



THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

THE INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE PARAMOUNT TO ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS OF STATE POLICY.

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Mississippi—The Farmer, Winona.
North Carolina—THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER, Raleigh.

Louisiana—The Union, Choudrant.
Tennessee and Kentucky—The Toiler, Union City, Tenn.

Free Speech, Beaumont, Texas, of the counties of Jefferson, Orange, Tyler, Hardin, Chambers, Liberty.

Florida—Farmers' Florida Alliance, Marianna, Fla.

[For THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER. SOME PLAIN TALK BY AN OLD FARMER.]

EDITOR PROGRESSIVE FARMER:—As farmers are cordially invited to express themselves in your paper (our organ), I take the liberty of writing you some things concerning us as farmers and our community.

Alliance clubs have been busy at work lately, trying to see what guano could be bought for—I mean the lowest rates for good, reliable brands. I don't think they have been able to do much in this direction, because so many things have happened to reduce the price this season that it is as low

as it can be sold, take the risk and live—so say our merchants. Various causes, outside of the Alliance, or any other farmers' organization, have reduced it from 360 pounds of middling cotton to 300, 287½ pounds, &c. One main cause in our community is the springing up of a little inland town somewhere down in Nash or Franklin county by the name of Spring Hope, I believe. Well, Spring Hope had to have a living and a trade from somewhere, and of course looked east of the Raleigh & Gaston Railroad route, back of Wake Forest and Youngsville for it. To obtain it, and make a trade, they dropped guano to 300 pounds of cotton. I can assure you the Alliance had nothing to do with it. And it will always be very hard for farmers to co-operate and accomplish anything, for there is always something that has caused everything for farmers before they will or can do anything for themselves. All merchants have the good of farmers and the working class at heart, and will always do for them rather than see them go to the trouble of organizing and holding meetings of any sort—(except their church meetings). Farmers are slow to take hold of this sort of thing, for most of us really believe it is against the laws of our country to have secret meetings, and try in any way to benefit ourselves against monopolies and moneyed men of our land. The idea of an old farmer's expressing himself about anything that he thinks is for the good of the sons of toil, or that would benefit the country at large, is simply ridiculous. All he ought to do is to work for merchants, doctors, &c., and vote as the lawyers and politicians of his county tell him is right. Farmers are not free men, and it is not becoming in any of us to be too forward. First thing we know we will be put down, and our moneyed lords will have laws made to take away what few privileges we now enjoy.

I see in your paper that it has been suggested that there are farmers in our State that would grace the chair of Governor.

How absurd to think about such a thing! I would just like to know how an old farmer would look in the new Jarvis mansion. We have had cyclones and earthquakes, but what would happen next, no one could predict.

Our farmers are sowing oats, ploughing up cotton stalks, and getting ready as fast as the weather will permit for another crop. If, in the meantime, we can manage to buy less and give fewer mortgages, we will, in the course of time, come, I hope.

I did not think of saying so much, and will only mention the public roads, with a few suggestions, as it seems to be one of the leading questions of the day. It is a fact that for the past twenty years we have grumbled and quarreled over our roads, and notwithstanding it all, they have continued to grow worse each year; and it really seems that the time is not far distant when we will have to abandon them, or at least, stay at home during the winter season. What can and must be done is the question for us to decide. A great many ideas have been advanced for the past ten years, as to how they might be improved. In the first place, however, I would notice that most all of the fuss made over roads from persons who do not have to help keep the roads in order; it is very seldom that you, or any one, hears an old farmer complaining about the roads; but he simply, when asked by his town friend how the roads are, answers that they are bad. The row is from men who have nothing to do but ride about and cuss, when his last meal is settled by some rut or stone in the road. But as farmers, we all want better roads, and how to get them is the thing for us to consider. The roads are worked according to law by men who, as a rule, have no wagons or horses, mules or oxen, to haul and cut up the roads; the most they do is to walk them, and of course ought to help keep them in order, and as a rule are willing to do

