

OPENING ADDRESS

TO THE CALIFORNIA STATE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,
SEPTEMBER, 1857.

BY THE PRESIDENT, WILLIAM GARRARD.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—Among the many causes that bring our people together, there is none more likely to prove interesting and instructive than the Annual Fair of the State Agricultural Society. Here we assemble from all parts of the state, each bringing with him that article in the production of which his neighborhood excels. Here we have a bird's-eye view of the partially developed resources of our young but rich state; and if we come together with doubts in our minds as to making California our permanent home, we leave with those doubts removed, and a determination to live and die among her golden hills, or in her broad and beautiful valleys. Here we witness, annually, the certain, and in many instances wonderful, progress made by us in the production of those articles that make our homes dearer and render our state less dependent upon other countries for the necessaries, comforts and luxuries of life. With our great variety of climate and soil, with our great natural advantages for manufacturing, equal to any country in the world, those who visit these exhibitions and see how much has been done in a few years, must be convinced that California needs nothing but population to place her among the first, if not the very first state of this Union.

There is no other country that offers to her citizens the same inducements for permanent location as California. Think of what we were seven years ago, of what we are now, and who will venture to prophesy our condition half a century hence? *Then* we were dependent upon foreign countries for nearly everything we consumed; *now*, in the short space of seven years, we are prepared to meet the entire demands of our people for many articles, and what is yet better, we can spare a great deal of our own productions to exchange for those we are not yet able to produce, and thus retain among us our gold to improve and beautify our houses. We have not only ceased to import grain and breadstuffs, but are returning thousands of dollars worth annually, to the very ports from which we, five years ago, imported millions. Many other articles we have ceased partly or entirely to import. To enumerate them would be to mention nearly half the things of daily use and consumption.

The experience of the last two years has demonstrated another important fact, namely: that this climate is as well adapted to curing meats,

both by salt pickle and smoking, as Ohio or Kentucky. But the great difficulty has been to raise hogs at a price to compete with the imported article. The trouble has not been in the fattening, for here we can raise grain as cheaply as most countries; but it has been found in the absence of proper grasses on which to raise and grow the hogs. The rich clover pastures that are found so essential to the hog crops in the western states, have heretofore been wanting among us after the month of May, owing to our long dry season. But the successful cultivation of two new crops, just introduced among us, will remove entirely this deficiency, and if I am not mistaken, it will be but a few years when the importation of pork, bacon and lard, will have ceased. The value of these crops must be estimated in millions. I refer, of course, to the introduction of Chinese sugar cane and Chile clover; especially the latter. It is certain, that on large districts of our country, when other grass crops dry entirely up before the month of June, alfalfa will, when once well rooted, continue green the year round, yielding three hay crops annually, and affording a full pasture, equal in richness to a grain field. This crop seems designed by Providence for our peculiar climate. Whilst it makes good hay, good pasture—spring, summer, fall and winter—it, unlike the native club or eastern red clover, has its seeds securely incased, as the rich burr clover of our southern counties, but is superior to that in the absence of its prickly burrs. The principal advantage of this clover consists in its capacity to send its roots to water, however deep, and thus draw sufficient moisture to keep green throughout the dry season. Our visiting committee found, at Mr. Cameron's farm, on Feather River, that the roots of this clover had penetrated to low water mark, a depth of over seventeen feet. This crop, however, is said to have this peculiarity, which should be well understood, that when once well rooted it cannot be exterminated, and of course no other crop can be cultivated on the same land. Of the Chinese sugar cane, less is known from experiments in this state, but out of many packages of seed distributed by our Society, not a single instance is known when the crop failed to mature, whether irrigated or not; and in some localities—at Mr. Campbell's, on King's River, for instance—it has reached a perfection unknown in other states.

Our display of fruits and flowers is well worthy of your highest admiration. Here the citizens of every country and climate may see the fruits that were most familiar to their childhood, and many others they knew nothing of. We not only excel in variety, but also in quality. Where else will you find such apples, peaches, pears and grapes, growing alongside of the orange, the fig, the pomegranate, the almond, and most other tropical fruits? How many of you are aware that there are single farms in this state containing, each, over half a million of fruit trees, in orchard and nursery? One person owning enough trees, when fully matured, to produce as much fruit, other than grapes, as will be sold this year throughout our state. The day is not far distant when fruit will be an important crop for raising and fattening swine. But one of the most interesting facts developed by this and similar exhibitions held in different parts of the state this year is, that there is a belt

of country running clear through our mountains, and near the gold region, that is equal to any portion of our valleys in the production of several of the principal kinds of fruit.

