

The News and Observer

—BY—

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THURSDAY, December 18, 1902.

A MORNING TONIC.

(Horatio W. Dresser.)

Every deeply thoughtful person now knows that all reform begins within and with the individual, and spreads, through gradual evolution, out of today into tomorrow.

THE TOBACCO CONVENTION TOMORROW AT ROCKY MOUNT.

The Tobacco Convention, called by Col. John S. Cunningham, president of the Tobacco Growers' Association, to meet in Rocky Mount tomorrow (Friday) is a gathering of great importance to all North Carolina and of vital importance to the twenty-five counties that depend chiefly upon the cultivation and sale of bright tobacco.

The merger of the two great trusts put down the price of bright tobacco thirty-three and a third per cent within six weeks. This is but the beginning of what many fear will follow the merger. Only last week the British American Tobacco Company was organized by the merged trusts, with J. B. Duke at its head, to absorb the entire export trade of both trusts. Of its object and its power, the Southern Tobacco Journal says:

"The company will absorb all the export factories, those whose goods for home consumption are manufactured remaining under control of the trusts in their respective countries. As will be judged from the above facts, the new concern is an unusually powerful one and is destined to hold a commanding position in the industrial world."

It develops all the time that it is the purpose of the trust to absolutely control the tobacco from the field to the consumer. They own nearly all the factories, they now take over the export business, they are dominating the retail business, they may soon control the warehouses or compel them to go out of business. Then the farmer is absolutely and without remedy at their mercy, which, of course, means that they will pay just enough to secure the planting of enough tobacco to meet their needs, leaving the farmer no legitimate margin of profits.

In view of the wiping out of one-third of the price of tobacco in the short space of six weeks, and the future peril to tobacco growers and independent tobacco dealers, it is important that the meeting called at Rocky Mount shall be largely attended. The wisest men who grow and handle the weed should exchange views and try to agree upon a plan to save themselves from the certain heavy losses that will come to them if they make no attempt to thwart the high-handed plans which the trust has determined to carry into execution. A prominent tobacco man said yesterday that, even if agreement upon the best plan could not be reached at the Friday meeting, it would do good to let the trust know that their cool taking of 33 1/3 per cent out of the pockets of farmers and dealers could not be carried out without a protest. He added: "The News and Observer's vigorous and ringing editorial on Sunday morning has already done good, and forced the trust to make a slight increase in the price of tobacco. The Rocky Mount meeting if it shows that North Carolina tobacco growers and dealers are in earnest, will do good."

By request of this paper, Col. J. Bryan Grimes, the first president of the State Tobacco Growers' Association, contributes a thoughtful and sensible article outlining the need of organized effort, and pointing out measures that he thinks ought to be adopted by the farmers. These suggestions are commended to the consideration of the convention. Col. Grimes is a practical and successful tobacco grower, a sensible and honest man, and whatever he recommends is entitled to the greatest weight.

Col. Grimes recommends that the farmers meet organization with organization. If the tobacco farmers of only twenty-five counties would secure a perfect organization to prevent the arbitrary reduction of the price of their product, they would do much to hold up the price. If, co-operating with them, small capitalists in the tobacco section in every strong tobacco town would invest a few thousand dollars in manufacturing cigars and smoking tobacco and conduct a small business, appealing first to home consumption for anti-trust goods, that would also help in the fight that must be waged if the tobacco farmers are not reduced to vassals of the tobacco trust. The success of the Wells-Whitehead Tobacco Company and a few other independent

concerns ought to encourage others to make like efforts.

Colonel Grimes also takes up the manufacture of fertilizer as one that ought to be considered by farmers. It is a profitable business, the cost of machinery is not great, every well-managed fertilizer company, small or large, has made money. The establishment of factories in the leading sections should be encouraged. It is as Colonel Grimes says "probably the most inviting field for investment in our State today." Much of the material is in the hands of the farmers and they ought to utilize it and save at home large sums now paid to the giant companies for the fertilizers they are compelled to use. Col. Grimes gives some figures showing the need of a change in the ingredients in fertilizers which he says would effect a large saving to the farmers of the State.

