

Democrat and Sentinel.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOVERNMENT, LIKE THE DEW OF HEAVEN, SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ALIKE UPON THE HIGH AND THE LOW, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

NEW SERIES.

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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY
CYRUS L. PERSHING, Esq.,
AT THE FIRST ANNUAL FAIR OF THE
CAMBRIA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY
HELD AT EBENSBURG,
On the 3rd, 4th and 5th days of October, 1855.

[Published by a unanimous vote of the Society.]
In accepting the invitation to deliver the address on this interesting occasion, I would be wanting in sincerity, did I not at once my inability to discuss the subject in such a way as to benefit my auditory. Having no practical knowledge of agriculture myself, it may appear much like temerity for me to say anything to practical farmers about it. I trust, however, my friends, you will bear with me patiently, and I promise you that what I may have to say, shall resemble those wonderful medicines so conspicuously bro't to our notice in the newspapers—it shall be purely vegetable, and if it does you no good, will assuredly do you no harm.

A kind Providence has once more blessed the labors of the husbandman. The fears which so painfully seized upon the public mind in the earlier part of the season, lest the present year would, like the last, be disastrous to the hopes of the farmer, are all dispelled. The Bountiful Giver has not again laid his finger upon the earth, blasting the roots of the corn and the wheat. The eye has gazed with rapture upon the golden fields of grain, from whose waving billows has gone up the glad songs from the joyous hearts of the reaper and binder. And now Autumn has come, bringing its tribute to the Creator of mellow fruits, and distended clusters, making glad the heart of man. Truly Peace and Plenty reign within our borders. And those of us who have met here this day, are taught by the sad experience of but a partial failure of the crops of 1854, to lay aside all the political differences which divide us, all the local interests and prejudices which so often bring us into contact, and all with swelling hearts, whatever be the creed to which we conform, join in the Heaven-born aspiration, *GOD SPEED THE PLOUGH!*

A history of agriculture would carry us back to that period in the history of the human race, when our first parents were driven from the garden of Eden, for eating of that forbidden fruit, "whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe." It was a divine command to man, "to till the ground from which he had been taken;" and from that hour down to the present, the tilling of the soil has been the employment of a large portion of the human race. So honorable was this occupation esteemed, that all the great nations of antiquity ascribed its invention to superhuman agency. Among all the divinities of that ancient mythology which peopled every grove, and hill, and valley—every fountain, and river, and sea with its appropriate deities, Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, is distinguished for the vast benefits conferred by her upon mankind. For her worship splendid temples were erected, and one of the great festivals of the Greeks and Romans, which was held immediately after their harvest, was named in her honor, *Cerealia*—an occasion of universal rejoicing, at which persons in mourning were not permitted to appear. And so well was it understood at that early period, that Agriculture is the foundation of all civil society, that to Ceres was also ascribed the establishing of laws for the protection of civil rights. The representations of Ceres are characteristic. In some she appears as a tall, majestic lady, her head garlanded with ears of corn, and a lighted torch in her hand. In others, she is represented as a country woman, mounted upon the back of an ox, carrying a basket and a hoe. I hope it will not be regarded as interfering with the status of Cambria county politics, when I suggest that the latter representation may, perhaps, be properly regarded as a fusion of the farmeress and the goddess!

Poets have sung to us of an iron age, far back in the history of the world, when men dwelt in peace and innocence—then of a silver and subsequently of the golden age. True it is, that every age is distinguished by some peculiar characteristics, which, standing out prominently, indelibly impress their character upon it. Progress is the word which sums up all that distinguishes the present age. Progress is called "God's universal law,"

and it is through the ever pressing and ever increasing wants of mankind, the All-wise Creator secures the accomplishment of his great design—Man's Eternal Progress. At no period since the commencement of the world have so many important discoveries been made, as within the last fifty years. Canals and rail roads, steamboats and telegraphs, have all followed each other with wonderful rapidity, and more wonderful results. We all agree that Dr. Franklin was right when he predicted that within a half a century from his time, it would not take more than twenty days to carry the mail between Philadelphia and Boston. It is now transmitted between those points in less than twenty hours. Perhaps I cannot more forcibly impress upon you an idea of modern progress than by exhibiting to you this newspaper of a past century. It is called "The Pennsylvania Gazette," bears date the 24th day of April, 1755, and purports to contain the "Freshest Advices, Foreign and Domestic." Though published in the city of Philadelphia, issued, as I believe, by Benjamin Franklin himself, it contrasts poorly with the most ordinary country paper of our day. Among the "freshest foreign advices" I find in this old paper, are those dating back to December, 1754; it thus requiring at that time four months to convey intelligence, which is now brought to our doors in ten days. Here, too, you find negroes offered at public sale in Market street, in the city of Philadelphia, while now the whole State is agitated at the imprisonment of Passmore Williamson, for the rescue of a few servants of a passing traveller. Such are some of the startling changes going on around us. "*Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur cum illis.*"

