

THE FENCE LAW.

Among the Laws of North Carolina there is one that ought to be repealed at once, for two reasons, viz: First, because it is never enforced and second, because it is an outrage on common sense and simple justice. We refer to the Law making it a misdemeanor, and therefore punishable with fine or imprisonment, for a planter not keeping a lawful fence about his cleared ground under cultivation. Every fair-minded man must confess that it is an unjust, unfair, and infamous Law, and it should no longer disgrace the Statutes of a civilized people! Just think of it a moment, and then realize its injustice and hardship: a man has a piece of land that he has bought and paid for, and wishes to cultivate, to make bread for his family, and yet if he does cultivate it without going to the heavy expense and trouble of enclosing it with "a sufficient fence at least five feet high," he violates the law of the land and can be arrested as a criminal and fined and imprisoned in the common jail! Is not this contrary to all ideas of justice? A man cannot build or keep up a fence except at considerable expense and with much labor, and yet if a poor farmer (either from poverty or infirmity) neglects to keep up a lawful fence around his cleared ground under cultivation, he is a criminal in the eyes of the law, and upon conviction can be haled out to pay the fine imposed upon him, or else be confined in jail with thieves and murderers. Is not this outrageous? Should not such a law be repealed at once? But it may be said by some one, that the law is not enforced, and therefore nobody is punished. Then, why have such a law? Why not repeal it? Because it is not enforced, is one good reason why it should be repealed. As it is, any evil-minded person through malice to some neighbor, can have him prosecuted and imprisoned at any time, for probably there is scarcely one farmer in Chatham county, but who is liable to indictment. Our farmers should not permit themselves to be thus placed at the mercy of any scamp, who may wish to harass them and put them to costs, but should demand the immediate repeal of so odious a law. The existence of this law and its not being enforced by our grand juries, is very demoralizing, because if grand jurors neglect to enforce one law, they may another, and thus their oaths are violated and justice stifled. Grand jurors take an oath to "present all things truly as they come to their knowledge," and while it must be within the "knowledge" of every one, that there are scarcely any lawful fences in the county, yet no presentments are ever made. What a consternation would be produced, if our grand jury next week should present all persons in the county who do not keep up lawful fences! And yet the law and a strict regard for the sanctity of their oaths would require them to do so. Is not this bare statement of itself, sufficient to induce our people to demand the repeal of such a law? We should have none but good laws, and all good laws should be enforced. So, if a law is not a good one, it ought to be repealed, and not allowed to disgrace our Statute Book.

OUR HIGHWAYS.

We herewith publish an extract from Gov. Vance's Message in relation to our public roads, from which it will be seen, that he advises "that some other method for their construction and repairing be devised," just as we have been urging in the Record. He also very properly suggests the use of convict labor upon the "leading thoroughfares," which suggestion we hope the Legislature will carry out, and put about 50 convicts at work on the road from Pittsboro' to Monrore and Lockville. Read what the Governor says: Remembering that North Carolina is pre-eminently an agricultural State, your legislation should be directed towards the improvement of that interest mainly. In this connection I beg to call your attention to the fact that the first and perhaps greatest need of an agricultural people, thinly scattered over a wide extent of territory, is that of good highways and easy transportation for persons and products. As a general rule, from the lowland belt westward the highways of our State are as bad as, if not worse than, any to be found in the Atlantic States. The old system of locating them and keeping them in repair, adopted by our fathers more than a hundred years ago, is still in use, though its utter inefficiency for nearly that length of time has been apparent. Of the inconvenience, cost and depressing tendency upon all industry which such roads occasion, I need not stop to remind you; I shall only beg your earnest attention to the necessity for a change, and express my decided opinion that no permanent prosperity need be expected unless this grievous evil is remedied. Certain great leading thoroughfares through the most convenient centres, and all pouring into the nearest railroad lines, might be cheaply and thoroughly constructed by convict labor, the counties through which they pass supporting the convicts. And as to the other roads discharging into these, I advise that some other method for their construction and repairing be devised.

