

FROM THE ADDRESS OF NICHOLAS BIDDLE, ESQ., BEFORE THE PHILADELPHIA AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY. OCT. 1840.

BESIDES lime and other enriching substances, the cost of the mere animal manures applied to the soil of England, amounts to three hundred millions of dollars; being more than the value of the whole of its foreign commerce. Yet the grateful soil yields back with interest all that is thus lavished upon it. And so it would do here, if we would only trust the earth with any portion of our capital. But this we rarely do. A farmer who has made any money spends it not in his business, but in some other occupation. He buys more land when he ought to buy more manure; or he puts out his money in some joint stock company, to convert sunshine into moonshine—or he buys shares in some gold or lead mine. Rely upon it, our richest mine is the barn-yard, and that whatever temptation stocks or shares may offer, the best investment for a farmer is *live stock* and *plough-shares*.

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No soil can withstand a succession of grain crops; and instead of letting it lie fallow in order to recruit from its exhaustion, as was the old plan, the better practice now is to plant in the same field a crop of roots. These draw their nourishment from a lower region than the grain crops do; they derive a great part of their food from the atmosphere, by their large leaves, which at the same time shelter the soil from the extreme heats; they provide a fresh and juicy food for cattle during the winter, thus enabling us to keep a large stock, which, in addition to the profit on them, furnish abundant manure with which to return to the grain crops. Now this should be our effort—more roots—more cattle—more manure—then more grain.

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All these improvements which may adorn or benefit our farms, are recommended to us not only by our own individual interests, but by the higher sentiment of our duty to the country. This is essentially a nation of farmers. No where else is so large a portion of the community engaged in farming;—no where else are the cultivators of the earth more independent or so powerful. One would think that in Europe the great business of life was to put each other to death; for so large a proportion of men are drawn from the walks of productive industry and trained to no other occupation except to shoot foreigners *always*, and their own countrymen *occasionally*; while here, the whole energy of all the nation is directed with intense force upon peaceful labor. A strange spectacle this, of one, and one only, unarmed nation on the face of the earth! There is abroad a wild struggle between existing authorities

and popular pretensions, and our own example is the common theme of applause or denunciation. It is the more important then for the farmers of this country to be true to their own principles. The soil is theirs—the government is theirs—and on them depends mainly the continuance of their system.—That system is that enlightened opinion, and the domestic ties are more stable guarantees of social tranquility than mere force, and that the government of the plough is safer, and, when there is need, stronger than the government of the sword.

WHAT GIVES VALUE TO THE LAND OF ENGLAND?

SUCH is the question asked by an intelligent correspondent in one of the late English Journals; and as most of our readers are land owners, and therefore directly interested in understanding what it is that gives value to land, we think we cannot do better than lay before them the answer that is given to the question:—

“Why, I ask again, is the price of land high in England generally? Why, evidently, not because the land itself is better than in other countries, but because a ready market for all sorts of produce is within reach, by means of roads, canals, railroads; that labor is cheap and abundant; that life and property are secure; that we have close at hand the means of grace, and education, and improvement; in short, that circumstances are favorable for such a life as shall be convenient and desirable here below, and shall prepare us for eternity hereafter. Thus the same land may be almost worthless or very valuable, according as it is well or ill provided with these things.”

By some of our readers it may be said that there is here one requisite that cannot be obtained by them—that labor cannot in this country be “cheap and abundant.” Directly the reverse is the fact. High-priced labor is cheap labor, while low-priced labor is dear labor. The Hindoo who works for a dollar a month, out of which he finds himself, cannot compete with the well-fed laborer of Alabama, nor the well-fed, well-clothed and well educated workman of Lowell. It is when the labor is largely productive that the laborer is well paid; and high as may be his wages, his labor is cheap by comparison with the unproductive labor of other countries. It is, too, when labor is largely productive that labor is abundant, because to render it thus productive it must be aided by machinery; and we know well that a single steam-engine will do more work than a hundred or even five hundred men. The reaping machine enables one man to do the work of ten; and the threshing machine and the grist-mill dispense with labor, the performance of which, would require ar-