. They are not the only people who have attained a remarkable degree of skill in certain branches of husbandry. The aborigines of South America and Mexico practised irrigation upon a scale and with a perfection of detail not surpassed in any modern improvements. The Spaniards overcame them in battle but have not equalled them in skillful and industrious tillage. Throughout all those immense regions of British India, history informs us that a high cultivation accompanied by the use of irrigation, mineral and vegetable applications, has there carried the productive powers of the earth to a point never yet attained in those parts of the Globe claiming to be more enlightened. In ancient Egypt the results were if possible more extraordinary; there, not only agricultural productions, but the imperishable monuments of art surpass even the comprehension of modern science. Coming down to the early days of the Christian era, we find the Roman writers abounding in sound precepts and suggestions which even now might be adopted with advantage. It is somewhat discouraging to look back and find ourselves but little in advance of the remotest times in many departments of our profession. We may at least congratulate ourselves, that we live in an age when agriculture is in the ascendant, the rights of man and the dignity of labor are vindicated. All professional men have their libraries stowed with appropriate instruction—why should the farmer alone be without his library and his literature, whose occupation when understood and followed as any man should wish to understand and follow, demands some acquaintance with Chemistry, Botany, Geology and all the branches of Natural History. Let me once more impress it upon the young men of our country a desire for agricultural information. An opportunity now presents itself through Mr. Fuller of this village to procure this information—we shall anxiously look for the fruits.

I will call your attention for a few moments to the State of New York. There is more recently the science of agriculture has received much attention, and its influence in combination with the practical labors of those engaged in the ennobling pursuits of husbandry has reduced the toil and increased the returns of the tiller of the soil. The same is apparent with regard to the mechanic arts. Now if the power, wealth and independence of our country is to be estimated by its ability to furnish its most essential wants, and from its abundance to minister to the wants of others, it is both wise and politic for every citizen to aid the advancement of those practical branches of knowledge more immediately bearing upon the pursuits of the great producing classes. The improved condition of agriculture is evident in nearly every county in that State, it is made apparent in its products, which flow in abundance to our seaport markets. Science has collected the fragments of agricultural knowledge from this as well as many other countries and they are now benefited practically by its application. Gentlemen shall we profit by their example? We are now thrown in competition by the New-York and Erie Railroad with some of those great agricultural districts, and it well becomes us to get up a reputation for our productions abroad, and it is in their abundance and the goodness of the quality that must recommend them as well as the soil on which they were produced. This is what will give us a prompt market for the surplus fruits of our agricultural industry and raise the value of our landed property from thirty to fifty per cent. in this county, and it must be admitted that this society has already wielded a powerful influence in giving us note and attention abroad, and having excited a spirit of emulation in the feeling of the great agricultural community, I am sensible from an interchange of sentiment with many of our best farmers that it is under judicious management growing in the confidence of its friends and attracting the interest of many who once doubted its practicability or its usefulness. And here let me observe that it is through our own county papers that we must expect to attract an interest and the attention of persons abroad to purchase in our county, to visit and examine the advantages for dairymen, the breeders and purchasers of good stock to centre here. Give our soil good and thorough cultivation and you may travel from Maine to Georgia and you cannot excel us in the variety and richness of our grasses. Let us take a cursory view of some of the counties in eastern New York, for instance West Chester, Dutchess, Orange and many others that might be named. Farms are worth from fifty to one hundred and twenty dollars per acre, and not naturally as much strength in the soil as in Susquehanna county. Comment is unnecessary, more should be written and said in our county papers respecting our advantages as an agricultural district, and in return we ought to patronize them more liberally and pay them promptly and render every aid to them to enable them to extend their usefulness in carrying into the fullest execution the noble object in view.

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