

## TO THE LEGISLATURE OF VIRGINIA.

The AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF ALBEMARLE was founded some twenty years past, by some of the wisest and most patriotic citizens of the commonwealth; among whom were their first President, the late James Madison, and his distinguished compatriot and friend, the late Thomas Jefferson. Associated under such auspices, and having in view an object of such general and high importance, it presents itself before the Legislature to invoke its fostering aid in behalf of Agriculture.

The views of the Society, were there a reasonable hope of success, would extend to the establishment of a Professorship of Agriculture—a Board of Agriculture, and an experimental Farm. Taught moderation, however, by the ill success heretofore attending their efforts before the Legislature, they content themselves with asking now for the creation of the Board—the members to be appointed by the Governor, and to be selected in equal numbers from the four great divisions of the State. The number at the beginning to be twelve—the compensation to be the same as that allowed to the members of the General Assembly, with an allowance for the contingent expenses of a Clerk, printing, &c. Their sessions would be limited to a few days, and the amount of the costs of such sessions could not exceed a thousand dollars. And to what purpose could a sum of that amount be appropriated with a prospect of a fairer return? It is about equal to the expenses of one day's setting of the Legislature. The Society will not permit itself to believe that an elaborate enumeration of the benefits of the measure they recommend need be made to the Legislature, many of whom (and it is fervently wished their number were greater) are Agriculturists. Let a few of the more prominent considerations in its favor suffice: It is known to the Legislature that such an establishment exists in every enlightened government in Europe, where the welfare of the people actuates their policy—but particularly in England, whose good fortune it has been to take the lead in the cherishing the arts and sciences—And it is an important truth that ought to be deeply impressed on the mind of every Legislator, that Agriculture has advanced hand in hand with such establishments—that while the small outgoings to sustain them have returned in benefits an hundred fold, the countless millions squandered in schemes of lawless ambition and in ruinous wars have left no monuments save of the folly and wickedness of rulers and of the sufferings of mankind. And it is submitted to the sober reflection of the Legislature whether the dedication of a small portion of their time to the important interests of Agriculture, might not be as profitable as when spent in the endless political strifes that exercise so baneful an influence on the quiet and happiness of society.

A Board of Agriculture, composed of twelve of the most intelligent cultivators, could not fail to concentrate a great mass of Agricultural information—information now confined to a few, but then to become the property of all. It is not merely the knowledge we now have, but we may confidently count on its continual increase which could not fail to ensue by a communion with each other. The errors into which they may have fallen, and of consequence, prevail in the regions they represent, by this communion would be detected and exposed; and being a rallying point which would attract to it the affections of all who take an interest in the subject, all would contribute to the usefulness of the establishment, by communicating whatever was calculated to further the objects of its creation. Information would be sought by such a Board, by carrying on correspondence with similar Institutions, whether in this country or in other quarters of the globe. With these funds of intelligence the Board might prepare a Code of Agriculture, combining all the now well established principles of Husbandry, and to be progressively improved by successive discoveries. Nothing has been productive of more mischievous consequences than pursuing, in the absence of a better guide, Treatises on Agriculture adapted to different climates and different circumstances—as pernicious as the acts of a foreign Legislature, ignorant of the wants and the condition of the distant people for whom they legislate.

The Society will not resort to the threadbare and disgusting theme of exhausted fields, dilapidated houses, and an impoverished and emigrating population—for it is not to your sympathy they would appeal, but to your justice—It is not a favor they ask, but a right they demand. The cultivators of the earth pay directly into the Treasury nine-tenths of the Revenue—Has a solitary farthing been expended directly in their favor, although Agriculture is the most important, and at the same time, from its complication, the most difficult to acquire among the pursuits of life? They have seen, and without regret, portions of their hard earnings expended on objects proper in themselves, but when compared with the improvement of Husbandry, insignificant. They now ask that something may be done for the very foundation on which the prosperity of the State reposes.

Small as may be the dispensation now required, compared with what they have a right to demand, they console themselves with a hope that when the advantages of a Board of Agriculture shall be developed, the Legislature will continue to manifest its patriotic solicitude by additional aids to this great and permanent interest; and in conclusion they suggest, that the condition of the cultivators of the earth may be assumed as a fair barometer of that of the State. When prosecuted successfully, peace and plenty prevail—when unsuccessfully, disastrous effects smite every portion of the social body. Nor should it escape the representatives of a free people, that it is the intelligent cultivator to whom liberty, in any crisis of difficulty, refers as her safest champion—all which is respectfully submitted.

*Resolved*, That the Society requests each paper in the State to insert the foregoing memorial.

August 5th, 1839.

At an adjourned meeting of the Agricultural Society of Albemarle, James Barbour, Sen'r., Wm. C. Rives and Frank Carr, were appointed a Committee to draft a memorial to the Legislature of Virginia, urging upon that body the establishment of a Board of Agriculture for the State, and to circulate said memorial, thereby soliciting the co-operation of those friendly to its object.

Teste,

FRANK CARR, *Secretary A. S. A.*

Petition of the  
 Agricultural  
 Society of Alber-  
 more praying  
 the establishment  
 by law of a Board  
 of Agriculture  
 for the Common-  
 wealth.

W. Laforce Hall

Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 1839

sent to a & ms

Albany

THE LIBRARY OF THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

...the establishment of a Board of Agriculture for the Commonwealth. The petitioners are of the opinion that the establishment of such a Board is necessary for the improvement of the agriculture of the State, and for the benefit of the people. They pray that the Board may be empowered to make such regulations as may be necessary for the improvement of the agriculture of the State, and for the benefit of the people. They also pray that the Board may be empowered to make such regulations as may be necessary for the improvement of the agriculture of the State, and for the benefit of the people.