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Address of Hon. Thomas Ruffin,

OF ALAMANCE.

Delivered before the State Agricultural Society of North Carolina, Oct. 18, 1855.

THE duty has been assigned to me of making to this assemblage of our fellow citizens the usual annual address on behalf of the Agricultural Society of North Carolina. I heartily [illegible] that it [illegible] some with [illegible] reluctant to instruct or entertain. But, though reluctantly, I have undertaken it, that I might, if no other good should be done, show my concern in the welfare of the agriculture of North Carolina and its kindred arts, and my zeal for their advancement and prosperity, under a confident assurance, indeed, of the kind consideration of North Carolinians for the imperfections of one who, though long unused to public speaking, is sincerely desirous, in any way he can, of magnifying to North Carolinians their chief calling and office, and endeavoring to make them satisfied with their situation here.

In the first place it is fit, that to all here thanks for their attendance and a hearty welcome should be tendered. The purposes of the Society and the modes of effecting them, are generally known; and we invite the co-operation of all in the good work. Join in our association. Let every one add what he can to the general fund of agricultural knowledge. Enter into the competition for improving tillage, perfecting and increasing the productions of the grains, the grasses, the vegetables, and the fruits of the earth, our animals and our implements of husbandry, and other manufactures; and exhibit here at our Fairs such things as you have. Indeed, those who bring only themselves are very welcome; for, after all, our men and women are our best productions, and we can only raise a just pride to see them gathered together to extend acquaintance, form friendships, gain and impart knowledge, honor agriculture, and thereby become the more content with our lot being cast in North Carolina.

Next, the Agricultural Society owes, and we ask the agricultural community to join in making, acknowledgments to the General Assembly for the pecuniary aid extended to the Society. Its usefulness depends chiefly on its ability to offer and pay premiums to exhibitors to such an amount as may stimulate competition and multiply exhibitions. A proper amount of premiums was larger than could be confidently counted on at all times from the fluctuating and uncertain contributions of annual subscribers and visitors at the Fairs; and, since our last annual meeting, the Society presented to the Legislature a memorial praying such assistance from the Public Treasury as that body might deem requisite to the advancement of agriculture and manufactures among us. I am happy to announce here, that, in compliance with the memorial, a permanent annual appropriation of $1500 was made for the payment of premiums, subject only to the reasonable and politic proviso, that within the preceding twelve months, the Society shall have raised the like sum for the same uses. The appropriation, if not fully adequate to the wants and claims of a people as agricultural as those of North Carolina, is yet of great benefit in many respects, and chiefly as permanently establishing the Society and Fairs, since, it cannot be supposed that the farmers and mechanics and traders of the State have hearts so dead to their duty and interest as to let them fail for want of contributions on their part to an equal amount. The present is the first occasion, since the grant, on which the Society has had the opportunity of acknowledging this legislative bounty, and we take much pride and pleasure in doing so.

Now, it may be asked: Is the agriculture of North Carolina worthy of this public patronage, and of the efforts of some of her citizens to promote and improve it? I answer, Yes—yes.—North Carolina is entitled to all, that every one of her people can do to promote her prosperity and elevate her character; and her sons will be amply remunerated for their efforts for her advantage and their own. Our occupations are essentially agricultural, and embrace all its variety of pursuits—planting, farming, breeding of live stock, and the culture of fruits. Until very recently they were almost exclusive agricultural, as there were natural obstacles to foreign commerce, difficult to overcome, and but few manufacturing establishments among us. In both these respects progress has been made and is making; and there is good ground of hope, that before long fleets of our own merchantmen will sail from our shores, richly laden with our productions for sale or exchange in the ports of our sister States and foreign countries; while factories of various kinds, now established in different parts of the State, will be multiplied beyond any present calculation that can be made, not only for the fabrication of the most useful implements of wood, iron, and other metals, but for our supply of those fabrics out of the great Southern staple, cotton, which have become indispensable. Manufactures are already, without doubt, material helps to agriculture, by diversifying employments, increasing the consumption at home of our crops and stocks, and supplying on the spot and without delay many articles needful to the planter and farmer. In time they will become a more distinct, productive, and influential item in our political economy; but never, I think, as the rival or foe of our agriculture, but as a faithful friend and servant. As yet, however, the cultivation of the earth is the great and productive business of North Carolina. It has made us hitherto a thriving and happy rural people.—We are still so; and it will make us still more so, as it becomes improved and more productive. Why should not the agriculture of North Carolina be as improveable and improved, and her sons engaged in it, as prosperous and happy as those of any other parts of our country? No reason of weight can be given in the negative, if we will but strive for improvement.—Every thing is in our favor if we will make the effort and use the proper means; and of that every one may be satisfied if he will observe and reflect on what is around him.

