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MR. GOODRICH'S ADDRESS.



AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE

HARTFORD COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,

OCTOBER 12TH, 1826.

BY REV. CHARLES A. GOODRICH.

HARTFORD :
PRINTED BY GOODWIN & CO.
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At the Annual Meeting of the Hartford County Agricultural Society, held at the State-House, October 12th, 1826.

Voted—That ENOCH PERKINS and WARD WOODBRIDGE, Esqrs. be a committee to present the thanks of this Society to the Rev. CHARLES A. GOODRICH, for his Address this day delivered, and to request a copy thereof for publication.

Attest.

B. W. BIRGE, *Recording Secretary.*

HARTFORD, October 16th, 1826.

REVEREND SIR—

In behalf of the Hartford County Agricultural Society. the undersigned Committee present to you the thanks of the Society for the Address which you delivered before them on the 12th instant; and request a copy of the same for publication. Permit us to add that the Society were very much pleased with the Address, and believe the publication of it will tend to promote the important objects of their Institution. We annex a copy of the Society's vote on this subject; and are very respectfully,

Reverend Sir, your obedient servants,

ENOCH PERKINS,
W. WOODBRIDGE.

Rev. C. A. GOODRICH.

BERLIN, November 25th, 1826.

Messrs. ENOCH PERKINS and WARD WOODBRIDGE, Esqrs.

GENTLEMEN—The attentions which I have recently been called to pay to a highly esteemed relation, during a protracted illness, have prevented my replying to yours of the 16th ultimo, until this late date. I thank you for the indulgent manner in which you have noticed the Address; and in presenting a copy for publication, I have only to regret that it falls so far short of my own wishes, and may be found to be very deficient by the members of the Society, on perusal. If, however, it shall “tend to promote the important objects of the Institution” in any degree, I will not regret its publication.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant,

CHARLES A. GOODRICH.

ADDRESS.



MR. PRESIDENT,
AND GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY.

SCARCELY half a century has elapsed, since the commencement of the present system of giving an impulse to agriculture and mechanical efforts, by Shows and Honorary Rewards. This short period, however, has elicited the opinion of many in their favor, and given to agricultural societies and their exhibitions, no small influence in the civilized world. Fifty millions of men, in Europe and America, are now their advocates. In England, societies of this description are numerous and efficient. Three establishments only, in the United Kingdoms, annually expend, in the promotion of agricultural objects, the sum of \$70,000. France has nearly one hundred annual shows, besides a national exhibition at Paris, once in three years, whose lists of premiums alone, would fill, it is said, an octavo volume of 350 pages. In the United States, in the short space of about twenty years, agricultural societies have increased from a single one to between fifty and sixty. Among the patrons of these societies, too, both here and abroad, are to be found men of the most cultivated and enlightened minds, of deep philosophical research and practical skill, and of the highest official rank. Surely, such men as MADISON, QUINCY, PICKERING, POWEL, LINCOLN, and PETERS, not to mention many distinguished

names in Europe, would not lightly favor a system, designed only to amuse a rabble, or destined to be ephemeral in its existence and influence. If public opinion, then, be any test—if the sanction of the wise and great, carries any weight, it must be admitted, that too much importance has not yet been given to agricultural societies.

The *exhibitions* of such societies are always connected with much that is interesting and instructive. Is the farmer an admirer of the animal creation? He here sees domestic animals, both native and imported, of the finest forms and choicest qualities. Is he an admirer of the vegetable productions of the earth? Here are exhibited specimens, which shew, that if in the sweat of his brow, man must toil, a munificent providence does not let him toil in vain. Is he pleased with exhibitions of mechanical skill? Here are implements, the result of genius, of patient, persevering industry, which will abridge his labors; and here, too, are proofs, not the fewest, nor the meanest, that the daughters of our land can put their “hands to the spindle,” and are not ashamed of the “distaff.” In short, the farmer has ocular demonstration, that if the last age of improvement has arrived, it has not yet made its exit from the world. The human mind is still ascendant. God has not prescribed a limit to the genius of man; or if he have, that limit is not yet seen. True, we may never be able “to plough by steam, nor sow by steam, nor by the novel combinations of the mechanic powers;” yet, who has fully tested the energies of nature, or can yet foresee what philosophical investigation, combined with practical skill, may not accomplish? Who will affirm that discoveries and improvements in agriculture do not await

us, similar to those, which, in the mathematical and mechanic sciences, have so highly distinguished the names of NEWTON, GODFREY, FULTON, WATT, ARKWRIGHT, and PERKINS? Who, but twenty years since, dreamed of the results of the present times? Is it too much to say, that we live in the dawn of a day, whose beams by their radiance, will by and by shew, how insignificant the light is, which we now think so great?

But from fancy, if this *be* fancy, let us descend to facts. I ask you to notice, for a moment, some *improvements*, which have been made in this country in agriculture and its branches, within the last twenty years, the merit of which, must be accorded to Agricultural Societies.

At the commencement of this period, the highest crops of potatoes were stated at 200 bushels to the acre—now, crops of this vegetable are not unfrequently made of from 400 to 700 bushels. Then, the highest quantity of corn gathered from an acre, was from 40 to 50 bushels—now, we read of numerous crops of from 60 to 120 bushels, and, in a single instance, of one which reached 172 bushels.* In the mean time, many valuable roots and plants, such as the mangel wurtzel, the Swedish turnip, the common turnip, the carrot, the common beet, the cabbage, some of which were before scarcely known, have been introduced as *general* crops, and yield hundreds of bushels to the acre. Many new implements of husbandry have also been introduced, and former ones improved, adding greatly to the convenience and profit of

* Messrs. J. & M. PRATT, of Easton, Madison county, New-York, in 1822, raised 172½ bushels of corn, on an acre. See *New-England Farmer*, p. 33½—also, *Farmer's Guide*, p. 92.

the farmer. Our farms are better ploughed, better manured, better seeded, better drained, and better fenced. Numerous flocks of Spanish and Saxony sheep have been introduced, which furnish to our manufacturers the material for fabrics, which already rival those of Europe. Through the instrumentality of some gentlemen, much zeal has been excited throughout the country, to improve other descriptions of domestic animals; and with what success, every year furnishes proof, which must come with a welcome to those who have pioneered the way, at the expense of much time and wealth.

The stimulus thus given to agricultural effort in the country, within the last twenty years, has been felt in the county of Hartford; and the Ninth Anniversary Exhibition of this Society, gives additional evidence, that improvements here bear some comparison with those of other societies, in this and sister states. It has, indeed, been objected to farmers generally, and perhaps to the farmers of Connecticut particularly, "that they are slow to adopt changes and proposed improvements." In this they are wise. Fickleness constitutes no part of their character. New discoveries do not always bear the test of experiment, and blazoned improvements are not unfrequently forgotten with the year that gave them birth. Still, in the progress of society and of science, discoveries are made, and improvements suggested, to whose value experience attests, and which, in respect to agriculture, our farmers would do themselves injustice not to attend.

In consenting to address the Society on this occasion, the speaker had not the arrogance to believe that he could offer any thing new, or particularly useful. Until within a few

years, he has ministered in the sanctuary ; and pardon him, gentlemen, if standing in this consecrated place, and looking round on this temple of Zion, he exclaims, " If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning ; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Placed, however, in the providence of God, in other circumstances, allow him to offer to the Society some thoughts, the result, he fears it will be too apparent, of only occasional observation, and still more limited experience.

Permit me to suggest, then, in the first place, the importance of our farmers, as a body, becoming men of more *reading and information in their profession*. It is not, indeed, urged as essential, that they should have made a pilgrimage to Parnassus, nor that they should have heard, at the winding up of a college course—" *Admitto vos ad primum gradum.*" Nor can it be deemed necessary that they should be able to give a botanical description of the grains and grasses which they sow, or chemically to analyze the soils which they till. The mariner may safely guide his ship, without knowing the principles upon which his compass is constructed ; and the mechanic at the power loom, may produce the fairest fabric, and understand little of the philosophy of the steam engine which propels it. So the farmer, guided only by his own experience, may cultivate his lands with profit. But does it follow that this would not in some things be more skilfully done, should he avail himself of the knowledge and experience of others ? The experience of an individual must of necessity be limited. He has not time, and often neither the requisite wealth nor capacity to institute experiments of

importance. How, then, shall his deficiencies be supplied? Obviously by the same means by which the deficiencies of the lawyer, the divine, and the physician are supplied—*by reading*. Let the farmer, then, purchase, as he is able, a few well selected books on the subject of agriculture—to these let him add a paper, or two, devoted to the same subject, of which, happily, we have now several of high character—and to these let him devote a portion of the dark days of autumn, and of the long evenings of winter. From these, every farmer may derive many valuable hints. He will find, perhaps, an account of some new and useful implement of husbandry; some new grass or grain; some improvement in the management of a crop of corn; some remedy for a disease afflicting his family horse; or some valuable suggestion about wintering his sheep. Besides relieving the tediousness of many an hour, ordinarily unprofitably dozed away in his corner, he will thus be adding to his stock of useful knowledge; and be preparing in the ensuing spring and summer, to bring to some profitable account the knowledge which he has gained. The vast improvement in Agriculture in Great Britain, within half a century, is attributable, in no small degree, to the circulation of facts and experiments, by means of treatises, pamphlets, and papers. It is to be hoped that the time is not far distant, when the farmers of this county, and elsewhere, will give to this subject its merited attention. Might I venture to name a single publication, which more than any other seems adapted to general use among our farmers, it would be that of the *New-England Farmer*, a weekly paper, published at Boston. Its Editor is as enlightened as he is industrious, and makes his paper a vehicle of

information on Agriculture, and its kindred subjects, of the most interesting and profitable kind.

Another point to which I beg your indulgent attention, is the importance of that management of a farm, which regards it as a *whole*. By a bold and vigorous effort, a farmer may, in a given instance, and on a favored spot, raise a crop of uncommon magnitude ; and yet this crop, by demanding that labor which is due to other parts of the farm, may, upon the whole, operate as a loss. No farmer should possess more land than he can watch over with proper care ; and his industry should have one uniform direction, and one ultimate tendency—*the melioration of the whole farm*. Like a wise father, if he have favorites, he should still discharge his duty to the whole circle of children. Each acre should receive that attention which it deserves, viewed as a member of the whole, and that cultivation, which will best bring its powers into action. Indeed, on the portions least favored by nature, he should, perhaps, bestow the most cultivation, on the principle which, it is said, parents should act in sending unlikely sons to college—to make them equal to the rest. It is attributable to this partial and unenlightened management, that so many of our farms present a chequered and unsightly appearance. A few particular lots are selected, which are cultivated with great assiduity ; while other lots are neglected and despised. No regard is had to the farm as a whole ; no system of general operations is pursued. The farmer gathers what he is able from these few well cultivated portions, and rests contented. By some of our farmers, the beauty of a farm is judged to lie much in *contrast* ; and hence some portions of their land are neglected through fear that

the bramble, the thorn, the thistle would otherwise find no dwelling place on earth.

These observations apply to no part of our farms with more force, than to our *pasture grounds*. Upon these scarcely a thought is ever bestowed. Bushes and briars and thorns and thistles are suffered to usurp dominion in the very heart of a farm, and to show a pointed and painful authority over the stock—besides operating to a total loss of many per centum of the value of these grounds. The consequence is, that where a couple of acres, or even less, would keep a cow, several become indispensable. And after all, the pastures are fed close; the dairy suffers; and a stock of meagre, half-famished cattle come in in the fall, and continue lean and lank through the winter. A few days spent upon these “neglected spots” each year, would enable the farmer, especially if they were thrown into small enclosures, to admit of alternate changes of the stock, to keep more, and keep them in better condition. In short, were the farmer’s attention directed more generally to his farm, as a whole, his sterile plains would in process of time become fertile fields; his dairy would be more profitable; his stock improved; his farm be more valuable, and his reputation be rescued from merited reproach.

A third point upon which I would insist, is the importance of a still *higher cultivation of our farms*. It is not an uncommon complaint among farmers “that the times are hard.” Is it wonderful that with some they are so? They are “hard” because their crops are small, and their crops are small, because they fail to bestow the proper cultivation upon them. Concentrated action is efficient action; and it

is this only which gives large agricultural results. But to this an obstacle presents itself nearly insurmountable. Our farms are in general too extensive, and the labor of the farmer is spread over too extended a surface. And yet, instead of selling a single acre, most of our farmers covet many more. If farmers, however, would thrive, they must change their policy ; they must concentrate their labour ; they must give to a few acres the care, now usually bestowed on many ; and if necessary to this, they must diminish their farms. Many an acre of corn, and many of rye now yield only 10 or 12 bushels, and even less. Many an acre is mowed, whose burden—if it may be called a burden—amounts to scarcely half a ton. How much wiser—how much more grateful, to give to these acres a proper cultivation and gather bushels for pecks, and nearer tons for hundreds ! This, I conceive, is, at present, the great error of our farmers generally. They adopt a diffusive, desultory mode of operation, which keeps their lands poor, and themselves poor also. The only method by which the benefits of a thrifty, productive husbandry can be enjoyed, is to change the present system for one more compressed and more vigorous. It should be written on every farm house, and in the centre of every lot, as a memento to its occupier—“ *Till but little, and till thoroughly.*”

To an efficient cultivation of a farm, two things appear to be particularly important—a *proper rotation of crops*, and a *sufficient and proper application of manures*.

In respect to a rotation of crops, it may be observed, that every soil is better adapted to some kinds of plants than to others ; yet it possesses, it is apparent, but in a limited degree

the ingredients, which render it most suitable to these plants. Hence, if it be pursued with these plants but for a few years in succession, the soil becomes exhausted, leaving the land incapable of bearing good crops of a similar kind. But the same land possesses other ingredients adapted to produce plants of a different kind. Now, what more philosophical than to stop short of the point of exhaustion in respect to the *first* crop, and to apply a *second* of a different kind, to be followed by a *third*, a *fourth*, a *fifth*, and even a *sixth*, if necessary, until the partially exhausted powers of the soil in respect to the first crop be restored, by acquiring the ingredients essential to its production, by the decomposition of vegetable matter. In this way, the productive energies of land may be preserved to a great extent, without the application of manures; and with them, may be raised to an indefinite extent.

The subject of the rotation of crops has long been understood in England, and forms one of the principal excellencies of their system of husbandry. It begins also to be understood here; and when resort has been had to it, and system observed in respect to it, the results have been highly gratifying. It is a principle, it may be added, easily understood, and is adapted to every farmer whether he have fifty acres, or five hundred.

The rotation of crops will doubtless enable the farmer to do with a less quantity of manure, than if such rotation were not adopted. But no management can preclude the necessity of some; and where large crops are expected, manures must be liberally supplied. It is not essential, indeed, that, in every instance, the manure should be from the yard;—lime.

gypsum, and other substances will, on some soils, bring the nourishing principle into action; but nourishment, and that too of the animal, or vegetable kind, must be furnished the plant, being as essential to its growth, as food is to the life of man. If the soil have not this nourishment previously, or if it have been exhausted, it must be supplied, either by a rotation of crops, which is more gradual, or by the application of manures, or by both. In the adoption of this last course, the perfection of farming, so far, seems to consist.

Hence, let the farmer learn the importance of greater attention to the accumulation of manures. Let him learn, that when he takes a crop from his field, be it grass, or be it grain, just so much virtue is subducted from the soil, and just so much must, in some way, be returned to it, ere its productive powers will be as before. And, let him be as solicitous too to *restore*, as to *take*, if he wish not to *steal* from himself, and thus lay the foundation for the permanent injury of his farm. In older countries, where the population is more dense, and consequently a greater quantity of food is necessary, more economy in the accumulation of manure is observed. "Even house sweepings, the dust or powder of bones, farrier's and clothier's clippings, refuse of manufactured skins, shavings and turnings of horn, hair, woollen rags, and many other like substances, are carefully saved, and sold to farmers." In this country, necessity does not yet compel us to resort to such means, nor does *economy* demand it. On every side, materials of better quality abound. In the accumulation of manures, however, the farmer should have reference to the nature of the soil, for which his application is intended. If the soil be sandy, let his yard,

or compost heap, receive “ a due portion of clay, loam, marl or peat ; if the soil be clayey, let him cart into his yard sand, lime, and such other substances as will render the soil more light and loose.”

In respect to the *application* of manures, whether in a *fermented* or *unfermented* state, much difference of opinion has existed. We have high authority, now, however, for believing, that “ rotten manure,” or that in which the fermentation is past, is inferior in virtue, and less applicable, particularly to tillage crops. In the process of fermentation, much of the volatile and most valuable part escapes ; whereas, were the manure plowed in, and the fermentation carried on beneath the soil, this would be saved. Another disadvantage in applying fermented, or rotten manure is, the loss of heat, which, if produced in the soil, would accelerate the germination of the seed, and nourish the plant, in its incipient and most critical state. Sir Humphrey Davy who has treated this subject with much observation and science, is of the opinion that in the process of fermentation, manures lose, from one half, to two thirds their weight. In this opinion, Mr. Young, who received the medal of the Bath Agricultural Society in England, for his essay on manures, and Mr. Coke, a distinguished agriculturist in that country, concur. Hence, the importance to every farmer of a stercorary, or shed, under which he may house his manure, to prevent fermentation and evaporation. Hence, also, manures, which are carried into the field in autumn, should be laid in large heaps, and carefully covered with earth. This will check fermentation, and prevent the escape of the carbonic acid and ammonia, two most valuable sources of nourishment to the

vegetable world. To test the value of the volatile part of manure, Sir H. Davy inserted the beak of a retort, filled with unfermented manure, among the roots of some grass, on the border of a garden. In a few days, the anticipated effect was apparent; this grass assumed a most luxuriant growth; yet it will be observed that from this manure it had received only the volatile part, no other being able to pass over. If this principle be correct, the practice of many of our farmers of getting out their manures in the spring, a month or two before they plow it in, is incorrect. Here exposed to the heat of the sun and to the wind it lies, until it is scarcely susceptible of being spread. *As little time as practicable should intervene, between carting it to the field and burying it in the soil.*

