

M. A. C.
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ADDRESS

AT THE

SEVENTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

American Pomological Society,

HELD IN ROCHESTER, N. Y.,

SEPT. 17, 18, 19, 1879.

BY MARSHALL P. WILDER,

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

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ADDRESS.

*Members and Delegates of the
American Pomological Society :*

GENTLEMEN :—

Having held the office of President of this Association during its whole life, with the exception of two years out of thirty-one, I regret exceedingly my inability to be present, and by your continued favor, to occupy the chair, as I expected to do, at Rochester. But Providence seems to indicate, by the late accident which has impaired my physical ability, that it is not my duty yet to risk a journey so far from home.

For twenty-nine years you have elected me as your President, and with a unanimity far beyond my merit. I most sincerely desire ever to cherish a profound sense of gratitude and thankfulness for the honor conferred, and the confidence reposed in me. My thanks are especially due for the cordial and vigorous support I have received from my official associates. It was my intention to be with you at this meeting and to extend to you an invitation to hold our next session in the city of Boston, when and where I should lay down the high honors which you have so long conferred on me. But my physicians advise me not to

take so long a journey and incur the labor which would necessarily fall upon me.

RESIGNATION.

With thanks which no language can express, for the repeated honors conferred on me, and for your kind coöperation and support during this long period of official service, and with the assurance that I have no higher ambition than to be associated with you in a cause so honorable, and to be a co-worker while life should last, I deem it, under present circumstances, my duty to tender my resignation as President of the Society. Under the belief, so often expressed by you, that my official services were important to the establishment and success of our Society, I have willingly conformed to your wishes, and should my health be fully restored, which I fondly hope will be the case, I will cheerfully respond to any call you may make on me. I beg to assure you that whatever my relations may be to you, I shall ever entertain a lively sense of gratitude to those with whom I have been associated and an ardent desire and ambition to promote the welfare and renown of our Society. If honor, distinction, and respect have been attached to the office, I have had them lavished on me; if toil, anxiety, and expense, then I claim to have borne my full share.

PROGRESS.

When I reflect on the rapid progress which our Society has made since its establishment, how it has risen from the small beginning of a few States, until its jurisdiction embraces a catalogue of fifty States, districts and territories, with lists of fruits adapted to each,—how its list of members has increased from a few dozens to many hundreds of practical and scientific cultivators, and numerous sister associations have spread over our fair land, from the British Provinces to the Gulf of Mexico, all working together in harmony with each other to aid us in our great work of planting throughout our vast domain, gardens, orchards, and vineyards of the best fruits known,—when I reflect upon the comparatively small value of the fruit crop of that day, not considered as worthy of a place in our national statistics, now rivalling in value some of the most important crops of our country, I feel an interest that can scarcely be expressed in words. When we consider the astonishing increase in fruit culture, the immense number of trees sent from this place and its vicinity and from other parts, distributed all over this continent and even to foreign lands—the wonderful increase of peaches, grapes, strawberries, and other small fruits, and the ease with which they are sent to market—the rapid development of new lands suited to fruit culture, and that throughout our broad land, wherever the foot of civilization has planted

itself, the enterprise of fruit culture is sure to keep pace with it—it is not easy to estimate its future importance, whether for the production of an article of luxury, of home consumption, or of foreign commerce.

In this connection permit me to refer you to the recommendations in my previous address; to the great increase of fruit culture in our country, and to the revenue arising therefrom. This is constantly increasing, showing a great augmentation since that time in our shipments abroad. I have not the statistics at hand, but as an evidence of the fruit shipped from New England—not including those from Connecticut, which went to New York—we find that more than half a million barrels of fruit were shipped from Boston, and ports east from Boston in 1878. Of this number fully two hundred and fifty thousand barrels were grown in New Hampshire alone, three quarters of the balance were from Massachusetts, and the rest from Maine.

LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE.

In that address I endeavored to sum up the experience which had been acquired during these years of our association, and the opinions I had so fully and freely expressed on former occasions on the topics connected with our art. I shall withhold any extended remarks in the present address, and simply refer to a few of the most important lessons which have been acquired by the experience of the past. I have often alluded to these before, but I desire to

call your attention to them again, and first, the expediency of

PRODUCING NEW AND IMPROVED VARIETIES

from seed, either by cross-breeding or from the natural seed of the best known kinds extant. These are the best methods of increasing and preserving a perpetuity of choice fruits, so that they may be adapted to the various soils and temperatures of our widely extended and constantly increasing domain. Therefore, confirming my oft-repeated suggestions, I most earnestly desire to enforce them and thus to obtain in the future more and more of those superlative fruits that grace the catalogues of different sections of our country. Go on without fear of disappointment. This is the road that leads to success. Who knows what glorious fruits you may create to bless the generations that are to follow you?

ADVANTAGES OF CROSS-FERTILIZATION OR HYBRIDIZATION OF PLANTS.

What wonders have been achieved in the vegetable kingdom by cross-fertilization in our own time! But still greater wonders are to be realized by this art as time advances, producing new and improved varieties of still greater excellence. Instances are so numerous of wonderful improvement by the application of this art in the production of magnificent fruits, flowers, and vegetables, as to need no reference in detail. I have

so often, during the forty years of my own experience, alluded to the importance of this art as the true means of rapid progress, that I refrain from extended remark and desire only to repeat again my former advice, *to plant the most perfect and mature seed of our very best fruits, and as the means of more rapid progress to cross-fertilize our finest fruits for still greater excellence.* Thus I have discoursed to you for many years—thus I have promised to do while I live. This is our work, to direct and help nature on in the course of improvement.

Who that has witnessed the amazing improvement by the application of this art in the Rose, Camellia, Dahlia, Azalea, and other plants in our own time,—who that has seen the hybrid grapes of Ricketts, Rogers, Ellwanger & Barry, Moore, Campbell, and other practitioners, can doubt the potent influence of the cross-impregnation of plants? Who that reflects on the astonishing advance made by hybridization of the Camellia in France and Italy, the Camellia and Azalea in Belgium, England, and France, and the improvement in the vegetable kingdom generally, can hesitate to say that this art is the great secret and source of the wonderful advance which has been achieved during the last half of the present century? Who that has seen the magnificent plants in our own conservatories, or the grand plant collections of England produced by this art, but would exclaim, “Truly, here, at last, have we found the philosopher’s stone!”

This improvement is all within the hand of man, to use it as he will. The field of progress is endless, and it is your duty, gentlemen, to occupy the ground. The same Divine power that gave us the infinite species of plants and trees, also furnished them with the ability not only to perpetuate themselves, but under judicious treatment, and a wise selection of parents, to produce indefinitely still better varieties than we now possess. In a word, we must depend mainly on the production from seed for fruits adapted to the various locations of our vast territory. And what richer legacy can a man leave to the generations that are to follow him, than a fine, delicious fruit, which he shall have originated by his own hand. This will be a living monument to his memory when posterity shall recline beneath the shade of its branches, and pluck the luscious fruit from the trees which he has left them.

THINNING AND PACKING OF FRUIT.

The importance of properly thinning our fruit trees when bearing redundant crops is more and more apparent. To produce fruit that commands a good price in the market has become an absolute necessity. This is seen especially in that intended for exportation, apples of good size, fair and properly packed, commanding in the English market fully double the price of those which had not received such care. Such also is the case in our own markets, Baldwin apples of one grower bringing two to three dollars per barrel, while

his neighbor's, which had received no such attention, brought but a dollar. To produce such fruit, trees must not only have good cultivation, but should be properly thinned, excessive production being always at the expense of both quantity and quality. This lesson we learned long ago, and I have often endeavored to impress upon cultivators the importance of following it. Therefore you will excuse me for calling your attention to it again.

The export trade of our American products is constantly increasing, and among them the fruits of our country, especially apples, are always in regular demand, and as new facilities are afforded for their shipment a constant trade will be ensured of great importance and permanency to our commerce. Nor is this demand likely to fall off. These facts should encourage our fruit growers to devote more and more of their broad acres to the production of fruits to meet the constantly increasing foreign demand.

VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF OUR SOCIETY.

I have often spoken of the salutary influence of our association. The more I reflect upon its operations the more am I impressed with its usefulness, and with the importance of perpetuating it through coming time. "The idea of voluntary combinations and associations," said Mr. Webster, "is the great modern engine of improvement." This power of association, bringing in contact man with man, and mind with mind, and the

information acquired thereby, is of more value than the same information derived from books. It is this centralization of experience which has produced by our Society and similar associations the great improvement which we have witnessed in our American fruits. Who can predict what the future influences of our own Society may be when our vast unoccupied territory, suited to the cultivation of fruits, shall be occupied for that purpose? Let us therefore discharge the duties of our day and generation, so that our children may have cause to bless our memories, as we now cherish the names of those who laid the foundations of our Society, and have brought it forward to its present flourishing condition.

Our work is of great magnitude, embracing an entire continent, opening up to us new resources and demands, and calling for constant and untiring energy and enterprise. The importance and usefulness of our association is seen in a review of its work for twenty-seven years, which I gave in my last biennial address.

We have made great advances during the thirty-one years of our history, and experience from the best sources is flowing in to us every day. The spirit of investigation is now thoroughly alive, and we have opportunities for improvement such as have never been afforded to any other Pomological Association on the globe. Our resources are abundant, and so kindly does nature coöperate with us under the benign influence of man, that he can mould her almost to his will,

and make of the rough and acrid wilding a most beautiful and delicious fruit, and thus we can go on producing indefinitely as fine varieties as we have ever seen.

When we review what has already been accomplished, in a country so varied in soil and climate, who can set bounds to our progress during the remainder of this century, where, by the exchange of personal experience the representatives from the different parts of our continent become kindly affiliated and united in the bonds of friendship and reciprocal regard, and by promoting the cause in which we are engaged we have learned to respect each other.

All this has been accomplished without financial aid, except that received from membership, and occasional sums from individuals to meet deficiencies. In this connection I desire to state that I have paid over to the treasurer three hundred and twenty-seven dollars and twenty-nine cents, being the balance in my hands of the Downing Monument Fund, with interest to this date. This has been done in accordance with the consent of the heirs of Mr. Downing and his administrator, and the Committee who had in charge the erection of the monument.

But the time has now come when means are wanting to constitute a fund to insure the publication of proceedings in future. I take the liberty of suggesting the propriety of soliciting from all life members who have paid but ten dollars, to forward to the treasurer ten dollars more each, and make their contributions

the same as are required now for life membership. And permit me to add that no better appropriation of money can be made, and I trust that when our friends are making donations and bequests for benevolent objects, they will remember the American Pomological Society.

CATALOGUE.

Agreeably to our former custom, I have no doubt our Catalogue will receive special attention in regard to its enlargement and revision. This is one of the most important labors of the Society. Great advantages have already resulted from it to the country and the world, and we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Barry, Chairman of the General Fruit Committee, and his associates, for the intelligence, enterprise, and careful discrimination exercised in the preparation and correction of its columns, which posterity will never forget. This Catalogue is becoming more and more valuable with every issue, embodying, as it does, the ripest experience of the best cultivators in all parts of our country, and classifying, as it does, our fruits, registering from time to time every thing that is valuable, and entering upon its pages every thing that is desirable for the various sections of our widely extended continent, and rejecting such fruits as may, on careful trial, be deemed unworthy of a place in its pages. Into this Catalogue is condensed the substance and essence of our proceedings and all the various State reports, and with every revision it may be expected to approximate nearer

and nearer to perfection. If this Society had rendered no other service than to give to the world its Catalogue of Fruits, it would have fulfilled an important mission. And if I were asked again what was the most important measure ever adopted by the Society, I should answer as before,—*its Catalogue of Fruits*. Persevere, then, in this line of our researches, and you will embrace in its register every new or old fruit of good quality, with its peculiar adaptation, and whether worthy of extensive cultivation. Persevere, I say, in your noble work, and you will leave to the generations that shall follow you richer memorials than those of marble or of brass, that can only perpetuate in lifeless praise the value of your services on earth.