The profits and the comforts of agriculture depend mainly on climate, soil, labor, and the facilities for disposing of surplus production. The two first, climate and soil, should be congenial to products requisite for the sustenance of the husbandman himself, and in demand for others who cannot produce for themselves. In both points North Carolina is highly blessed. In her position on the globe she occupies that temperate and happy mean, which is conducive to health and [illegible] next thrust upon the [illegible] ties and energies of body and [illegible] cutting [illegible] ments tending more than all others to the hospitalities and charities of life and the other virtues of the heart, and which constitutes a climate, that, in union with her fertile soil, yields abundantly to the diligent tiller nearly all the necessaries and many of the luxuries required by man. We do not work barely to maintain life; but, beyond that, to realize gains that may be employed in the addition of other things productive of the elevation and refinement of civilized man. Our winters, by their duration and rigor, do not confine us long within doors, nor cause us to consume the productions of our labor during the other parts of the year; but we are able to prosecute our field operations and comfortably pursue our productive employments throughout the four seasons. Though not of such extent of latitude as thereby to create much variety of climate, and consequently of production; yet the dimensions of North Carolina, east and west, supply that deficiency in a remarkable degree. The proximity to the ocean of her eastern coast, and the difference in elevation between that and the mountains of the west, with the gradations in the intermediate regions, produce a diversity of genial climate which gives to North Carolina, in herself, the advantages of many countries conjointly. By nature, too, her soil was as diversified and as excellent as her climate. The rich alluvial of the east, the extended and extremely fertile valleys of the many long streams—the Roanoke, the Tar, the Neuse, the Cape Fear, the Yadkin and Pedee, the Catawba, and the other rivers, which appear upon our map, besides those of smaller streams, almost numberless, all, at a moderate expense of care and labor, return large yields of nearly every grain and other production fit for food. Rice, maize, wheat, rye, barley, oats, the pea, the potato of each kind, besides an endless variety of other sorts, vegetables, and fruits, are found abundantly therein; while higher up the country, in addition, the grasses grow so readily and luxuriantly as to afford not little plots on the moist bottoms of brooks, but extensive pastures and magnificent meadows to the mountain tops. Then, there are the great articles of cotton and tobacco, so extensively used and in such great and increasing demand—to one or the other of which the greater part of the State is eminently suited. Of fruits, melons of every kind and of the best qualities, apples, peaches, pears, cherries, nectarines and apricots flourish almost everywhere, as do also the smaller, but most valuable kinds, as the strawberry, the raspberry, the gooseberry currants, and, above all, our native grapes, the sweet and prolific Scuppernong and the rich Catawba, which mature well, besides some of foreign origin. When to these are added the fish, with which our eastern waters abound through the year, but are alive in the spring—our naval stores and lumber, our marls, our minerals, gold, silver, copper, and especially the extensive and rich deposits of iron ore, and the coals, one may confidently ask, is there any other country which contains or produces more or a greater diversity of things to sustain life or to bring money? And then let me enquire of your North Carolinians, what better country do you want than your own? I hold it is good enough—too good, I am tempted to say, for sinful man. It requires only to be dressed and tilled to give nearly all we want on earth, and much for our fellow man less happily situated. There may at some time be a stint below our usual abundance; but we need never fear a famine here while we work. Indeed, that calamity can hardly befall a country where maize—which we call Indian corn—grows to perfection. There is no record of a dearth, approaching famine, where the principal crop was maize, as it is here. Our climate and soil are so congenial to the other cereals, that a failure of that crop from an unpropitious season is necessarily perceived in time to provide the others, or some of them, as a substitute.

