

moderate capital at their command—say two men who have £5,000 to dispose of; and the question being whether they are to enter into some ordinary trade, or whether they are to enter into the business of farming, I say that man who takes his £5,000 to stock a farm, which is let to him as a tenant farmer, will require far more of intelligence in order to enable him properly to transact his business than if he opened a shop in some street in a great city (*Hear, hear*). Well now, gentlemen, it is eminently desirable, but you will agree with me that it is not possible, that the farmer should be a profound chemist, an accomplished meteorologist, and the possessor of those other arts which it is desirable he should possess. A pretty good knowledge of some of them he may attain through practice, but he cannot be possessed of every accomplishment necessary. What has he to know of the working of machines? Does not the comparative value of machines turn often on matters of profound calculation? What is he to know of the analysis of soils? What of the manures which he employs? Here, again, comes in the Royal Agricultural Society. The Royal Agricultural Society applies to the machines that are offered to your patronage, the severest test that science has devised. It applies to the manures with which you are to fertilize the ground, those searching analysis which enable you to know with what materials you are dealing; and, in point of fact, in general enables you to prosecute the arduous path of improvement under the safeguards and guarantees of a knowledge which no single individual can possess, but which this society amasses and accumulates, brings to the door of every man, and places therefore at his disposal (*applause*). Well, now, my lord, I think, reasons enough why we should be grateful to the Royal Agricultural Society for having come here to hold its meeting in the ancient and venerable city of Chester. I feel indeed ashamed to be the organ, in any sense, of the sentiments of this neighborhood, when I remember the recency of my own connection with it, and when I recollect that I speak in the presence and in the neighbourhood of those whose families have been rooted to the soil for more centuries almost than I could count years. But, at the same time, I cannot help feeling how appropriately this scene has been chosen for the present anniversary. In this town we meet under the shadow of a venerable cathedral. We meet in a city which derives its name from a denomination established in England 2,000 years ago. But yet we see this ancient city, which has been lately subjected to the influence of change—we see it now becoming the centre of the new traffic—stretching forth the arms of its suburbs right and left, and promising so to flourish and to grow that the Chester of the 18th century will by-and-by be scarcely recognised in the expanded dimensions of the Chester of the 19th. It associates the new and the old—it associates them as they are associated by the Royal Agricultural Society, which, aiming at the improvement of the one great primitive pursuit of man, brings to bear upon the primitive pursuit of every discovery of history—all the patient thought of to-day, all the hope of to-morrow and the future (*applause*.) And let me add this—for I am sure, if there be one cause more than another that has given to this society its place in your universal confidence, it is that which I am about to mention. I have no doubt you love it for the purposes to which it is directed. I have no doubt you rejoice in the union of classes which it exhibits. But, as it appears to me, there is nothing more admirable in its constitution and machinery than that prevailing spirit of publicity and fair play which attends the whole of the proceedings (*applause*.) It has functions to discharge which involve the reward of merit. The reward of merit involves constant comparison of merit. The comparison of merit necessarily grates upon the feelings; and yet, notwithstanding, here is a body which deals with every kind of product of agriculture, and every kind of instrument applicable to agriculture, which yet continues to retain universal confidence—the confidence alike of the victors and the vanquished in their honorable strife (*cheers*). And why is this? It is because its proceedings, like all other agricultural proceedings, pretty nearly, are completely in the face of day. There is no secret about its details. The spirit of secrecy it abhors. Everything that is done is done subject to the free judgment of Englishmen. The judges themselves, who pronounce upon your performances, are judged, in your free, unlicensed, and unrestrained liberty of communication. And the spirit that I believe has, more than anything else, tended to preserve for us the vital power of our public institutions—I mean that of a thorough, and unshrinking, and unswerving publicity—is the spirit which we regard as the guarantee of fairness, and is the spirit to which every proceeding of this society appears to be made to conform. (*Hear, hear*). I cannot help reminding this company with reference to what has fallen from the distinguished Ambassador of France, that he perhaps has done us more than