Assessment of Property.

The Governor very properly calls attention to the present scheme of assessment of property for taxation, and says: "I cannot conceive it possible to devise one which would operate more unequally, unjustly or prejudicially to the Treasury. The rule for every county, town and township is different, and the values of property situated in the same locality and of the same character, are as variant and unequal as the avoided, arbitrary, and of an indifferent opinions of the assessors may chance to be. Very little property is assessed to anywhere within the neighborhood of its value, but that does not matter; the essential idea is to have the assessment bear the same uniform proportion to the true value of the property taxed. Unless this is secured, one man pays a vastly higher tax than his neighbor, and one township or county than the adjoining township or county, and it is in the power—and often happens in practice—of the county assessors and commissioners to defeat the will of the Legislature by lowering the assessments. It becomes also a heavy tax on honesty, and compels the conscientious man to pay sometimes double or treble the tax paid by his less scrupulous neighbor. A remedy for this evil is demanded alike by justice and good policy. What that remedy shall be your wisdom must devise. We do not want an increase of taxes but an equalization of taxes, and a faithful collection of those which are levied. My own opinion is that the Treasurer, Auditor, or other State officers, be authorized to act as a State Board of Assessors, with power to supervise and equalize the assessment of the county officials whose lists should be submitted to it; and it should have authority to summon witnesses, hear testimony, &c., and if the county assessors were chosen by this State Board it seems to me we would almost have a guaranty that uniformity could be secured."

Correspondence.

FOR THE RECORD, WILLIAMS' TOWNSHIP, N. C., January 8th, 1879.

MR. EDITOR:—I have been using fertilizers under cotton for several years, but have never decided, fully, that it pays to use it, as it is generally used by farmers. The custom in this section is to run a field in cotton for several years in succession, using home-raised manures as far as possible, and filling out with commercial fertilizers. When the guano is used in connection with the compost, the land will be improved, but it is very frequently the case, that a portion of the land is manured with the fertilizers alone for a succession of years. I have noticed on some of my land, thus manured, that after two or three applications there is no improvement over previous crops, that the land becomes close, and bakes after every rain, and the crop suffers much worse in drouth, than when it has been manured with compost, or has been previously sown in wheat or oats. If there was a judicious system of rotation adopted, this packing and baking would be avoided. If any of our farmers have adopted a system of rotation which works satisfactorily, they will confer a great favor on the public by letting it be known. I have been an advocate of the "no fence" system for several years, and have been more firmly convinced from recently published articles, from sections that have tested it—that wherever it is adopted, an early, and rapid improvement of the farm and stock will result, to say nothing of the immense saving of timber, and the heavy expense incurred in keeping up so much fence. It requires the closest economy for the farmer to balance accounts now, and every one is looking around, to see where and how he can make the same crops with less expense. The first thing that suggests itself is, that he must pay his laborers less. Is there where the fault lies? Not entirely, I think. It will not do to cut the wages of the laborer too much—neither will it do to give them regular employment. In order to have honest, reliable laborers, they must be regularly employed, and must earn a respectable living. What shall we do then? We must adopt a system that will enable us to employ all the labor of the farm to a profitable account. We must drop off every unnecessary expense, and let the labor of the farm be employed constantly in the preparation of crops when not engaged in their cultivation, or harvesting. I think the adoption of the "no fence" system, would be an important step in that direction. The question then, is, how shall we get under this "no fence" system? It will require a united effort on the part of its advocates, until the people of the county are convinced of its economy, and of the great benefits that would result. Who will suggest a plan for an organized effort?

FOR THE RECORD, ROCK HILL, S. C., January 7th, 1879.