This meeting at Rocky Mount concerns the people of the towns and cities in the tobacco section almost as much as it does the growers of the weed, and the independent buyers, dealers, warehousemen and manufacturers, as well as the farmers, should be present. Colonel Grimes says with manifest truth that "they cannot afford to lose this opportunity to consult together concerning these matters that so vitally concern their welfare."

BEST IN AMERICA.

The Washington Star, which is the best paying afternoon paper in America, has celebrated its fiftieth birthday by issuing a beautiful anniversary number of 114 pages, containing magazine supplement, fac simile of the first issue, illustrated section, industrial section, news and editorial sections. In matter, style and taste the edition is perfect—in keeping with the Star's reputation for excellence. It covers its field better than any paper in America, and regularly goes into eighty-eight out of every one hundred homes in the city of Washington. It is conducted upon safe and conservatively progressive lines, and is easily one of the first newspapers in America.

The growth of the Star is an almost perfect barometer of the expansion of the city of Washington. When the first number of the Star—an insignificant four-page paper—appeared on the 16th of December in 1852 Washington bore no more likeness to the Washington of today than the little Star then bears to the great Star of today. The growth of Washington has done much to help the Star, and by the same token the Star has done much to develop every legitimate interest of Washington. It has been one of the most potent factors in promoting every enterprise and improvement that have made Washington the pride of the whole Republic.

BILL ARP'S PRAYER ANSWERED.

Some months ago, after examining The North Carolina Confederate Records, edited by Chief Justice-elect Walter Clark, Bill Arp said he prayed that Georgia might make similar provision for the publication of its Confederate war history. His prayer has been answered. Near the close of the last session of the Georgia Legislature, Hon. Clark Howell, Senator from Atlanta, introduced a bill providing for the publication of Georgia's Colonial, Revolutionary and Confederate records. The Governor has chosen ex-Governor Allen D. Candler to compile these records.

Good for Georgia. It is rapidly taking its place next to North Carolina among the most progressive Southern States.

Major Moody's gallantry has been put to the test and he flickered. He has been trying for some time to secure the removal of Mrs. Leduc, the postmaster at Tryon, Polk county. When the late President McKinley was a small boy, Mrs. Leduc was his teacher. That gave her the office. Now that he is dead, his school teacher must make way for a healer.

If England and Germany can destroy the war ships of Venezuela, thus lessening its ability to pay its debts, and if they can stay in command of its revenue one day, why not one year? If one year why not ten? If ten why may not the occupancy be continuous? Then what becomes of the Monroe Doctrine?

Politics and Politicians.

Hon. John E. Woodard, State Senator-elect, of Wilson, arrived in the city yesterday and is here on professional business. This will be his second consecutive term in the Senate, his strength with his party being shown by his reelection by a large and increased majority. He will bring a trained mind to the arduous work of the General Assembly, and will do able service in the positions he takes on questions coming before the Senate of 1903 of which he will be a recognized leader.

Praise for Judge Winstead.

(Special to the News and Observer.)
Wilson, N. C., Dec. 17.—At the close of the court held in Wilson the grand jury closed their report to Judge Francis D. Winstead on follows:
"And we further desire to express to your Honor our appreciation of the courteous and expeditious manner in which your Honor has conducted the business of the court and aided the grand jury in their work, and we desire to express to your Honor our regret that the State will not longer have the services of your Honor upon the bench. With assurances of best wishes for your happiness."
Wilson in this commends a judge who has won deserved praise wherever he has presided.

Col. J. Bryan Grimes to the Tobacco Growers.

To the Editor: Col. Cunningham has called a meeting of the North Carolina Tobacco Growers' Association at Rocky Mount on the 19th, and not only growers but warehousemen, manufacturers and buyers are invited to come together and discuss the tobacco situation; for in the fact of the present crisis the interest of one is the concern of all.

The American Tobacco Company has absorbed the Imperial Tobacco Company, its chief competitor, and in the past sixty days prices have fallen about 25 or 30 per cent, and will probably go lower. The tobacco farmer is at the mercy of the trust and will be impoverished—the towns in Eastern North Carolina that have prospered so greatly for the last year or two are in the hands of the combination and may be blighted—the independent buyers and speculators who bought heavily before the consolidation of the trusts, are now in their power and will be ruined, and the warehousemen can live only in their favor or at their survival.