Such is North Carolina! Here she is, and let any man say, who can, whether she be not in everything as she has now been held up to him. Then, why should any leave her? I trust the period of her people's deserting her and seeking—what they never found—a better place, is near its end, and that they will cleave to her and exalt her by uniting in an effort to render her, by increased fertility, yet more teeming in her productions, and to embellish her with durable and tasteful habitations, gardens and lawns, with substantial farm houses, with orchards and every other thing that can make her beautiful in our eyes and fasten our affections on her. True, the soil is not what it once was, and our task is not merely to preserve fertility, but in a great degree to restore that which has been more or less exhausted. We must not blame our ancestors too hastily or too severely, for the system under which the rich vegetable loam they found here was so used up. The labors and hardships of settling a wild country leave but little opportunity for more than preparing for cultivation and cropping such parts of the land as absolutely necessary for maintaining the colony. Land was in plenty—timber an incumbrance, and labor scarce and costly; so that, in reality, it was cheaper, and the sounder economy in them to bring new fields with their exceeding superficial fertility into culture, rather than manure those which they had reduced by imperfect tillage and scourging cropping. Throughout America the land suffered by the exhausting operations of the settlers and their descendants for several generations; but that can only go on to a certain extent, and then it must stop. When getting to be so reduced as not to pay for cultivation, necessity forbids a further reduction of the soil, and then the process of regeneration begins. At first it proceeds slowly; but every degree of improvement furnishes means for still greater, and accordingly it increases its pace, and by improved culture, manures, rotation of crops, and the like, it ends in a productiveness beyond its original capacity.

If not to the lowest, certainly to a very low condition, much of the land in the State had been brought; and the time came, when, if improvement was ever to be made, it would be [illegible] NORTH CAROLINA [illegible] instead of "has come," because it is a joyful fact, that some persons in various parts of the State, many in some parts, have improved, and continue to improve their lands and increase their crops—profitting much therefrom in their fortunes and setting the rest of us examples by which we ought also to profit. We have all heard for some years past, that the era of improvement had begun in the great and wealthy county of Edgecombe; and I learn from unquestionable sources, that the intelligent and enterprising planters of that county have been rewarded by signal success. I do not propose to enter into a detail of their system further than to say, that it consists chiefly in draining by ditches and embankments, making and applying composts, the use of guano and plaster of Paris, and the field-pea as an ameliorating crop, as well as food for stock. I advise every one, however, who has the opportunity, by minute enquiries to obtain from those who have put this system into use, detailed information respecting it; and I feel no hesitation in preferring a request to the planters of Edgecombe, as public-spirited gentlemen, to communicate through our agricultural periodicals, the history of their improvements, and their experiments—as well as those in which they failed as those in which they succeeded, with all other matters which may be useful to their brethren in other sections.

In other parts of the country, with which I am more intimately acquainted, much improvement has been made, to my own knowledge.—Of the counties ranging along our northern border, from Warren to Stokes, inclusive, I have had for about fifty years considerable knowledge. That was the principal region of the tobacco culture. According to the course of that culture, wherever it prevailed in our early annals, the country was cut down rapidly, cropped mercilessly with a view to quantity rather than quality, then put into corn, and exhausted quickly and almost entirely. When I first knew it, and for a long time afterwards, there were abounding evidences of former fertility, and existing and sorrowful sterility.—Corn and tobacco and oats were almost the only crops. But little wheat and no cultivated grasses were to be seen in the country. Warren and Granville bought the little flour they used from Orange wagons. Large tracts were disfigured by galls and frightful gullies, turned out as "old field," with broomstraw and old-field pines for their only vesture, instead of their stately primitive forests, or rich crops for the use of man. This is a sad picture. But it is a true one; and there was more fact than figure in the saying by many, whose work of destruction rendered that region so desolate, and who then abandoned it, that it was "old and worn out." Happily, some thought its condition not so hopeless, and, cherishing their attachment for the spots of their nativity, within these few years—since the time of river navigation and railroads began—set about repairing the ravages of former days. Do you suppose they were content with less crops, and therefore that they cultivated less land than before, leaving a larger area to natural recovery by rest? That was not their course. They did not give up the culture of tobacco, but greatly increased it, and corn also; and they added to their rotation, wheat, when so much more easily and cheaply carried to market.—But they greatly increased the collection and application of manures from the stables, and the cattle yards, with considerable additions of the concentrated manures obtained from abroad, and protected the land from washing by judicious hill side trenching and more thorough plowing. The result has been, that many old-fields have been reclaimed and brought into cultivation, the lands generally much increased in fertility, and of course, in actual and market value in the like proportion, while the production has, probably, doubled in quantity and value in all the range of counties mentioned. Such examples are honorable to those who set them, and useful to others, who desire to improve. For that reason I have thought it proper thus to signalize them, as I would gladly do others, which may, and I hope do exist, were I as well aware of them: contenting myself with adding only, that I think I see the dawn of a better day in the county of my own residence and those contiguous. For our present purpose, it is sufficient that we can hence learn that the effects of the most injudicious and destructive cropping may be repaired by good husbandry, in the use of fertilizers saved on the farm, and others, which are becoming better known and more attainable than formerly; and thus all the outlay will be more than reimbursed at a short day by the increase of products, besides enhancing the value of real estate. Thus will our agriculture be rendered as pleasing and as profitable as that of the most favored portions of the earth.