MR. EDITOR:—Feeling an interest in the property of the CHATHAM RECORD, and wishing to encourage the farmers of Chatham in a good cause, I know no subject that would interest or benefit them more than the "no fence" question. You may ask how you are to be benefited by this law? As I have seen it tried in this County (York, S. C.), I feel that I can give you some idea of the benefits to be derived from it. In the first place, you would keep better stock, and get rid of the fencing, and by that means save hundreds of dollars of timber and labor each and every year. I have not seen a horse otherwise than fat since I have been here, and a good farmer tells me that he only keeps one common cow, now, which gives him abundance of milk and butter for his own use, and he supplies four or five families with milk besides; whereas before this law was passed here, he had to keep three cows and had no milk to spare. And there is still another advantage—you can make enough where your fences are, to feed your cows on; and besides you get rid of briars at the end of your rows which will be certain to be there if you don't go to considerable expense every Spring to clear them away. Respectfully yours, R. PETER.

FOR THE RECORD, ROCK HILL, S. C., January 7th, 1879.

MR. EDITOR:—I have shown that the present banking law substitutes Government Bonds in the place of specie, and so far, reverses our former banking system of amplifying circulation about 200 per cent. above the basis, as really to reduce circulation about 35 per cent. below the basis, thus making a change of about 235 per cent. And does not this fact afford a full answer to the questions so often asked in the South, "why is money so scarce, and how is it that it can only be had in rare instances, even at 12 per cent, and with undoubted security?" But as many of your readers for want of time or attention, may not apprehend the working and effect of the law, I propose to offer a few suggestions touching its chief phases, and especially in regard to the Confederate States. As these States are mainly agricultural, and generally used the amplifying State Banks, they did not require a large amount of specie, and had, therefore, a small volume of it, at the advent of the war. And mining and coinage being checked by the war, and a strict blockade established, there was little or no accretion during the war, from any source, while some was exported in blockade runners, to purchase necessities, and a considerable sum was gotten hold of in various ways, by the federal army, and carried off by them. Such was our financial condition at the end of the war; all of our other circulating medium having been rendered entirely worthless, by its results. And now, compare these States with the loyal States; in them the State Banks were not destroyed, but only forced into liquidation, and a change of their capital into National Banks, or other investments. A vast amount of precious metals, especially of silver, was mined and coined, and immense sums of greenbacks were put afloat. Such was the contrast financially between the classes of States at the end of the war, and such in a slightly diminished degree is still the financial contrast between them. In spite of the entangling effect of the National Bank Law, the loyal States have a mighty mass of circulating medium in specie and greenback, while without that law, the Confederate States would suffer from an oppressive scarcity, which is ruinously on file by the law. And to a failure to perceive and realize this great contrast, I must attribute the antipathy of Northern statesmen to yield to any remedy or modification for our relief. But perhaps their eyes will be opened when they find that here-in is the true secret of a solid South. In this matter both races are suffering alike in the South, and both are realizing it, as we in the fact that the former issues of the Democratic and Republican parties have merged into a common front, universal in theory, and only exceptional in practice, because of some political and hot-headed nondescripts who cannot realize when a contest is fairly ended, and who seem to delight in guerilla warfare. But their ranks are not large, and it is hoped they will grow small by degrees, and be unaccountably. They are impotent to arrest the final success of great measures, and chiefly serve to afford pabulum to more patriotic and demagogues. I allude to the Constitutional Amendments fixing the rights and status of colored people, and perhaps I ought to qualify the word universal in reference to the theory of them, in view of the late utterances of Senator Blaine and his confederates! Wonders will certainly never cease! TAYLOR.

Value of Convict Labor.