Another subject worthy of more notice than can be here given to it, is the importance of an increased attention to the *cultivation of some of the choicer kinds of fruit.*

Fruit of various sorts, indeed, abounds; but I need not say that most of it is of a very inferior kind—without deliciousness to the taste, and greatly obnoxious to health. Few things add more to the beauty of a farmer's residence, and nothing, surely, of this nature more to the comfort and pleasure of a family circle, than an enclosure of good fruit. Yet among farmers, and, indeed, among most classes of society, this source of honest joy has been culpably neglected. The varieties of excellent fruit within our reach are numerous, and at the reasonable prices at which they are afforded at our nurseries, few are so poor, that they cannot purchase sufficient to adorn and enrich their yards. To such as may be desirous of making a *small* selection, I would recommend

as among the best—of *Peaches*, the Aune, or Early Ann, the Noblesse, the Old Newington, the Yellow Rare Ripe, the Green Catharine, the Red Cheek Melacaton, the Lemon Clingstone and the York Rare Ripe;—of *Apples*, I would mention the Early Harvest, Early Bough, Nonpareil, Newtown Pippin, Spitzenberg, Roxbury Russeting, Rhode Island Greening, and the Baldwin Apple;—of *Pears*, the Jergonelle, St. Germain, Chaumontelle, Skinless, Vergaloo, Bon Cretien, or Good Christian, and the Seckle;—and of *Cherries*, the Black Tartarian, Ronald's Black Heart, May Duke, White Heart, and Yellow Spanish. These are but a *few* of the many excellent varieties which have been found to flourish on our soil. But, were a farmer about to advertise his place for sale, and could he only add that *these* varieties of fruit would be found upon it, would he not expect an addition to the price for the farm, many times exceeding the cost of the trees, and the value of the labour of rearing them? If our farmers then would add beauty and value to their farms, let them betake themselves to the cultivation of a good selection of fruit trees.

With little more than an allusion to another subject, I will relieve your patience—I mean *the want of attention to neatness and order about many of our farm houses*.

New-England has many points of advantage; but in respect to neatness and order about her villages and farms, she contrasts badly with other countries. Englishmen who visit us, are disgusted with the appearance of our villages, for in their own land, they are accustomed to see them adorned by the hand of system and taste.

Let us look to this point then. Neatness and order are enjoined not only by economy, but by comfort. Every

slovenly farmer resigns one of the choicest pleasures within his reach, that of seeing his house and home surrounded by the marks of neatness, industry, and taste. He brings up his family amidst confusion, and presents to his children an example of negligence the most unpardonable. Can he wonder if they follow this example? They will go further—In their very partialities, they will have a vicious preference for what just taste, good sense and sound economy condemn. They will regard with less respect the decencies of life, and be more likely to abandon the paths of virtue and morality. There is much meaning in the old adage, and the observance of which, let me urge as a remedy for every degree of the evil I advert to—“Have a place for every thing, and keep every thing in its place.” In the language of a venerated man, now gone to a better world—

Let order o'er your time preside,
 And *method* all your business guide.
 One thing at once, be still begun,
 Contrived, resolv'd, pursued and done ;
 Ne'er till to-morrow's light delay,
 What might as well be done to-day.
 Neat be your barns ; your houses neat,
 Your doors be clean ; your court-yards sweep ;
 Neat be your barns ; 'tis long confess'd,
 The *neatest* farmers are the best.*

Finally, gentlemen, let us by every honorable and practicable means, endeavor to raise the credit of our profession. It is one which lies at the foundation of life and happiness ; and as such is worthy of our love, and of the respect of the world. Let us make it our business to give to the pursuit of agriculture a good and an honorable name. And as the means of doing this, let us as *a class* be intelligent, be moral,

* President Dwight.

be industrious, and the world will accord to us our proper influence.

In conclusion, I thank you for the indulgence given to these desultory observations. I add only a thought inspired by this temple, in which we are assembled to-day. Its *spire* points to heaven ; and in heaven it is that we learn there lies another and a better country than this. A better sun shines there ; and a soil watered by the river of God, yields fruits of immortal value, without care, and without toil. Animated by the hope of meeting there, let us here “ *sow unto the spirit,*” as the only means of “ *reaping life everlasting.*”

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