Then let me say once more to you, men of North Carolina, stick to her, and make her what she can be and ought to be. For you and your sons she will yield a rich harvest: to some "thirty fold, some sixty fold, and some an hundred fold," according to the skill and diligence with which the tillage of the good ground is done.

The nature of the labor employed in our agriculture is the next subject for our consideration. It is a most important element in the cost, amount and value of production. I very frankly avow the opinion, that our mixed labor of free white men of European origin and of slaves of the African race, is as well adapted to the public and private ends of our agriculture as any other could be—making our cultivation not less thorough, cheap, and productive than it would be, if carried on by the whites alone, and far more so than the blacks by themselves would make it; and, therefore, that it has a beneficial influence on the prosperity of the country, and the physical and moral state of both races, rendering both better and happier than either would be here without the other. Of course, I am not about entering into that controversy which has connected itself with the contentions of sectional factions, [illegible] political [illegible] it is unnecessary that I should; for every one is aware, I believe, of the nature of the controversy and the motives of the parties to it. It is one of the conservative effects of slavery to impress on us a deep conviction of the inestimable value of the Union, and a profound reverence for the Constitution which created it; and hence we habitually cherish a good feeling, as of brethren, towards our fellow-citizens of every State, and any deed or word tending to impair the perpetuity of the Union and the efficiency of the Constitution and the laws passed in accordance with it, or to alienate the affections of the people of the different States from each other, is seen with impatience and frowned on with indignation. Indeed, if there were any thing in slavery or the interests connected with it incompatible with that fundamental law, I doubt not that our people would willingly abide by that sacred instrument, though it should cut off a right hand or pluck out a right eye. But there will be no occasion for a display of our loyalty in that respect, since the Constitution clearly recognizes our slavery, sustains the rights of ownership, and enforces the duty of service; and I am persuaded, that the obligation of those provisions and their execution will be ultimately pronounced and carried out by those on whom the Constitution itself confers the authority.—My purpose now, however, is merely to maintain that slavery here is favorable to the interests of agriculture in point of economy and profit, and not unwholesome to the moral and social condition of each race. In support of the first part of the proposition, a decisive argument is furnished by the fact that the amount and value of the productions of slave labor in this country exceeds those of similar productions, nay, of all other agricultural productions, of an equal number of men in any other country, as far as they can be ascertained. In some localities, indeed, and in respect to some articles of great value, the production would cease, or nearly cease, with slavery; since the blacks by the Constitution inherited from the African ancestors, can labor without detriment, under degrees of heat, moisture and exposure, which are found to be fatal to the whites, whose systems are better adapted to different conditions of the atmosphere. In truth, if the free men in those States in which slavery prevails be allowed credit for common sense and the capacity to understand their own wants and interests, the utility of the employment of slave labor and its productiveness are established beyond controversy, simply by the fact, that it is done. Men who are thoroughly versed in the practical operation of any institution, certainly will not, to their own prejudice uphold it from generation to generation, and cling the closer to it as by its natural extension it becomes more and more destructive. If it be said that the continuance of slavery does not prove its utility to the Commonwealth, because it was continued of necessity and would have been, however impolitic it might be found, we must own some force in the suggestion, by itself, since at all times after its introduction it would have been difficult to get rid of it, and that difficulty has been