The rich treasures of Science are daily thrown at our feet. By her disclosures, we are enabled to interrogate all nature and learn her secrets. By means of the telescope we walk among the stars. Geology has enabled us to penetrate the bowels of the earth, and drag from its hitherto unknown treasures. The Astronomer in his study, by means of his arithmetical science, demonstrates the existence of another world, never yet seen by mortal eye, and then discovers in that part of space indicated by this conclusion, this new planet, justly named *Le Verrier*, wheeling its silent rounds. Steam has almost annihilated Time and Space. The lightning leaps from the clouds to bear our messages, and soon old Ocean will wear beneath his waves, a girdle of fire!

Prolific as is the theme, it is not my intention to dwell on the amazing progress of scientific research and discovery in our own day. This has so frequently, and so recently too, been dwelt upon by others in addresses of this kind, that for me to say anything more upon it, might look too much like "treading in the footsteps of my illustrious predecessors."

The dignity and importance of agriculture have been often dwelt upon. Distributing the people of the world into classes, representing their respective pursuits, agriculture presents seven-eighths, while all others combined represent but one-eighth of the whole. As a means of creating natural and individual wealth, therefore, agriculture is infinitely greater than all others together. Since it alone supplies food and raiment for all, the very existence of civilized communities is dependent upon its products. The soil is our common mother from whose bountiful breast we derive our subsistence. Agriculture is the basis of all other industrial interests. As an art, the oldest of the arts—it is the sustaining mother of all the arts. As a science, it claims the homage and invokes the aid, while it is the support of all the sciences. The thousands of manufactories spread over our land, the smoke of which darkens the air, and which afford employment to so great a number of our population, are incessantly employing in changing the form of the products of agriculture, and in supplying it with implements and tools. The commerce which whitens every ocean, is but engaged as a carrier to exchange the place of agricultural products, by distributing the fruits of different climates or localities of civilized life. Without agriculture, commerce and manufactures, with all their important and ever increasing interests, never could have existed. Without it, education, arts, sciences, refinement, mental and moral improvement, would soon languish and die. Without it, civilization would be unknown, and men be reduced to savage life, prowling through the dark forests, like beasts of prey, seeking an uncertain subsistence in the spoils of the chase.

The truth of all this will be at once admitted. Is it not then strange that the science of agriculture for a long period did not keep pace with the other sciences, and in fact, made no progress? American farmers appeared contented, year after year, to till the soil, extracting from it all the elements of its fertility, without ever thinking of restoring these elements to the soil again. Yearly the soil became more exhausted until the consequences of this mode of cultivation developed themselves in the deteriorated crops of the vicinity of Albany, less wheat is now raised there, than there was thirty years ago, and the same is true of many other localities. In some States, the plantations have been abandoned, and were once in a high state of cultivation. The potato, the clover, the sulphuric and phosphoric acids, which form component parts of the soil, are yearly carried away and sold in the millions of tons of cotton, hemp, &c., we raise and export, and the rich, virgin soil, we leave to the weeds and grain growing countries of Europe. There, where the population is dense, and labor is the schoolmaster, this subject long since attracted attention. The facts just referred to, at length attracted the attention of some of our practical and sagacious farmers, who immediately commenced the work of reform, in which they showed themselves national benefactors.

Neither can the importance of this subject in a national aspect, be over-estimated. It has been said, "that productiveness of crops and destructiveness of soil, are the two most prominent features of American agriculture." We forget to feed the land that both feeds and clothes us all. The great loss sustained in consequence of defective tillage, may, perhaps, be best learned from a few statistics which I condense from one of the reports of the Patent Office. In the State of New York, there were, in 1845, under improvement, 11,737,968 acres of land. In 1850, the number was 12,408,968 acres, showing an increase in five years, of 671,000 acres. Notwithstanding this increase of over half a million of acres of cultivated land, it is evident that the soil parted with more of the elements of crops than it regained, from the fact that in this interval of five years, in the number of horses, cows, cattle of every kind, swine and sheep, in the crops of wheat, buckwheat, potatoes, peas and beans, and in the quantity of wool and flax, there was a large decrease. Suppose now the lands in that State are damaged, on an average, to the amount of two dollars per acre for each year, and you have a loss of about twenty-five millions of dollars. Extend this calculation to the 118,435,178 acres of improved land in the United States, as returned by the census of 1850, and the nation loses annually more than two hundred millions of dollars from the bulk of her national wealth. Careful examination has shown, that to supply the potash, magnesia, lime, soda, &c., annually extracted from the soil to its hurt and impoverishment, would cost even more than the enormous amount designated. Well may such exhibitions arouse us. It is gratifying to witness the deep interest now manifested by all classes on this subject. Such displays as we have seen here during this, our first County Fair, serve greatly to excite and keep alive that spirit which is so essential to the perfection of agricultural science.

I was much surprised to find, in the examination of this subject, that the average crop of wheat per acre, in the harvests of Great Britain, on the soil cultivated for hundreds of years, is about double that produced on the soil of Ohio, the first wheat growing State in the Union.—Why is this? Because British farmers are thoroughly educated for their work, and so work wisely. They pay back to the earth what they borrow. They endeavor by every means in their power to enrich their ground, and in return it enriches them. Perhaps the chief sin of American farmers is, that they too often seek to double their acres instead of their crops.

A glance at some of the means by which European agriculture has made such marked progress, may not be unprofitable in this connection. Prominent among the provision made by England and France for the promotion of the arts and sciences generally, is that for the promotion of the art and science of agriculture in particular. These nations not only have national institutions in which, philosophy, literature and art are taught, but they have also national boards of agriculture, and excellent schools of instruction with model farms attached, where every thing is taught necessary to secure the success of the student in his career as a farmer. The constituent elements of the soil, and every mode of amelioration which ages have brought or experiment recommended, are carefully taught in these agricultural schools and upon these model farms. Experience, the best of all tests, has shown the great national advantages resulting from these institutions. The French School is situated at Grignon, near Paris. The farm embraces twelve hundred acres, and so prosperous has it been of late years, that the profits have exceeded the expenditures, and thus its advantages have been extended to many free pupils. Similar institutions are found in England, Ireland and Scotland, and they have already contributed to that advancement of agriculture, both as an art and a

science, which has so signally marked its modern progress.

Our own WASHINGTON, a practical farmer, who loved his occupation so well that he reluctantly tore himself from it for a time, to wear the highest honors of a nation, used his efforts to establish boards of agriculture in this country. In a letter to William Strickland of England, he says: "I have endeavored, both in a public and private character, to encourage the establishment of boards of agriculture in this country, but hitherto in vain." And in speaking of the National Board of Agriculture, in Great Britain, he says: "I have considered it as one of the most valuable institutions of modern times; and to be productive of great advantages to the nation, and to mankind in general."

Is not the great want of American agriculture some such organized system as at present exists in England, France, and Scotland? Our Government has established military and naval schools, which work well, and which are sustained directly from the national treasury. What would our armies and navies accomplish without the toil of the farmer? Let us then have agricultural schools of a high character, with model farms attached for the purpose of making experiments, thus combining the "book learning" with the practice of the art. I know the idea of experimental farming is often sneered at, but why should it be? Is not a vast amount of that knowledge of which we boast so loudly, the direct result of experiment? Had Franklin not experimented, he never would have made that splendid discovery which has immortalized his name, and which will hand it down "till the last syllable of recorded time." The discovery of the age—one that will confer greater benefits upon mankind than all the blood bought victories that stand out so conspicuously on the page of history, is that of Peruvian guano. Providence has in this favored the farmer with a substance by which he is enabled by use of but little more in weight than the seed with which he sows the land, to restore the most worn out fields to the production of their palmiest days. Fifteen years ago, viz: in 1840, a few tons of guano were introduced into England, which were used by way of experiment. Now the consumption has increased to 100,000 tons annually, and the Royal Agricultural Society has offered a premium of £1000 for the discovery of a manure equal to guano in strength, which can be manufactured and sold in large quantities at \$25 per ton. I have referred to this for the purpose of relating an incident. As far back as 1824, thirty one years ago, John S. Skinner, a pioneer in agricultural science, obtained two barrels of genuine guano from the coast of Peru. He placed this guano in the possession of a few friends, who neglected it, and that was the end of it. Had there been in existence at that time, a National Industrial University, with such an experimental farm attached as the 1200 acres at Grignon, the inestimable value of this fertilizer would have been ascertained years before it was. And is it an over-estimate to say, that had the discovery then been made, the gain to the country would have equalled our national expenditures from that day to this?