To have a conference of these interests is the purpose of this meeting called at Rocky Mount.

It is not supposed that a scheme or plan will be devised that will be a panacea for present conditions or give relief in one year or several years. It is not to be hoped that a young organization, without capital can successfully combat a powerful organization firmly entrenched in both the old and the new world, with millions at its command.

It is hardly probable that the price of tobacco for the coming year will be forced below the cost of production, as such a course by the trust, followed immediately upon the high prices we have just received, and lowered for no apparent reason except the arbitrary will of the trust, might force the growers in the small area growing bright tobacco (which is limited to Virginia, North Carolina, East Tennessee and South Carolina), in desperation, to combine for self preservation. That combination if made, compactly organized and controlled, would doubtless determine the price of a product of which they have a monopoly in growing—monopoly against monopoly. North Carolina alone, it is estimated, grows seventy-five per cent of the bright tobacco made. Such a combination of farmers for even that small territory may be ridiculed, but it is a possibility, and necessity may force them to it. The tobacco crops of 1900 and 1901 were short, so it was reasonable to hope that with world wide prosperity, expanding markets, increased demand, and an average crop, this year profitable prices would prevail.

At Rocky Mount it is desired to have a full and free discussion of the situation in all its phases, especially in relation to production, consumption, local co-operation, factories, markets, etc. Steps should be taken to curtail the acreage, if possible, and endeavor to restrain the great planting which it appears will be made in 1903, and which must have a depressing, if not destroying, effect upon prices. Some system should be devised by which accurate information can be obtained from the various counties as to area planted, yield per acre, proportion of crop marketed, class of tobacco raised, the amount of and kind of fertilizer used, etc.

There are no accurate statistics obtainable and such as we have are merely guess-work; the farmers and dealers are in the dark as to the real situation, and prices are left to the pleasure of the trust or to chance to fix.

Some of the estimates of yield for North Carolina seem ridiculously high and doubtless much tobacco is counted several times as it is sold and re-sold on the several markets in this State and Virginia, before it is exported. These statistics can be gathered by legislation, supported by the hearty co-operation of the State and National Departments of Agriculture and with the aid of farmers' associations. By being well organized and informed as to true conditions we can act intelligently and control acreage and production, and incidentally prices.

With the increased demand for tobacco and higher prices for manufactured tobacco, and with a short supply, no combination or combinations, can be sufficiently strong to absolutely control prices.

There is a growing sentiment against trusts and a tendency to patronize anti-trust goods, as has been so handsomely illustrated in the magnificent support given the Wells-Whitehead Tobacco Company, and I hope in the next year or two to see many cigarette factories and other tobacco factories established in our tobacco towns, as it seems they could be operated profitably.

Farmers' associations should be organized in every township. These associations, besides gathering and disseminating information, would serve as agricultural schools, and the experience and superior intelligence of one farmer would teach an inexperienced or less gifted neighbor. What is said of the tobacco farmer applies with equal force to the cotton, grain, stock, truck or general farmer. The practical benefits to be derived from farmers associations are too many to enumerate, but I wish to illustrate one item alone where by intelligence and co-operation the farmers of Eastern North Carolina would save hundreds of thousand of dollars.

Until the Legislature of 1901 changed it, the law in reference to fertilizers, required that brands sold in the State, whenever any of the following ingredients were asserted to be present should contain "soluble and precipitate phosphoric acid, which shall not be less than 8 per cent; soluble potassa, which shall not be less than one per cent; ammonia, which shall not be less than two per cent." This created an unnatural demand for acid phosphate, as it required about 1,100 pounds of acid phosphate, which is practically controlled by a trust, to every ton of this fertilizer when the soils did not need it.