continually increasing. It was much easier for those who now condemn so strenuously our toleration of slavery, to capture and enslave the helpless Africans and bring them here, than for us, without crime yet more heinous, to renounce our dominion over them and turn them loose to their own discretion and self-destruction. Their fate would soon be that of our native savages or the enfranchised blacks of the West Indies, the miserable victims of idleness, want, drunkenness, and other debaucheries. But the argument goes only to show that we would have done right—even though enforced thereto by the necessity spoken of—in still holding those people in bondage. It is far from showing that slavery would not have been and ought not to have been maintained, though there had been no such hypothetical necessity for doing so. Furthermore, there are numerous facts to prove a clear opinion to the contrary in every class of our population.—When did any man, for example, leave North Carolina in order to get clear of his slaves or of slavery? We have, indeed, a respectable and peaceful religious society—less numerous than formerly—who are forbidden by an article in their creed from holding men in slavery. Even they never warred or contended against this institution here, nor sought to seduce or spirit away their neighbor's slaves; but like the quiet and Christian men they professed to be, they left us and immigrated chiefly to the States of the North West, in which slavery did not exist. With that slight exception, the public sentiment is so generally satisfied with the existence of slavery and its propriety here, that it may properly be called universal. Some men have emancipated some or all of their slaves by sending them to other States. But I know not of an instance in which the former owner went with them, or left North Carolina because other owners would not follow their example. On the contrary, when our slaveholders remove, they carry their slaves with them further south, where slavery is, if possible, more firmly fixed than here, because they expect the labor of the slaves to be more productive. Besides, there are many inhabitants of this State who do not hold slaves, some from choice and some from inability to purchase them, and nevertheless, they are content to abide among us and our slaves. And it is also true, that even when those men migrate, much the larger part of them likewise go to the south of us in the thick of slavery, because they hope to make a greater profit from their own exertions. These facts, which cannot be denied, will bear reflection, and furnish evidence sufficient to satisfy any fair mind that there is an unanimous conviction of our people, that slavey, as it exist here, is neither unprofitable, nor impolitic, nor unwholesome. For certainly, though slaveholders, we may [illegible] to possess as clear understandings, and [illegible] ear consciences as generally fall to the [illegible] other men.

It would [illegible] otherwise, if it were true, as supposed [illegible] forth by some, that slavery degrades free labor and, consequently, that the population are too proud or too lazy to work, and become, especially slave owners, dissolute, and profligate in morals, as well as atrocious tyrants. But that is not true—not all true; and there never was a greater mistake than to suppose it true. It cannot but excite a smile in us, who know the contrary so well, when we are told that white men do not work here, and that they do not because it is considered disgraceful. Why, there is not a country on earth in which honest labor and diligence in business in all classes and conditions, is considered more respectable, or is more respected. We, like every other people, have the idle and vicious amongst us. But they are chiefly those who have the least connexion with slaves, and particularly those employed in agriculture, and are to be found, without means, lounging about cities and villages. Many most independent farmers, who own slaves, but not enough to make their superintendence full employment, work, they and their sons, with their slaves; and it is sure, that no one here ever treated them or thought of them as disgraced by it. Indeed, every one, who by intelligence, integrity, and industry, provides for himself and his household either in the field or at the forge, or any other mechanical pursuit, is as highly respected here, as in every other well-ordered community; and many of them are of great and useful influence in society.