But a brighter day is dawning. History has shown that agriculture as an art, when unaided by science, made but little progress in a thousand years. Experience might accumulate facts, but no principle of general application could be established. A manure beneficial in one place was often found worthless in another, because no rule could be given for its use—no reason for its failure. Here agricultural chemistry steps in and gives its invaluable aid to the intelligent farmer. When a student at college, our President, on one occasion, in addressing our class, made this remark: "Young gentlemen, the man among you who knows the most Greek and has the most Grace, will make the best preacher." This rule will hold good in farming as well as in preaching. Every farmer has his Greek in his bones, and muscles, and sinews—his Grace, agricultural grace, he must find in chemistry. It is this science alone which determines the nature and quality of the elements of the soil, and also the composition of the various manures, thus adapting the one to the other without loss. The constituents of plants and the substances necessary to their existence, are also disclosed by chemistry. But for the teaching of this science we must have agricultural schools and model farms. Pennsylvania, our own honored State, has taken a noble step for the advancement of agriculture. The labors of Watts and Woodward, Elwyn and Gowen have not been in vain. "The Farmer's High School of Pennsylvania," has been incorporated by our Legislature, and soon the spire of the first purely agricultural school in the Union, will point towards the sky. The Plough on our State Coat of Arms, is now an emblem of some significance. The Press, that power which is omnipotent in this country, is also contributing its aid in

the advancement of the great interest of agriculture. But a few years ago, and there were no periodicals devoted to agricultural science, now almost every State in the Union sustains its agricultural newspapers, which are weekly disseminating a vast amount of valuable information for the benefit of the farmer. Through them the best talent of the land speaks, and considers itself highly honored in addressing such assemblages of farmers as I have before me to-day.

Within the last year or two, hundreds of thousands have congregated at the agricultural fairs held at Saratoga, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Dayton, Springfield and Columbus. The exhibition at Springfield embraced horses only, but is not the horse worthy of a national fair? The noblest of the animals, he has been celebrated in history from the Bucephalus who bore Alexander the Great on his back to the conquest of a world, down to Old Whitey, who having carried Old Zach through all the perils of Palo Alto, Rosaca, Monterey and Buena Vista, next distanced all competitors on the Presidential race course, and brought his master in triumph to the much prized goal—the White House, in Washington! These fairs are powerful auxiliaries in the advancement of agricultural skill and science. It is through these associations, whether County or State, that a strong agricultural public opinion is being formed, which is fast making itself felt and respected. Farmers, on these occasions, meet together and feel that they are no longer isolated, but a community—a brotherhood. A spirit of healthy enterprise and emulation is excited. Through the agency of such societies, new implements of agriculture are brought to the attention of the cultivators of the soil. In the invention of agricultural implements our mechanics have won some world renowned triumphs. Whilst England and France are rejoicing over the fall of Sevastopol, America is rejoicing at the victory of her mechanic son, McCormick, at the Paris exhibition of all nations. Our rejoicing is not mingled with the wail of the widow and the orphan, neither are our hero's laurels stained with blood.

The great contest of the age among the rival nations of the earth, is for commercial supremacy. "Commerce is King," but his throne would soon totter and fall were it not supported by agriculture. Every year our ships find their way into new ports in distant parts of the globe, and it has been reserved for American diplomacy to overcome the superstition and prejudices which for ages have closed the ports of Japan to every nation. The over-crowded populations of China, India and Japan, want our agricultural productions. This will render the Pacific Rail Road necessary, and it is through the instrumentality of our agricultural interests that the Atlantic and Pacific oceans will yet be joined by bands of iron. The day is not far distant when across this continent will be carried the commerce of the East, which has enriched every nation that ever enjoyed it. The commerce of the world will pass through San Francisco and New York. Then will our commercial supremacy be triumphantly established, and this nation become the mightiest power, if true to itself, the world has yet seen. But this must be accomplished through our agriculture, for no axiom of political economy is more true, than that the commerce of any country is limited by the amount of products it has to give in exchange.

