

# PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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

Vol. 4.

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No. 9

## DIRECTORY OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS.

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

E. T. Brumback, Jas. E. Compton and Geo. H. Chrisman.

## LETTER FROM MICHIGAN.

Not a "Hoosier," but a "Woolverine."

DAVISON, Mich., March 25, '89.

MR. EDITOR:—I think I never got such an advertising before in my life as you gave me. Take the last United States census report and look at the charts of illiteracy. The South is brooded over by a sable cloud. But the letters I get show they read THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER over a wide range of country and can write splendid letters, full of friendly welcome. I thank you each and all and will answer personally, but it will take time on my part; patience on yours, there are so many.

Meantime I explain that two of my neighbors were negotiating to buy my farm, but last week one sold to the other, and so I am here yet. Several want my place and I am liable to sell any day. Land sells freely here this spring at good prices; 40 acres \$2,400, 45 acres \$2,800, 50 acres \$2,800, 77 acres \$3,500 are samples. