

ADDRESS OF THE HON. JOSIAH QUINCY,

AT THE MEETING OF THE NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

I cannot satisfy my imagination with the hard working man, who, after toiling through the day, has no thought at its close, but to satisfy his animal nature and to sleep. No, the man who cannot find some time for the cultivation of his intellect, is in a wrong position; and does not improve, as he might, the situation in which he is placed. This it is that spiritualizes his labour, and raises him above the brute that labours for him. I do not expect him to be learned on subjects for which he has no occasion; but, if he enjoys the priceless boon of health, let him know something of that most wonderful instrument, his own body,—that, if that "harp of thousand strings" should fail, he may, with some intelligence repair the evil. Let him know something of the physiology of the vegetable world: and every blade of grass, and ear of corn, will speak to him of the benevolence and skill of the Great Contriver. Let him not enjoy the sunshine without some knowledge of the laws of light, or see his field drinking in the dew, without understanding its adaptation to the purposes of nutrition. It is in the power of every man to reserve some portion of his time for those pursuits; and he will find, that every addition to his stock of knowledge will make his walks the pleasanter, the flowers the sweeter, and every thing more full of interest and meaning.

But there is something superior to intellectual pleasure; and can a sphere be better adapted to progress in the moral qualities than the one he occupies? Every situation must be a scene of trial. Yet different states have different temptations. The difficulty of entering the narrow path is not, in every case, likened to the passing of a camel through a needle's eye. Agricultural life has few temptations—no risks are run in its pursuit—no deception is used in its progress—no concealment is required for its success—it is open, manly, straight-forward. It depends on no one's favour; it rests on no one's promise, excepting His, who has said, that, "While the world endureth, seed time and harvest, Summer and Winter, shall not cease." And, while free from temptation, such a life gives ample scope for the exercise of all those duties that elevate man, while benefitting his race. It is not required of many men in a generation to do some great thing for themselves or for their country. It is the little every day duties and habits that mark the character. It was not in the shouts of multitudes, that the old patriarchal farmer delighted. But it was, "when the eye saw him, then it blessed him; and when the ear heard him, then it bore witness of him." Then opportunities of exercising the elevated virtues are ever present to the independent farmer. Like the patriarchs of

old, he stands at the head of his family. Like them, he should rule his household after him—instructing, consoling, supporting.

And there are others dependent upon him, who owe their comfort and well-being to his care; and whose dependence may be the means of awakening sentiments, that even religion has not overlooked. When the great lawgiver of the Jews led them from the house of bondage, and by Divine command, established them as an agricultural people, his laws recognized the advantages of such a life for the formation of character. To remember and love the Giver, and rejoice before Him, in the spring-time and in the harvest, on the anniversary of their deliverance, and on festal days, was the first and great commandment, and the second was like unto it. Love and kindness to the neighbour, to the stranger, to the widow, to the fatherless, were enjoined as congenial duties. But the directions stopped not here. The brute creation of every kind shared in his remembrance. The Sabbath was to be observed, "that thy ox and thy ass may rest." And when the harvest was gathered in, the mute and patient labourer was not to be forgotten: he should share the grain for which he had toiled, and the command, "thou shalt not muzzle thy ox when he treadeth out the corn," secured to him at least a portion.

But freedom from temptations, and opportunities of exercising the virtues, are not the only facilities that an agricultural life offers for the formation of an elevated character. The scenes that surround it, the unceasing regularity of cold and heat, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, cannot but lead the observing mind up to their author. In no crowded workshop his time is spent. The broad fields and the high mountains, and the running streams, diffuse health and cheerfulness around. No smoky lamp sheds a doubtful glimmer over his task; the glorious sun sends his rays for millions of miles to warm; and enlighten, and gladden his path. The religious sentiment is nowhere so naturally developed, as among rural scenery,

But some one, smarting under ills that are common to every lot, may say, in description, a farmer's life may be poetic and delightful; but we want to be rich; we want to be powerful; we want to look down upon others. That is happiness; that is the usefulness to which we aspire. I am ambitious, and avaricious, and envious. I have no scope here: I can never be happy as a farmer. And in what position can you be happy? Where do these feelings produce aught but misery? An ambitious, avaricious, envious farmer cannot be happy on his farm, for it is a law of man's nature, that no outward situation shall satisfy a disordered mind. And of agricultural pursuits no more can be said, than is alleged of godliness by the apostle, "with contentment is great gain."

What, then, is the conclusion of this whole.