

HON. W. A. GRAHAM'S RESPONSE TO ADDRESS OF WELCOME TO SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONERS.

On behalf of my associates, I tender you hearty thanks for an appreciation of your cordial welcome. Your city has always been the metropolis of the South, and has our best wishes that she may continue to be. Her commercial importance was recognized even before the purchase of the Louisiana territory by Mr. Jefferson. The people living in the country adjacent to the Mississippi River, higher up the river, were of the opinion that a people in their position could not prosper if a foreign nation owned the port at the mouth of the river, which was their highway of commerce, and while the United States was negotiating with France for the purchase there was an organization in Kentucky and Tennessee known as Fillibusters—similar to the organization which in later years operated in Cuba, for the purpose of capturing New Orleans and making it United States territory. Henry Clay, whom many of us regard as the greatest American statesman, was a member of this force. The land was peaceably acquired and the Fillibusters disbanded.

The products of the farms, especially cotton, sugar and rice, and supplies for those who operate the farms, compose much of the business of your city. You are, therefore, interested in the success of the farmer and rejoice in his success as his condition to a great extent affects yours.

Many, if not all, of the members of our Association have been guests of your city on other occasions and know your proverbial hospitality—that in such matters you make no failures. I again thank you for your welcome and tender you our best wishes for the continued prosperity and progress of your great city.

We wish the farmer to know where his brow is and to profit by the knowledge.

Before the war the farmer was the independent, prosperous man of the South. I am glad to have been a part of the Old South and to have known it in that day of prosperity and hospitality which was never known elsewhere and I do not think will ever be duplicated. The farmer raised the supplies to maintain his plantation and owned his money crop when it was harvested. Endeavoring to raise some other crop to sell in order to get money to buy supplies (especially corn) has been the curse of the South. You can take your pencil and pad, and in an hour or two any night, make yourself rich by calculations on this line, but ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy and believe that tomorrow will fulfill the expectations of to-day and that the crop produced by this method will in the fall make good the anticipations of the spring, go to the many thousands of farmers who have pursued such a course and listen to their tale of woe. I have never known a man who made a habit of buying his corn who prospered as a farmer. In those days, a state of happiness and contentment was expressed by the couplet:

"Corn in the crib, money in the pocket.

A baby in the cradle and a pretty wife to rock it."

I have never seen a sheriff when selling property to pay the debts of a man who had failed as a farmer offer, among the things sold, a crib of corn, and I have never met the man who says he has seen it.

The Southern farmer has by his crops enriched much of the balance of the world, and yet he and his family until very recently have seen bad times. If the money which has

supplies to raise cotton had been retained here, what a difference it would have made.

We appreciate your cordial welcome. Representing the farmers who compose four-fifths of the people of the States from which we come, the condition of our constituents is the condition of these States; when four out of five of our fellow-citizens are in good condition it favorably affects the other fifth, but when only one man in five is not in trouble or financial straits he cannot have much influence on the other four. This was for many years since the war, the condition of affairs, but the farmer is awakening and the past decade has shown a wonderful advance in agricultural affairs. For many years the farmer of the South, with some notable exceptions, has regarded his business as one that should be conducted mainly by muscle with little or no aid of the brain. They have read in the good book that man was to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, and the amount of perspiration that could be developed in the process was the main object. He seems to have mistaken his back for his brow and followed such methods as produced the most perspiration on it. The brow or face is on the head near the brain, and the farmer began to recognize this fact and to cause his brow to sweat by exercising his brain and no longer estimates the value of the sweat produced on the rest of his body. The great object of our assembly is to suggest to the farmer methods by which he may locate his brow.

A story is told of an Irishman who was called to the front in time of war; he procured a piece of metal as a shield and carried it to the tailor who was making his uniform, telling him to place it in his clothes so that it would cover his heart; the tailor placed it in the seat of his pants; in the battle Pat determined to "fight some other day"; as he turned to flee a bullet struck his shield and glanced off. He exclaimed: "Faith, and isn't it a good thing to know where a man's heart lies?"

I doubt (if we except Texas) if there is a State that does not each year send abroad the value of its cotton crop to purchase supplies which can be more cheaply produced at home.

Since 1880 the cotton crops of the South have been more valuable than all the silver and gold the world has produced, and there have been only five years in which the product of precious metals would have paid for the part of the cotton crop exported that year.

I hope, sir, that the night is past. The Southern people have generally succeeded, or proved themselves worthy to have succeeded in whatever they undertake. They have located their brow—have learned the folly of isolation and the value of co-operation, and from now I believe the most prosperous part of our country will be our Southland.

But I close by again, on behalf of my associates and myself, expressing our hearty appreciation of and thanks for your cordial welcome.

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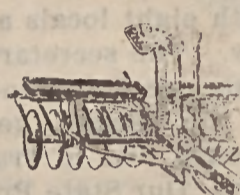
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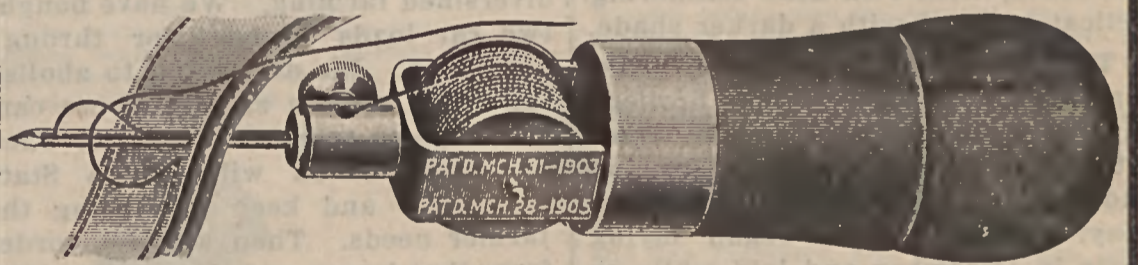
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