

farms; gentlemen, but in defiance of the imputation of political heresy, I avow myself in favor of free farms, not as an argument, for I am no disposer of the sacred rights of property. "We have now ever a vast public domain, rich and fertile and purchased by the money which belongs to the whole nation." For the last half century, it has been peddled out to speculators, and sold to the actual cultivator, at an extravagant price, and the small amount which our government has received has been so decimated before it reached the treasury, that but little has been left. My own views, which have become settled convictions, are, that every man who will settle upon, and improve a quarter section of land, and make it his home, should receive it "without money and without price." The wealth of every nation consists in what it produces, whether in minerals, manufactures, or agriculture. If we were to adopt, in the enlightened and progressive age, the system pursued by the Roman government, three thousand years ago, what a splendid country would be ours! With a universal and careful cultivation, with small farms, and free farms—with a happy rural population, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, every valley would teem with the rich fruits of the earth, and every hill-side present its golden harvest to the sun!

All history proves, that man has a strong and undying attachment to the soil. If he owns a spot of earth, and can call it his home, he will fight and die to preserve it. The past has demonstrated, and the future will clearly show, that our great strength, as a nation, consists in the universal distribution of property, and the more this is extended, the more strong and enduring will become our political institutions. With such a population, and such a country, we might defy the whole universe in arms! The extension of our territory within the last few years, has enlisted on the part of some of our statesmen, the grave doubts, and greatest fears; but with a wise policy on the part of our government, it will redound to the permanent benefit and future glory of our common country. Adopt the system of parcelling out our public lands to actual cultivators, and when the toxin of war is sounded, or foreign-invasion threatened, it will be found that like the fabled produce of the dragon's teeth, millions of able and armed men will spring from the earth, ready and willing to defend their homes and their country.

The most celebrated writers on political economy have advanced, and sustained the position, that everything valuable to man, is extracted from the earth. A brief examination of the basis of their argument, proves its truth. The precious metals furnish but a mere medium of exchange, with a determinate, but arbitrary value. Gold and silver will neither stay hunger, or save us from starvation, unless we can exchange it for food. We cannot clothe ourselves with rich jewels, except for ornament. Paper money is still further removed from the exigencies of life; it is but the mere representative of the precious metals, and often, as experience has shown, not even that. When money is plenty, and the currency is inflated, land and the produce of land are high; when scarce, they are low, and command a small price. The substance of the whole argument, is that every art, whether mechanical or professional, is not only fostered, but sustained by agriculture! From the soil, and that alone, are extracted the immense supplies, which give life and activity to all human pursuits.

Fare be it from me, to decry, or under-value, in our social system, the various liberal professions, and the mechanic arts. They are all, not only useful, but indispensable, to the progress of human society. If time and space permitted, I might point out and explain the necessary alliance, which exists among the members of every civilized community. The lawyer, the merchant, and the mechanic, all act their part, and prove their usefulness, in the great drama of life. The clergy also, who are our spiritual guides, have an equal claim upon us, for our veneration and respect: devoting their lives to the benefit of our race; self-sacrificing, and uncomplaining; and shut out from the world by the sacred duties of their profession; no class of men receive more bitter neglect, or endure such pangs of hopeless poverty.

I admit and confess that I am an enthusiast on the subject of agriculture, for I see in it, and have long seen in it, the towering greatness of my native country. I have for a number of years pursued it as a pleasure, a profit, and a passion, and it has afforded me more real enjoyment, than all the honors of office have been able to confer. I can safely appeal to the young men who may listen to me on this occasion, to turn their attention and fix their hopes upon the cultivation of the soil! Every profession is crowded to its utmost limit, and if among the swelling number, a portion could be subtracted for the benefit of agriculture, their condition would be vastly improved. A few years have worked great changes in the pursuits and hopes of the rising generation. Many have graduated in our colleges, and subsequently devoted themselves to mechanical pursuits; and statistics abundantly show the same result in every civilized country. It makes man more happy, because it makes him more cheerful, and more charitable. We find men of every religious persuasion and political creed, every where, associating together, like a band of brothers, in this great work of agricultural reform. It has done more to level artificial distinctions in society, and to improve and elevate the human mind, than all other pursuits. The enthusiasm which has been awakened within the last few years in its favor, has perched every rank from the votary to the palace. Our wisest statesmen, and our ripest scholars have caught the flame, and afford practical examples of its influence. The universal spread of intelligence among the people, and the combined efforts of agricultural associations, have accomplished within a very short period, more than the ill-directed labors of a whole century. The successful application of modern science to this branch of industry, has introduced a new impulse,

and stimulated faithful and skilful investigation, which has achieved such wonderful results.

In the cause of declining power, the principal duty of husbandmen have been held to take a more general and enlarged view of its past and present influence upon the human race.

The important picture I

have drawn of the resources and future prospects of our own country, may serve to awaken your thoughts, and lead you to an investigation of the causes which must inevitably control our future destiny as a nation.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole."

And every individual, who accumulates property, by his industry, swells the aggregate amount of the wealth of the whole country. This superficial view, which I have presented, aided by your own intelligence, will serve to demonstrate the fact, that agriculture is, and must be, at all times, the greatest source of our national wealth, and power. It is said that the valley of the Mississippi alone is capable of sustaining one hundred millions of human souls; and this too without acquiring the dense population which some portions of Europe now possess!

The same visible hand of Providence, which led our armies to victory, and to which the immortal Washington ascribed our glorious success, seems still like the pillar and the cloud, to be guiding us onward to our future destiny. This grand and fertile continent, the last discovered, and peopled by civilized man, seems designed for two purposes: to become his last refuge, and from whence the bright star of hope shall continue to reflect back its radiance upon the benighted nations of the ancient world.

It is time to bring my discursive remarks to a close. In discussing a subject like agriculture, so many crowding thoughts are connected with it, that it becomes difficult to select the most appropriate topics for a brief popular address. In the present instance I have been governed by my own taste, and have pursued my own mode of thinking. Prepared in the midst of pressing professional labor, I am aware of its many imperfections; but such as it is, I present it to you, as the only offering I can make for the confidence and kindness which dictated your invitation. If it shall hereafter be found that I have aided you by hints, and suggestions in the noble enterprise, in which you are engaged, I shall feel that I have not lived in vain.

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