INSECTS AND DISEASES INJURIOUS TO VEGETATION.

In regard to insects and diseases which are making such devastating progress in our own and other lands, it is not necessary for me to enlarge, as cultivators are fully aware of the importance of the subject. Thanks to Harris, Riley, Fitch, Glover, Le Baron, Thomas, Packard, and other entomologists, who have devoted their lives to the investigation of this subject, and from whom we have already derived so much benefit in the past, and to whom we look for aid in the future in teaching us how we may arrest the depredations of insects, and the remedy for diseases, we have discovered means for the destruction of many insects and diseases of trees, and we have faith in the ultimate

triumph of man in discovering remedies for, or the means of preventing, most of these that vegetation is subject to from the ravages of insects. Everlasting vigilance is the price of reward, and this is especially true in contending with the host of vile creations that we have to meet with in the culture of fruit trees. I desire, however, to call especial attention to the ravages of that terrible insect, the phylloxera, which is now become of such vast importance to the grape growers of Europe, and has brought them to a condition little short of desperate.

From the interesting paper by our Mr. G. W. Campbell, Commissioner from the State of Ohio to the Paris Exhibition of 1878, in the Twelfth Report of the Ohio State Horticultural Society, it appears that the only reliance of the French vineyardists for overcoming this scourge is the grafting of their varieties on stocks of the American species, among which the Jacques, supposed to be identical with Longworth's Cigar Box Grape, is preëminent for health and vigor. Mr. Campbell says "The enthusiasm in favor of the American vines reminds me of the flush times in America when the 'grape fever' was at its height, and when grape growing was the all-absorbing question in many parts of this country." Although we deplore the loss to the French vineyardists, the recognition of the health and vigor of the American species cannot but be gratifying to those who have labored so diligently to originate and introduce new and improved varieties.

It is also gratifying to know that, though as a rule the French do not like the flavor of our wines, they admit some of them to be good, and we believe that with the lapse of time they will be more and more appreciated. It is matter for great thankfulness that on this continent we have thus far experienced but little injury from this scourge, and the health of American vines in France affords strong hopes that we may continue to be exempt.

Since writing the above we are informed that the phylloxera continues its deadly march over the vine-clad hills of France, having, it is estimated, already destroyed some 900,000 acres of vines, and great fears are entertained for the safety of the remaining vineyards of that country.

IN MEMORIAM.

Since our last session several members of our Society have closed their pilgrimage on earth, but their labors in our cause will live to bless the world, and their names will be treasured up in our memory as benefactors to mankind.

First in order we would remember Hon. Willard C. Flagg, whose death was announced in a circular just as our last volume was going to press. He died at his residence, Moro, Illinois, on Saturday, March 30th, 1878. His memory will ever be cherished by us for his great ability and fidelity as Secretary of the American Pomological Society, and the various other

institutions of our country with which he held official relations. Few men of his age have held more offices of honor and trust, which were properly referred to in a closing page of our last issue.

Mr. F. R. Elliott, formerly Secretary of this Society, died at Cleveland, Ohio, in February, 1878. Mr. E. possessed large experience as a pomologist and horticulturist, and from early life was a contributor to public journals, and was also an author of several popular works on these specialties. He was one of our early members, and ever took an active part in the proceedings of our Society. For many years he was Secretary of our Society, and had a natural facility for accomplishing the work of that officer. He will be remembered by a large circle of friends throughout the country, as one who did much for the promotion of American horticulture and pomology. We delight to remember him at one time as one of our most useful men; but misfortune overcame him. We remember his valuable services in the cause we are seeking to promote, but it is not our province or duty to speak of his misfortunes or frailties. No, let us rather spread the veil of charity over his grave, and remember the good he has done. Peace to his ashes!

Silas Moore, Vice-President for the State of Rhode Island, died at his residence, near Providence, several months since. He was one of the older members of our Association, having held for many years that office. Mr. Moore was one of the oldest nurserymen of New

England, well skilled in his business, highly esteemed for his probity, and had done much for his own and adjoining States to promote the present advanced condition of American pomology. He was a modest and unpretentious man, much interested in the welfare of our Society, and had exerted a happy influence on the fruit culture of his own and adjoining States. He was a useful man in his profession, and respected as a citizen.

Dr. A. P. Wylie, Vice-President for the State of South Carolina, died at Chester nearly two years since. Many will remember his interesting and scientific paper on the cross-fertilization of American and foreign grapes, especially on the different forms of pollen grains, showing how it was not possible for some kinds to fertilize others. They will also remember the fine specimens of grapes of his own crossing which he has shown at the various exhibitions of the American Pomological Society, especially the Peter Wylie, now in much repute, at the South. Dr. W. was a modest unpretending gentleman, and was eminently a man of science, much attached to the cultivation of fruits, and the results of his investigations are of great interest not only to horticulturists but to vegetable physiologists. His loss will be much deplored by all who knew him.

Dr. H. A. Swasey, died at Tangipahoa, Louisiana, of yellow fever, September 18th, 1878, in Washington Parish, at his post of duty as a physician in contending

with this fearful disease. Dr. Swasey was born at Saint Johnsbury, Vermont, but had resided at the South for a long time. He was a strong friend of the American Pomological Society, and warmly attached to the pleasures of rural life. He was one of our Committee on Native Fruits, and on the Revision of the Catalogue. During a long and busy life he was connected with the agricultural and horticultural press. He was for a considerable time editor of our "Home Journal," of Louisiana. He published a horticultural journal at Yazoo City, Mississippi; was connected with the "Rural Alabamian," at Mobile, and took editorial charge of the "Southern Plantation," at Montgomery. He was a constant contributor to the agricultural and horticultural press, dispensing freely of the knowledge he acquired, and much of the horticultural improvement in the South is due to his zealous and unselfish efforts to promote the public good.

Although it has not been our custom to refer to others than those who have held official relations with us, I think it proper also to notice the death of Col. Edward Wilkins, of Chestertown, Maryland, who died December, 1878. From Col. W., it will be remembered, the Society received especial courtesies at its session in Baltimore. At his invitation the Society visited his extensive peach orchard, the dimensions of which would astonish the world. It was probably the largest of which we have any record. He was much attached to fruit culture, and did not confine

himself to peaches alone. He was one of the fathers of the immense peach trade, and his orchards were wonderfully successful. He was one of the foremost horticulturists of Maryland, full of enthusiasm, and characterized by business-like methods in this and other walks of life. He was universally respected as a progressive man.

There may be others who have held official relations with us, who have died since our last session, of whom I have not been informed; if so, I trust appropriate resolutions will be passed, expressing our respect and gratitude for their services in our cause.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, with a heart full of gratitude for the many honors you have conferred upon me as your President, I now lay down the robes of office with which you have clothed me for twenty-nine years, feeling assured that though we may die, our institution shall live, and as time advances, others will take it up and foster it with the same love that we have entertained for it.

Cherish, then, the friendships and kind sympathies which have existed between us. The cause you seek to promote is the cause of civilization and humanity. A few more years and those who now occupy these seats will have closed their labors on earth, but the same earth will bring forth its myriads of fruits and

flowers, and yield its bounteous harvests for the service of those who may come after us.

A few more days, a few more months, and he who now addresses you will have joined the great congregation of the dead, and have passed beyond the horizon of life, but his spirit shall continue to render thanks to the Giver of all good for the blessings which have flowed from the influence of our association. May it live on and on, and be perpetuated as a benefactor of mankind. And what more dutiful or grateful service can we render to our kindred or our country than to hand down to posterity the choicest fruits we have been enabled to produce for their use. May the success of the past cheer and stimulate you to greater exertions in the future, and although you may not live to reap the rich harvest which you are now planting, your children and your children's children shall rejoice in the result of your labor long after you shall have passed over the river to those celestial fields,

Where the verdure of spring time forever shall reign,
 And the perfume of flowers float o'er the bright plain,
 Where the noontide of summer and autumn shall blend,
 In a harvest of fruits that never shall end.

