

For the purpose of
the Association
Charles F. Dana

CONSTITUTION

OF

THE BROOK FARM ASSOCIATION,

FOR

INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION,

WEST ROXBURY, MASS.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

BOSTON:
I. R. BUTTS, PRINTER.
No. 2, School Street.
1844.



BROOK FARM ASSOCIATION.

THE Association at Brook Farm, has now been in existence upwards of two years. Originating in the thought and experience of a few individuals, it has hitherto worn, for the most part, the character of a private experiment, and has avoided rather than sought, the notice of the public. It has, until the present time, seemed fittest to those engaged in this enterprise to publish no statements of their purposes or methods, to make no promises or declarations, but quietly and sincerely to realise, as far as might be possible, the great ideas which gave the central impulse to their movement. It has been thought that a steady endeavor to embody these ideas more and more perfectly in life, would give the best answer, both to the hopes of the friendly and the cavils of the sceptical, and furnish in its results the surest grounds for any larger efforts.

Meanwhile every step has strengthened the faith with which we set out; our belief in a divine order of human society, has in our own minds become an absolute certainty; and considering the present state of humanity and of social science, we do not hesitate to affirm, that the world is much nearer the attainment of such a condition than is generally supposed.

The deep interest in the doctrine of Association, which

now fills the minds of intelligent persons every where, indicates plainly that the time has passed when even initiative movements ought to be prosecuted in silence, and makes it imperative on all who have either a theoretical or practical knowledge of the subject to give their share to the stock of public information.

Accordingly, we have taken occasion at several public meetings recently held in Boston, to state some of the results of our studies and experience, and we desire here to say emphatically, that while on the one hand we yield an unqualified assent to that doctrine of universal unity which Fourier teaches, so on the other, our whole observation has shown us the truth of the practical arrangements which he deduces therefrom. The law of groups and series is, as we are convinced, the law of human nature, and when men are in true social relations their industrial organization will necessarily assume those forms.

But beside the demand for information respecting the principles of association, there is a deeper call for action in the matter. We wish, therefore, to bring Brook Farm before the public, as a location offering at least as great advantages for a thorough experiment as can be found in the vicinity of Boston. It is situated in West Roxbury, three miles from the depot of the Dedham Branch Rail Road, and about eight miles from Boston, and combines a convenient nearness to the city with a degree of retirement and freedom from unfavorable influences, unusual even in the country. The place is one of great natural beauty, and indeed the whole landscape is so rich and various as to attract the notice even of casual visitors. The farm now owned by the Association contains two hundred and eight acres, of as good quality as any land in the neighborhood of Boston, and can be enlarged by the purchase of land adjoining to any necessary extent. The property now in the hands of the Association is worth nearly or quite thirty thousand dollars, of which about twenty-two thousand dollars is invested either in the stock of the company, or in permanent loans at six per cent., which can remain as long as the Association may wish.

The fact that so large an amount of capital is already invested and at our service as the basis of more extensive operations, furnishes a reason why Brook Farm should be chosen as the scene of that practical trial of association which the public feeling calls for in this immediate vicinity, instead of forming an entirely new organization for that purpose.

The completeness of our educational department is also not to be overlooked. This has hitherto received our greatest care, and in forming it we have been particularly successful. In any new Association it must be many years before so many accomplished and skilful teachers in the various branches of intellectual culture could be enlisted. Another strong reason is to be found in the degree of order our organization has already attained, by the help of which a large Association might be formed without the losses and inconveniences which would otherwise necessarily occur. The experience of nearly three years in all the misfortunes and mistakes incident to an undertaking so new and so little understood, carried on throughout by persons not entirely fitted for the duties they have been compelled to perform, has, as we think, prepared us to assist in the safe conduct of an extensive and complete Association.

Such an institution, as will be plain to all, cannot by any sure means, be brought at once and full grown into existence. It must at least in the present state of society, begin with a comparatively small number of select and devoted persons, and increase by natural and gradual aggregations. With a view to an ultimate expansion into a perfect Phalanx, we desire without any delay to organize the three primary departments of labor, namely, Agriculture, Domestic Industry, and the Mechanic Arts.