It is a mistake, too, equally notable, that slaveholders are above or exempt from the cares and the business of life; and it is a gross calumny to represent them as the ruthless and relentless tyrants, of whom some persons delight to draw over-charged and exaggerated carricatures. Although the labor of a large slaveholder is not manuel, yet it is not the less engrossing and onerous; and the feelings between masters and their slaves in the great bulk of our population is kindly on the part of the former, and affectionately faithful on the part of the latter.—Slavery, indeed, is not a pure and unmixed good. Not is anything that's human. There are instances of cruel and devilish masters, and of turbulent and refractory slaves, who cannot be controlled and brought into subjection but by extraordinary severity. But these are exceptions, and rare exceptions. Great severity in masters is as much opposed to the usages of our people as to the sentiment of the age, and, indeed, to the interest of the master. Moderation in the punishment of dependents is founded in nature; and unjust, excessive and barbarous cruelty is not to be presumed, but quite the contrary. The meek man who led the Israelites through the wilderness, and legislated for them by inspiration, understood this better than those who point us so frightfully, without knowing much about us. In reating of the different degrees of homicide, he had regard to the known motives of the human heart, and therefore founded the presumption, that the slaying of a slave by the master, is by misadventure, "because he is his money," unless it should be rebuked by such excess in the degree or duration of the infliction as to make him "die under his hand," and thus prove that discipline was a pretence, and the killing of designed malignity or wanton brutality. I appeal to every one, if our experience is not in accordance with the divine statute. The same motive induces the master to be observant of the health and morals of his slaves; to care for them, and to provide for them; to restrain them from baneful excesses, and employ them in moderate, though steady labor. That this is the course—the established habit of the slaveholding portion of the country, is plainly to be deduced from an increase in the numbers of our slave population beyond the ratio of natural increase in the population of any other nation;—which could only arise from the abundant supply of the necessaries and comforts of life, and a contented state of mind.

But the interest of the owner is not the only security to the slave for humane treatment; there is a strong tie between them. Often born on the same plantation, and bred together, they have a perfect knowledge of each other, and a mutual attachment. Protection and provision are the cares of the master, and in return the slave yields devoted obedience and fidelity of service; so that they seldom part but from necessity. The comfort, cheerfulness, and happiness of the slave should be, and generally is, the study of the master; and every Christian master rejoices over the soul of his slave saved, as of a brother, and allows of his attendance on the ministry of God's word, and sacraments, in a church of his choice in his vicinity. The condition of a slave denies to him indeed, opportunities of education sufficient for searching the Scripture for himself, and working thereon his own conversion; but God forbid that shold be necessary to salvation! It is not; for the poor and the unlettered the Christian graces are promised and given in an especial manner, because they have less pride of intellect, more simplicity of faith, and more singleness of heart; and among the slaves of this country there are many exemplary Christians indeed, slavery in America has not only done more for the civilization and enjoyments of the African race than all other causes, but it has brought more of them into the Christian fold than all the missions to that benighted continent from the Advent to this day have, or, probably those for centuries to come would, except only the recent Colonies of blacks on the western coast of Africa, by which one may hope, believe that under divine direction the light, civilization and the knowledge of the true God may be reflected back on that whole land such are some of the beneficial effects on account of their connexion with us. Upon the slave the impressions are not less distinctly durable, nor less beneficial. He is habitually a man of employment. As in military life he must train his troop to their duties, lay out their work, and superintend its execution; and by a mild and just, though firm discipline, reward and punish according to their deserts; and he must never fail in sympathy with them in regard to [illegible] enjoyments at proper times [illegible] in sickness and in health. [illegible] have exceedingly great effect in improving the slave and uniting him to his owner. I know a gentleman, one of the most successful planters, who produced a marked change for the better among his slaves, by the small boon of a cheap looking glass for each of their quarters. Another bound his people to him by a devoted affection, by joining with solemnity in their processions at the burial of their dead, in a grave-yard which he had protected by a plain post and plank enclosure.