This exacted, I estimate at least \$650,000 a year for acid phosphate from the farmers of North Carolina in excess of the amount of the phosphoric acid they needed. As the law is now, they can use what chemicals their soils and crops require and are relieved from paying this trust tribute if they see fit to do so. The soils of the Coastal Plain are deficient in potash and if our farmers will use a large percentage of potash in their fertilizer they will find it greatly to their advantage to do so—making larger crops with cheaper fertilizers, and fertilizer companies will make brands to suit their demands. The brands of fertilizer on the

market now, and most generally used, still contain 8 per cent phosphoric acid, which phosphoric acid is used as a filler and in many soils is entirely unneeded.

An intelligent club of farmers could use only what their soils demanded and buy their fertilizer in quantities, which would be a great saving. As an illustration of the difference in wholesale and retail prices, I will instance one. I saw acid phosphate offered in December, 1899 for \$6.50 a ton and sold at retail in May, 1900, at \$16.00 a ton. If farmers associations would buy the raw material (chemicals) and mix their own fertilizer, they would save several dollars a ton on each ton used, or more than \$1,000,000 a year. This alone is worth organizing for.

I have reason to believe that during the year 1903 several farmer fertilizer companies will be organized in North Carolina (this is probably the most inviting field for investment in our State today), and I hope that our farmers will soon be sharing with the fertilizer trust some of the profits they are making out of the fertilizers we are compelled to use.

For a generation the power and influence of the farmer has been waning in North Carolina four-fifths of our people live by agriculture, but they are a scattered, unorganized mass and do not exercise the influence they should. It has been estimated, that of the young men coming of age in North Carolina annually, about 18,000 become farmers—about sixty or seventy lawyers and about the same number become preachers and doctors. Is there any question as to the relative influence wielded by these boys individually? Is the farmer wielding the power he should?

In the United States today, more than half its population live on the farm. More than one-third of the people engaged in "gainful occupations" work on the farms and they have invested in agriculture twenty billion dollars, or four times that invested in manufactures. Of the appropriations of the last billion dollar Congress, the smallest of the general appropriations was made to agriculture—\$5,208,990—when the products of agriculture amount to five billion dollars annually. The "business interests" of the country are organized and are legislated for and protected—the laboring man is organized and demands protection and his voice is heard—the millions of farmers are forgotten. Why? Because he will not assert himself—because they are unorganized. Combined they would be all powerful.

Organization is our hope—it is the key to the situation, and we should meet combination with combination.

It is to be hoped that the general government will eventually supervise and control trusts, but our only salvation now is in ourselves—let us unite for self-protection—in which righteous cause it is only necessary for the farmers to stand together to ultimately better their condition and succeed.

This meeting at Rocky Mount should be well attended. The interests of independent buyers, manufacturers, warehousemen and farmers are interwoven and interdependent, and they cannot afford to lose this opportunity to consult together concerning those matters which so vitally concern their welfare.

J. BRYAN GRIMES.

December 17, 1902.

Let me say I have used Ely's Cream Balm for catarrh and can thoroughly recommend it for what it claims. Very truly, (Rev.) H. W. Hathaway, Elizabeth, N. J.

I tried Ely's Cream Balm and to all appearances am cured of catarrh. The terrible headaches from which I long suffered are gone.—W. J. Hitchcock, late Major U. S. Vol. and A. A. Gen., Buffalo, N. Y.

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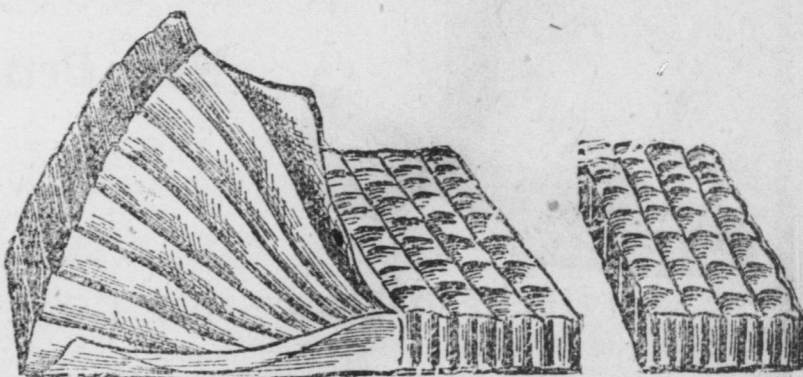
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