The exhibition of live stock, you will find, is by far the largest, and greatly superior in quality, to any heretofore presented by our Society. This was to be expected, and we may hope for many years to come, the improvement in quality, at least, will be observable each year. There is no business to which our state is more admirably adapted than the raising of stock. We have fewer diseases, and a greater variety of grasses, than any other country in the world. The importance, however, of improving our breeds, especially of our cattle, is not, I fear, properly appreciated. In a short time, the wide, and as many thought, exhaustless range, will be gone for at least six months in the year, and we will have to look to cultivated grasses on which to fatten our beef and mutton. • Indeed, already we find it difficult to supply the market with good beef during the months of January, February and March. Last winter, and we may expect the like next, the same quality of beef brought double the price in March that it would have sold for in the June preceding, or following that month. If, then, we are to cultivate grass which is to supply our markets with good winter beef, it becomes a matter of the highest importance that we should improve our breeds, and hence the necessity for the importation of fine blooded cattle. This, I am happy to say, has already commenced, and you will find in our stables, cattle that you might feel proud to exhibit in any state in the Union. It is believed, by persons experienced in stock raising, that a half blood, short horn Durham, for beef purposes, when grass is valuable, is worth fifty per cent. more than the common stock, and that the same amount of grass fed to thorough-breds will double the quantity of beef, if fed to our native herds. The reason of this is, that the short horns feed kinder, mature a year or two earlier, and are capable of carrying much more flesh than the common stock. Our Society, then, could not be more advantageously engaged, than by offering every inducement in their power to the importation of fine blooded cattle into our young state. You will find the exhibition of horses, jacks, mules, sheep and swine, highly worthy of your attention.

Notwithstanding that last season was an unfavorable one for the grain crop, you will find it equal to all our wants, and offering a handsome surplus for exportation. Another good rain during the latter part of April, and we would have produced near or quite double the amount of grain ever before grown in any one year of our state's existence.

And this, too, is a country where we have four months in which to sow, the same in which to harvest, and where one man with a good team, by volunteering one half annually, can cultivate one hundred acres.

Who can doubt that if this exhibition (gotten up, as it is, by the limited means of our young Society,) could be transferred to each county in the United States, an immigration would pour in upon us that would place California, in a few years, where she is destined some day to stand, among the first and wealthiest states of our Union?

But in casting our eye over our state as it is, and sending our mind

back to the old homes, for another sight of which our hearts yet long, what is it that they and we at once agree is most needed to link us closer together and unite our destinies forever as one people?

All must admit that the great desideratum of the age is a connection, by railroad, of the Father of Waters with the bay of San Francisco. To us it is a matter all important, to them it is a little less so.

But if our eastern friends are still disposed to postpone this great work; if the success of mere political parties is of more importance to them than our union by railroad; if its accomplishment is still to be postponed to the discussion of fruitless, and more than fruitless, questions, then at least those annual exhibitions will have the advantage of convincing our people of our capacity to supply and protect ourselves, independent of all federal aid or protection whatever.

Whilst I would not instill into the bosom of any one even a lukewarmness toward our federal government, it cannot be denied that if the talent of our state had more state pride about it, more anxiety to develop our hidden resources, more pride in state honors, and a less hankering after federal appointments and federal positions, we would be a happier, a prouder, a richer, and a more contented people.

But it is to you, ladies, especially, that we are to look for the successful cultivation of a home sentiment—a California sentiment. It is you, more than any other portion of society, that have the power, by corresponding with your friends in the east, to bring to the Pacific that class of population that ties us to the soil and renders home endearing. It is you who have in charge the character of California's future society. Cultivate in the rising generation a regard for the old-fashioned homespun virtues—virtues that have become characteristic of the American people, not only in their social intercourse, but also in their form of government. I heard it remarked the other day, by a gentleman of distinguished talents, that our system of government was the perfection of human wisdom; that the glaring faults detected by all, in its administration, were not owing to a want of intelligence in the people, because ours were the most enlightened and intelligent people in the world; but, said he, it is the heart, and not the head, that needs training and education. This branch of education is almost exclusively in your hands, ladies, and to you is intrusted the future destiny of this golden state. Emulate the example of the mothers of the olden time, in cultivating a love of the soil, a love of home, an individuality of character, a state pride, and California will yet fulfill the fondest anticipations of her most sanguine admirers.