it. But is it surprising to find that we have bad roads when they are to be kept up entirely by a set of men who do not have to use them much, and who feel that what work they are doing is for somebody else's pleasure or benefit? Is it right for us to expect it? As the law now exists, it exempts all over 45 years from road duty, and this excuses most all who use the road most. I know it is not a popular idea, but it strikes me that the only plausible one for us to pursue, is for us to work our roads by taxation, and let every man bear his burden according to his worth. It is nothing but right; and then, we certainly would have better roads. Let's have a fund for it, and have on each section of the road one hand, or more if needed, whose business it shall be to stay on the road and work it just as the section of a railroad is kept up. This force can see that no place in his road becomes bad, and by not letting any one place get in a bad condition, he will be able in the summer seasons to do a great deal of work on his section that will be of lasting good to the road, and at this season all of the working class could be called out to help put our roads in first-class order. I do not pretend to know what is constitutional, but this much I am certain of, that every working man would much prefer paying a reasonable tax than to be harassed and bothered as he is now.

We are all bound to admit that the present system is a failure, and not more so than we could expect when we force a set of individuals to keep up the roads who are not interested in them, and who do not want to do it, (at least all of it). If all were as willing to take hold and help as we are to quarrel, we could and would have better roads.

Hoping that our next Legislature may be composed of men who will not be afraid to tackle roads, dogs, or anything else that will benefit the farming and working classes, I am,

Respectfully yours,

A FARMER.

[For THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER. A GOOD SYSTEM OF DRAINAGE.]

In company with Mr. W. G. Upchurch, Mr. S. C. Pool, and several other excellent farmers, I recently visited Mr. Priestly Mangum's farm, about one and a half miles from Wake Forest, N. C. Mr. Mangum is a farmer by birth, by raising, by natural choice, and a good one, too. I had long heard that in regard to one of the prime essentials of good farming, his methods were not equalled in Wake county. That essential point is drainage! Mr. Mangum became convinced twenty-five years ago that unless some practical method could be devised to prevent the washing of land, that first-rate success so far as farming is concerned in Middle and Piedmont North Carolina, was impossible. This destructive waste taxes the farmer severely. One heavy rain is liable to carry off in the swollen waters of the creek the treasured compost, the expensive commercial fertilizer, the growing crops, which are the pride of the farmer's heart, and last, but most important, the soil itself.

Under the old slave system, when immense bodies of land were frequently owned in one plantation, although there were many good farmers, now and then one would be extravagant. A remark made by one of these magnates in Wake has passed into a proverb. He said his rule was, "To clean out, to work out, to cut out." That of course was not a good rule, even in those days of "land plenty." Land is an inheritance, which should be improved, not wasted, and the same land may be cultivated for ages, and left in better condition than at the beginning—provided, always, that it is tended aright.

By good farming, and the use of careful methods, the soil on Mr. Mangum's plantation is better to-day by far than it was when a large part was cleared from forest growth of sixty years' standing, and the remainder inherited from his ancestors, and to-day

there is not a wash in his cultivated lands. His methods are not extravagant, but are within easy reach of all good farmers. I will not mention the successive experiments, with varying results, by which the above results have been reached, but will tell of his farming land as we found it.

Mr. Mangum had perhaps the best system of hillside ditches in Wake county. A few years since, when he read of the level terrace system practiced to some extent in Georgia, he tried it fairly, on twenty-five acres, and found it would not do for his farm, which is a good representative tract of Middle and Piedmont North Carolina land. Finally, Mr. Mangum worked out the scheme of the Modified Terrace which we saw, and which I will briefly describe:

He utilized his hillside ditches, plowing down the upper bank several times, using hoes where necessary, allowing the lower embankment to remain. In front of this, where the ditch was, is a space of ten feet on a dead level, and about twelve inches below the embankment. This level drain has a fall of one and one-half inches to thirteen feet four inches.

The guide row is then staked off, and horizontal furrows run, plowing through this level drain, and the embankment just as they chance to go. To run these terraces, a spirit level set in a light frame thirteen feet four inches wide is used, and of course, as much judgment is needed to make them as to prepare a good system of hillside ditches. Plowing down the hillside, across the ten foot level drain, and lightly over the embankment the water is distributed uniformly and slowly, and in the severest rains will never overflow.

Whatever sediment or soil washes down is saved, the terrace gradually gaining more soil, and becoming the richest part of the field. We saw land which had formerly ravines and gullies, now presenting a beautiful and uniform slope; the very site of the gullies, as in case of the terraces, presenting a better show of crops than other parts of the field.