It is a great error in those who do not know our slavery, to confound authority in the private relations, though it be that of a slave owner, with the absolute power of a prince on a throne. A political despot is separated from his subjects. He knows them not, nor loves them. He sympathizes with none of them, but their positions and feelings are in constant hostility. But authority in domestic life, though not necessarily, is naturally considerate, mild, easy to be entreated, and tends to an elevation in sentiment in the superior which generates a human tenderness for those in his power, and renders him regardful alike of the duty and the dignity of his position. It is only when the authority is disputed and resisted, that a conflict occurs; and the slaves, if kept to themselves, unprompted from without, will seldom give occasion in that way for rigor. Why should this propitious state of things be changed? Why should any one wished it changed? Especially, why should persons who have no concern in it, who are not of us, and know not what they do, officiously interfere in a relation so entirely domestic and delicate? We know that our slaves are generally tractable, obedient, quiet, and a contented and cheerful race of laborers. Scattered over the plantations in rural situations, they are never riotous or dangerous, as the same number of uneducated working men have often been in other parts of our country. Slaves are no part of the State's [illegible] with its political power, and seek no violent or sudden change in the law or policy of the country; and where slavery exists labor and capital never come in conflict, because they are in the same hands, and operate in harmony. It is not, then, a blot upon our laws, nor a stain on our morals, nor a blight upon our land. A signal instance of its beneficial political influence just occurs to me, to which I cannot refrain from asking your attention. The sad fate of the Indian tribes in the territories, now forming the United States, is familiar to every one. With the exception of a few small remnants, seated among the whites, as a degraded caste, in one or two of the northern States, all belonging to that region are extinct. They had no separate property, and therefore they never engaged in the pursuits of civil life, and could not be civilized. They were killed up in wars with the whites, or, at their instigation, with each other, deprived of their and, and consequently, with reduced supplies of food by the diminution of game, and brutalized by intemperance, they wasted away while they were yet savages. The same fate befell most of those at the South, and from the same causes. But there are exceptions worthy of grave consideration. There were five large tribes on this side of the Mississippi—the Cherokees, the Creeks, the Chickasaws, Choctaws, and the Seminoles. The two former were nearer to us, and, indeed, part of their territory was within our borders. Therefore we are more familiar with them, and I will speak only of them, though I believe the same is true of all of them. The Cherokees and Creeks suffered losses of land and people like the other tribes; but they differed from them in one circumstance, and only one, from which, however, most important consequences resulted. It so happened, that, while yet respectable in strength, they got, in some way—by capture or purchase—some negro slaves. Immediately there was a change in their whole polity, which preserved their existence, and increased their numbers and their wealth. The acquisition of slaves gave them the idea of property in individuals, and in order to make the labor of the slaves beneficial, a qualified property in the lands occupied by each Indian, and worked by his slaves, was recognized by the nation, and the pursuits and arts of civilized life were established among them; farms were extended, dwellings erected, traffic practised, clothes worn after the fashion of the whites, schools and churches opened, and the red man became as the white man in his occupations, property, education, and religion. And now those tribes form intelligent and thriving people beyond the Mississippi, with enlarged knowledge, property and power; with a printed statute book, with a legislative body, and regular tribunals of justice. Such works hath American Slavery wrought upon those tribes! Is that a reproach to it? And is it not marvellous that, still, it should be pursued by persons having no knowledge of its practical operation, under a phrensy against slavery in the abstract, fatally bent on its restriction and destruction, though they thereby should desolate our fields, desecrate our altars, and cause the blood of both races of our people to flow in rivers? Such philanthropy is both fanciful and ferocious, and must gall and irritate, and may, to a certain extent, alarm some. But I believe we need not apprehend much danger to our personal rights or political institutions. Occasionally demagogues may sway popular or legislative majorities against us. But it can only be for a season, and a short season. For, in every part of our beloved country there are men, and, I trust, many men, of sound heads and sound hearts, who are as able as we to understand and explain the constitution, and calculate the value of the Union as justly. Such men must have great influence in society, however it may be constituted, and will assuredly instruct, persuade, and lead back the masses to a due regard for the Constitutional rights of their fellow-citizens—not less their fellow-citizens because living far apart—for multitudes, proverbially prone to change, never do so more readily, than when under the guidance of wise and good men, they can retreat from an extreme wrong, and escape from the denomination of those who dishonestly led them into it. The very excess of the error ensures its speedy perception, and a more perfect reaction. I believe we shall be one people again in good feeling; and therefore I cherish the spirit of brotherhood even towards those who may now seem to hold it in the least respect; and in that I only sympathise, I am sure, with the great bulk of my fellow-citizens at home.