(Extract from the Governor's Message.) The number of convicts now on hand and their distribution is shown by the report of the very competent and energetic Board of Directors and Superintendent, sent herewith. The able force kept in the enclosure has been constantly employed upon the walls and buildings, and by placing a cash valuation upon the work done, it will be seen that they have earned handsome wages over and beyond their keep. The returns from those engaged on the various railroads show greater wages, valuing their work by engineers' estimates. These estimates are very liberal towards the company for whom the work is done, yet it will be seen that the convicts have earned more than four times the minimum fixed by the Legislature at which the companies should be charged. From this we may draw some valuable conclusions: 1. That convict labor is almost if not quite as valuable for road construction as hired labor. 2. That convict labor is more valuable used in this kind of work than employed at trades and mechanical work in close confinement. 3. That the health and general tone of the convicts is better in outdoor work. Influenced by these considerations I am induced to say, that in my opinion, it is our policy to provide labor for them on public works altogether, after the completion of the Penitentiary buildings, leaving within its walls only such as from feebleness or the nature of their crimes cannot be sent outside. In addition to the completion of the roads begun by the State, and to which labor has been already assigned, there are a number of local railroads and turnpikes greatly desired in many parts of the State, and valuable swamp lands to be drained, at which convicts might be employed with great profit to the State, the counties or communities supporting the convicts. I think that whenever any county or community will obtain

a charter for building a railroad or a turnpike, or draining a swamp, or dyking a river, and will undertake to support the hands they should be given the convict labor. There are many fertile valleys of greater or less extent, remote from railroad facilities, whose well-to-do farmers I am sure would be induced to attempt the building of narrow gauge railroads if they were given the necessary labor; and many excellent turnpikes would be constructed as feed-roads to our railroads, and many rich swamps might be drained in the same manner. In this way the increasing cost of the Penitentiary would be kept down, and a vast benefit to the people be accomplished.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

**Haw River High School:** (NEAR PITTSBORO', N. C.) Dr. W. A. WILBORN, A. M., Principal. Students prepared for College or Business. Thoroughness, Good Morals, and Strict Discipline, are the main objects of the School. Tuition and Board, very cheap. Spring Session opens January 18th. For particulars, address: W. A. WILBORN, Principal, or J. B. BYNUM, Trustee, Pittsboro', N. C., Jan 9th.

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**Mortgage Sale!** By virtue and in Execution of a power of sale contained in a certain Deed of Mortgage, made to me by John T. Moore, I will sell at the Court House door, at Pittsboro, on Tuesday, the 21st day of January, 1879, the tract of land described in the said deed, viz: 21 1/2 acres, more or less, lying on Rocky River, joining Joseph J. Fox, and the Mackay Mill tract. Terms cash. E. F. MOORE, Mortgagee, Fayetteville, N. C., Nov. 18th, 1878. nov-21-3m

**LAND SALE:** BY VIRTUE OF Sundry Executions in my hands for collection, in favor of John W. Deane and John Mackay, against Alva Mitchell, I will sell at the Court House door, in Pittsboro, on first Monday in February, 1879, at Public Auction, a certain tract of land, lying on the waters of Wolfcreek Branch, Chatham county, adjoining the lands of Thomas Bynum, K. H. Mitchell and others, and containing 20 acres; another tract on Parker's Creek, adjoining M. T. Baldwin and others, and containing 60 acres; one other tract on New Hope, adjoining lands of Betsey Bell and others, and containing 30 acres; located on the lands of said Mitchell to satisfy said executions. This, 1st day of January, 1879. JOHN W. TAYLOR, Sheriff, J. J. KNIGHT, Dep. Sheriff. jan-2-1

**Bynum Manufacturing Company,** L. B. BYNUM, Agent. PITTSBORO', N. C. MANUFACTURERS OF THE BEST YARNS AND SHEETINGS. DEALERS IN GENERAL MERCHANDISE! LOOK FOR THE SHEETINGS AND YARNS, BRANDED CHATHAM COTTON MILLS, IF YOU WANT THE BEST! FIRST AND ONLY COTTON MILL IN THE COUNTY. Encourage Home Enterprise. oct-3-no-3-1f

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**ON HAND for Xmas,** A nice assortment of Nuts, French Candies, Best Layer Raisins, and a full Line of Groceries, For sale by M. T. NORRIS & CO., We are daily receiving consignments, and get the Highest Market Prices, and look close after the interest of our customers. M. T. Norris & Co., sep-19-dec-12-2m Raleigh, N. C.

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