The farmers in the United States occupy a high position. In France the continual division of the paternal estates among all the children has resulted disastrously to the agricultural interests, for the land is held in such minute portions as to render its profitable cultivation impossible. In England, the laws of primogeniture and entailment have accumulated the whole territory in the hands of a few. The farmers are chiefly tenants, paying enormous rents to the nobility, besides heavy taxes to the government. Thus, in 1851, the population of Great Britain, including Ireland and the islands in the British seas, was 27,610,866, and of this number but 30,000 were land holders. The Licinian law of the Romans, which fixed the quantity of land each one was allowed to hold, is needed in Great Britain. The love of property is said to be one of the strongest principles of the human breast, and the prospects of its acquisition is a powerful stimulus to industry. Colonel Benton said of tenantry: "It is unfavorable to freedom, it lays the foundation for separate orders in society, annihilates the love of country, and weakens the spirit of independence. The tenant has, in fact, no country, no hearth, no domestic altar, no household god." Here we have no such landed laws as deface the statute books of Europe. Our land is tilled by men who own the soil they cultivate;—by men who love home and all the thrilling associations that word calls up;—men who have ever shown themselves willing to lay down life in defence of their firesides and their alters.

The monk, Raoul Glaber, has given us a terrible picture of the ravages of famine at several periods during the middle ages. In 1420, flocks of famished wolves, finding nothing to eat in the country, came and devoured dead and living beings in the outskirts of the cities as far as Paris. The lands were all held by the feudal lords, and were exceedingly fertile, but says the monk, "the unfortunate serfs who cultivated the lands of the Barons, could not dream of multiplying the means of subsistence. Why should they? If they produced more they would have to give more to the lord; to pay more taxes; to sweat larger drops for taxation. And so what horrible times! how many generations during them were destroyed by hunger!" With agriculture as the national interest, an intelligent yeomanry who till the lands for themselves, and not for some feudal Baron or lord, with a country favored by Heaven, embracing every variety of soil and climate, in which millions of acres are yet untouched by the hand of culture, we need little fear a return of those dark days so vividly depicted by the monk. Truly, "ours is a goodly heritage."

Let no one then despise the pursuits of the farmer. It is the occupation in which our noblest statesmen gladly take refuge from the toils of political strife. Mount Vernon and Monticello, Ashland and Marshfield are distinguished names on the map of agriculture. Amid the scenes of rural life the heart is brought into closer communion with nature, in her green retreats and shady bowers, and imbued with a sense of its dependence, turns thankfully to the Father of Mercies. Let us seek then to elevate and ennoble agriculture. Let us teach our sons, who are so eager to rush from the farm to all the temptations of city life, too often, alas! to fall, that happiness and distinction are not always found by those who dream of forensic fame, of senatorial halls and the high walks of professional life. Teach them never to forget

"The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wild wood,
And every loved spot which their infancy knew."

I will detain you no longer. With the hope that this, the first Fair of the Cambria County Agricultural Society, may be productive of far more good results than its intelligent and public spirited founders ever anticipated—that it will inaugurate a new era in our little mountain county, and make her as distinguished for her agriculture as she now is for the beauty of her daughters, and the bravery of her sons;—and that after another seed time and harvest are past, we may all meet again at our next anniversary, I shall conclude in the language of true poetry:

"Wide—wide may the world feel the power of the plow,
And yield to the sickle a fulness delighting,
May this be our conquest, the earth to subdue,
Till all join the song of the harvest inviting.
The sword and the spear,
Are only known here
As we plow, or we prune—or we toil void of fear,
And the fruit and the flower all smile at their birth,
All greeting the farmer, the prince of the earth."

CONSTITUTION OF THE EARTH.—A writer in the *Scientific American*, after examining all the various theories concerning the structure of the earth, endorses the conclusion that the world is one mass or globe of mixed metals, of which the mere crust has become rusted, or of earthly form; the outer rind, as it were preventing any rapid combination taking place with the metallic surface, five or six miles below the face of the dry land.—Eruptions from volcanoes he thinks are produced by the sea getting down to the metallic surface through some fissure in the earth's crust, a decomposition of the water then takes place, fire flame and steam causing an eruption.

FEARFUL RETRIBUTION.—James W. Coffroth, a State Senator of California, elected originally by the Democrats, but recently by the Know-Nothings, made the following remark at Benicia in 1853:—"If ever I desert the Democratic party, may my right arm be withered." He became a member of the Know-Nothing Order, and was their candidate at the recent election in California for the State Senate. On the day of the election he fell from his horse and so completely shattered his right arm that amputation was deemed necessary.

A JUST REBUKE.
In a recent criminal trial in Michigan, the wife and infant child of the accused, accompanied by a minister of the gospel in the relation of a friend of the family, were constantly present, and afforded the counsel for the defence an opportunity, which was not lost, to make a very pathetic appeal to the jury. The judge thereupon took occasion to state, in his charge, that he "hoped never again to witness such things brought into court as a part of the machinery of the defence."

Don't be afraid to marry a sentimental young lady. She may be sometimes melancholy; but no matter as long as she is pensive without the ex.