On the remaining point, on which the interests of agriculture, and, indeed, of all other employments depend—namely, the facility of transportation, I have to offer to all North Carolinians heartfelt congratulations. The carriage of bulky and cheap articles long distances in wagons over bad roads, was a great draw-back on the profits of capital and labor for a long time here. Some relief in particular parts of the State was derived from even the imperfect improvement made in the navigation for boats on a few of our rivers. But it was far below the wants and demands of the people; and afterwards resort was had to Railroads. The wonders worked by steam, and railways are indeed astonishing throughout the world. In no part of it can they be more requisite or beneficial than in this State, the extent of which and the want of navigable waters at only a short distance from the sea, rendered them indispensible. Every one, therefore, ought to commend the legislative policy in providing them, and in extending them, from time to time, as the funds of the State may be found adequate. It will not, I trust, be going out of the way, while on this subject, to say a word in honor of the memory of a great and good man, who first presented the utility and construction of Railroads to the notice and patronage of this State; I allude to the Rev. Dr. Joseph Caldwell, the late eminent and zealous president of the University. Upwards of thirty years ago he visited Europe on the business of the College, and there saw such roads in use; and soon after his return, I remember, he published a series of essays under the signature of "Carlton," in a newspaper printed in this city, explaining the practicability of their construction and earnestly urging a central one from Buncombe to Beaufort. The novelty of the subject, and the dread of the expense, operating upon timid counsels, prevented his suggestion from being then adopted. But it is honorable to his sagacity, that at the late session of the legislature charters were granted for completing a line of Railroad on the very route recommended by him, when probably it was unknown or had been forgotten by the acting generation of legislators, that he had ever advocated the measure. I shall be pardoned for desiring to rescue from oblivion for a brief space longer his early service in a cause now so generally and justly advocated, and of such surpassing importance.

I have thus endeavored to lay before you the resources and advantages enjoyed by North Carolina, and her capacity to supply the wants of man, and satisfy his reasonable desires for accumulation and the higher enjoyments of both laboring and educated and more refined men.—It has been done without setting up any claim for her, which I do not believe to be well founded, or any statement in which I do not expect your concurrence. In truth I new, have said nothing and I have not sought so much to impart information as to excite reflection on what you already know.—For we take no note of things that we see every day, and it is a more common fault not to make a proper use of knowledge, than it is not to possess it; to fail in duty, not because we are ignorant of it, but because we are indifferent to it. My purpose has been to present to you, with much plainness of speech, things that none can deny and are fully known among us. You know that all these things are true. If they be, let them make their impress on our minds and hearts, that we may be duly sensible of, and thankful for, the goodly bounties of health, competence and wealth, which may be derived from the agriculture and other occupations of North Carolina.

I am quite sensible that I have performed most defectively the task set for myself. After the lapse of more than thirty years since I engaged in public discussion, I ought not to have undertaken it, and regret that I did so, especially as this address has been hastily prepared under many disadvantages. I beseech your forgiveness, and will make the best reparation now in my power, by promising not to offend in the same way again; and, as I have very nearly arrived at the scriptural limit of man's life, I think I may, in conclusion, safely make the promise. I cannot close, however, without asking you once more to cleave to North Carolina. Stay in her, fertilize her, till her cherish her rising manufactures, extend her railways, encourage and endow her schools and colleges, sustain her institutions, develop her resources, promote knowledge, virtue, and religion throughout her borders, stimulate State pride, and exalt her to renown: And may the blessing of Almighty God be upon each one of you, and on all North Carolina, and make her good name and fair fame endless!

THE BRITISH WHEAT CROP.—A recent estimate of the British wheat crop, published by Mr. John Caird, in the London papers, has attracted attention on the other side, from the fact that it reduces the deficit, as compared with 1854, to one-tenth, and the growth of last year being unusually heavy, the writer assumes that 2,812,505 quarters, or 22,500,000 bushels will supply the deficiency in the annual consumption of the United Kingdom, which, he says, "is little more than one-half the average annual importation of the last five years." His figures for the crop of 1855 are 15,187,500 quarters; the wants of the Kingdom, 18,000 quarters.

Winter has set in, and let each neighbor remember that fuel is an essential item for the poor and needy.