For this purpose additional capital will be needed, which it is most desirable should be invested by those who propose to connect themselves personally with the institution. These should be men and women accustomed to labor, skilful, careful, in good health, and more than all imbued with the idea of Association, and ready to consecrate themselves without reserve to its realization. For it ought to be known that the work we propose is a difficult one, and except to the most entire faith and resolution will offer insurmountable obstacles and discouragements. Neither will it be possible to find in Association at the outset the great outward advantages it ultimately promises. The first few years must be passed in constant and unwearied labor, heightened chiefly by the consciousness of high aims and the inward content that devotion to a universal object cannot fail to bring. Still there are certain tangible compensations which Association guaranties immediately. These are freedom from pecuniary anxiety, and the evils of competitive industry, free and friendly society, and the education of children. How great these are, those

who have felt the terrible burdens which the present civilized society imposes in these respects will not need to be informed.

Those who may wish to further this course by investments of money only will readily perceive that their end is not likely to be lost in an Association whose means are devoted mainly to productive industry, and where nothing will ever be risked in uncertain speculations.

The following Constitution is the same as that under which we have hitherto acted, with such alterations as on a careful revision seemed needful. All persons who are not familiar with the purposes of Association, will understand from this document that we propose a radical and universal reform, rather than to redress any particular wrong or to remove the sufferings of any single class of human beings. We do this in the light of universal principles, in which all differences, whether of religion, or politics, or philosophy, are reconciled, and the dearest and most private hope of every man has the promise of fulfilment. Herein, let it be understood, we would remove nothing that is truly beautiful or venerable; we reverence the religious sentiment in all its forms, the family, and whatever else has its foundation either in human nature or the Divine Providence. The work we are engaged in is not destruction, but true conservation: it is not a mere revolution, but, as we are assured, a necessary step in the course of social progress which no one can be blind enough to think has yet reached its limit. We believe that humanity, trained by these long centuries of suffering and struggle, led onward by so many saints and heroes and sages, is at length prepared to enter into that universal order, toward which it has perpetually moved. Thus we recognize the worth of the whole Past and of every doctrine and institution it has bequeathed us; thus also we perceive that the Present has its own high mission, and we shall only say what is beginning to be seen by all sincere thinkers, when we declare that the imperative duty of this time and this country, nay more, that its only salvation, and the salvation of all civilized countries, lies in the Reorganization of Society, according to the unchanging laws of human nature and of universal harmony.

We look, then, to the generous and hopeful of all classes for sympathy, for encouragement and for actual aid, not to ourselves only, but to all those who are engaged in this great work. And whatever may be the result of any special efforts, we can never doubt that the object we have in view

will finally be attained; that human life shall yet be developed, not in discord and misery, but in harmony and joy, and that the perfected earth shall at last bear on her bosom a race of men worthy of the name.

GEORGE RIPLEY,
MINOT PRATT,
CHARLES A. DANA, } *Directors.*

Brook Farm, West Roxbury, Mass., }
January 18, 1844. }

CONSTITUTION.

IN order more effectually to promote the great purposes of human culture ; to establish the external relations of life on a basis of wisdom and purity ; to apply the principles of justice and love to our social organization in accordance with the laws of Divine Providence ; to substitute a system of brotherly cöoperation for one of selfish competition ; to secure to our children and those who may be entrusted to our care the benefits of the highest physical, intellectual and moral education, which in the progress of knowledge the resources at our command will permit ; to institute an attractive, efficient, and productive system of industry ; to prevent the exercise of worldly anxiety, by the competent supply of our necessary wants ; to diminish the desire of excessive accumulation, by making the acquisition of individual property subservient to upright and disinterested uses ; to guarantee to each other forever the means of physical support, and of spiritual progress ; and thus to impart a greater freedom, simplicity, truthfulness, refinement, and moral dignity, to our mode of life ; — we the undersigned do unite in a voluntary Association, and adopt and ordain the following articles of agreement, to wit :

ARTICLE I.

NAME AND MEMBERSHIP.

SEC. 1. The name of this Association shall be "THE BROOK-FARM ASSOCIATION FOR INDUSTRY AND EDUCATION." All persons who shall hold one or more shares in its stock, or whose labor and skill shall be considered an equivalent for capital, may be admitted by the vote of two-thirds of the Association, as members thereof.

SEC. 2. No member of the Association shall ever be subjected to any religious test; nor shall any authority be assumed over individual freedom of opinion by the Association, nor by one member over another; nor shall any one be held accountable to the Association, except for such overt acts, or omissions of duty, as violate the principles of justice, purity, and love, on which it is founded; and in such cases the relation of any member may be suspended or discontinued, at the pleasure of the Association.

ARTICLE II.

CAPITAL STOCK.

SEC. 1. The members of this Association shall own and manage such real and personal estate in joint stock proprietorship, divided into shares of one hundred dollars each, as may from time to time be agreed on.