Now as to the advantages, or at least, some of them. A larger crop

is made, as the entire field is cultivated; the soil is preserved and added to; fertilized and compost matter are fully utilized, as the soil has enough basis and humus to digest them to advantage. So here we have—and the imagination is not drawn upon to support the facts—land which is getting richer, land which is producing greater crops without strain, and both at a less cost, than under the old hillside ditch system.

Again, the hillside ditches have always been a kind of catch all; grass, which the farmer endeavors to weed out always finds a welcome lodgment on the ditch bank, and without let or hindrance flourishes. As soon as the seed of this self-improvised grass plot is washed out or is blown out by the wind, by a species of grim humor, it takes revenge on the farmer for endeavoring to rice it, by spreading itself on the slope below.

The terrace system rids the field of grass. Every foot of land is under cultivation. Grass weeded out finds no place of lodgment, and dies. In a particular cotton field of Mr. Mangum's, where it has been necessary from the rapid slope to have frequent hillside ditches, which have now been for about two years converted into terraces, I found out that by the present method one-sixth more land is in cultivation. The waste of the ditches is saved. Of course this would not amount to quite so much in a field where modified slopes render ditches less frequent. The saving of the land occupied by the ditch is but a small part of the result gained. As before remarked, the best crops are on the terrace, i.e., the ten foot level and the embankment. Then, too, one gets rid of grass to a great extent.

Mr. Mangum employs certain excellent methods in farming which should be used by all good farmers, such as composting, making good use of clo-

ver, rotation of crops, &c., &c., but he is thoroughly convinced of the great saving which comes to him by the modified terrace system.

The past two years have, in this section, been wet years in certain critical seasons, yet his terraces have stood the test, and are now in fine condition. Mr. Mangum raised last year, with all the disadvantages of the season, a bale of cotton, and twenty-five to thirty bushels of wheat to the acre.

The excellent farmers with me were also convinced, and six other farms, and splendid ones at that, will hereafter be cultivated under this system.

The farm of the Agricultural College, near Raleigh, during the last year, was terraced partially, and will be completely. I have mentioned the utilization of this kind of waste at length, as I consider it a most important matter.

It is impossible to explain with entire satisfaction, the simplicity and efficiency of this system, either orally or on paper. It must be seen in operation to be fully appreciated.

I am convinced that the system of the "Modified Terrace," so patiently and intelligently worked out by Mr. Mangum, will attract the attention sooner or later of thousands of farmers, who will thank him for the service he has done to the most important class of citizens in North Carolina.

W. S. PRIMROSE.

[For THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER. OUR NEXT GOVERNOR.]

I look upon a State as a great corporation, governed by a Constitution and laws made in accordance with it. The stockholders in this corporation are the tax-payers who support it, and elect its officers to manage it. The largest tax-payers are the farmers, not only in numbers, but in the amount of money paid into the firm, they therefore are justly entitled to have a controlling voice in selecting officers to run this great machine; thus it can be seen that the farmers have the controlling power not only in our own State, but in all other States of the Union. Then the question arises: Why don't they use it?

I leave this question for the farmers to answer. And I will ask them another question: How long has it been since a farmer was elected Governor of North Carolina? Is there any one in the ranks of the farmers, or any other profession old enough to remember when such an event occurred?

Now, brothers of the farm, the time has come when we ought to speak out boldly for our rights and privileges, because if we don't do it, we may rest assured that no one else will do it for us. This is the year to elect State officers, and many distinguished men have already been recommended as suitable candidates for the office of Governor, among them only one farmer, S. B. Alexander, of Mecklenburg, a man eminently qualified to fill the office. His name is now prominently before the people. Now, brother farmers, he can be nominated, and he can be elected, if we do our duty. Let us unite, therefore, as a band of brothers, determined to win the victory next fall, and make our distinguished friend and brother farmer, Capt. S. B. Alexander, the next Governor of North Carolina.

J. P. M.

We want to see the time when farmers can obtain such representation in Congress as will kick the lobbyists out into the cold, and when legislation cannot be bought and sold to the highest bidder like property under the constable's hammer. Then we may expect better times for the farmer, and we need not look for them before.—Tennessee Wheel.

The African sheep are not clad in wool, like their European relations, but are covered with a stiff, coarse hair. Their color is always black and white, the white forming the ground work for the black, which occurs in spots.