SEC. 2. No share-holder shall be liable to any assessment whatever on the shares held by him; nor shall he be held responsible individually in his private property on account of the Association; nor shall the Trustees or any officer or agent of the Association have any authority to do any thing which shall impose personal responsibility on any share-holder, by making any contracts or incurring any debts for which the share-holders shall be individually or personally responsible.

SEC. 3. The Association guaranties to each share-holder the interest of five per cent. annually on the amount of stock held by him in the Association, and this interest may be paid

in certificates of stock and credited on the books of the Association: provided that each share-holder may draw on the funds of the Association for the amount of interest due at the third annual settlement from the time of investment.

SEC. 4. The share-holders on their part for themselves, their heirs and assigns, do renounce all claim on any profits accruing to the Association for the use of their capital invested in the stock of the Association, except five per cent. interest on the amount of stock held by them, payable in the manner described in the preceding section.

ARTICLE III.

GUARANTIES.

SEC. 1. The Association shall provide such employment for all its members as shall be adapted to their capacities, habits, and tastes; and each member shall select and perform such operations of labor, whether corporal or mental, as shall be deemed best suited to his own endowments and the benefit of the Association.

SEC. 2. The Association guaranties to all its members, their children and family dependents, house-rent, fuel, food, and clothing, and the other necessaries of life, without charge, not exceeding a certain fixed amount to be decided annually by the Association: no charge shall ever be made for support during inability to labor from sickness or old age, or for medical or nursing attendance, except in case of share-holders, who shall be charged therefor, and also for the food and clothing of children, to an amount not exceeding the interest due to them on settlement; but no charge shall be made to any member for education or the use of library and public rooms.

SEC. 3. Members may withdraw from labor, under the direction of the Association, and in that case, they shall not be entitled to the benefit of the above guaranties.

SEC. 4. Children over ten years of age shall be provided with employment in suitable branches of industry; they shall

be credited for such portions of each annual dividend, as shall be decided by the Association, and on the completion of their education in the Association at the age of twenty, shall be entitled to a certificate of stock to the amount of credits in their favor, and may be admitted as members of the Association.

ARTICLE IV.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROFITS.

SEC. 1. The nett profits of the Association, after the payment of all expenses, shall be divided into a number of shares corresponding to the number of day's labor; and every member shall be entitled to one share for every day's labor performed by him.

SEC. 2. A full settlement shall be made with every member once a year, and certificates of stock given for all balances due; but in case of need to be decided by himself, every member may be permitted to draw on the funds in the Treasury to an amount not exceeding the credits in his favor for labor performed.

ARTICLE V.

GOVERNMENT.

SEC. 1. The government of the Association shall be vested in a board of Directors, divided into four departments, as follows: 1st, General Direction; 2d, Direction of Education; 3d, Direction of Industry; 4th, Direction of Finance; consisting of three persons each, provided that the same person may be elected member of each Direction.

SEC. 2. The General Direction and Direction of Education shall be chosen annually, by the vote of a majority of the members of the Association. The Direction of Finance shall be chosen annually, by the vote of a majority of the share-holders and members of the Association. The Direction of Industry shall consist of the chiefs of the three primary series.

SEC. 3. The chairman of the General Direction shall be the President of the Association, and together with the Direction of Finance, shall constitute a board of Trustees, by whom the property of the Association shall be held and managed.

SEC. 4. The General Direction shall oversee and manage the affairs of the Association, so that every department shall be carried on in an orderly and efficient manner.

SEC. 5. The departments of Education and Finance shall be under the control each of its own Direction, which shall select, and in concurrence with the General Direction, shall appoint such teachers, officers, and agents, as shall be necessary to the complete and systematic organization of the department. No Directors or other officers shall be deemed to possess any rank superior to the other members of the Association, nor shall they receive any extra remuneration for their official services.

SEC. 6. The department of Industry shall be arranged in groups and series, as far as practicable, and shall consist of three primary series; to wit, Agricultural, Mechanical, and Domestic Industry. The chief of each series shall be elected every two months by the members thereof, subject to the approval of the General Direction. The chief of each group shall be chosen weekly by its members.

ARTICLE VI.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SEC. 1. The Association may from time to time adopt such bye-laws, not inconsistent with the spirit and purpose of these articles, as shall be found expedient or necessary.

SEC. 2. In order to secure to the Association the benefits of the highest discoveries in social science, and to preserve its fidelity to the principles of progress and reform, on which it is founded, any amendment may be proposed to this Constitution at a meeting called for the purpose; and if approved by two-thirds of the members at a subsequent meeting, at least one month after the date of the first, shall be adopted.

THE COMMUNITY AT

WEST ROXBURY, MASS.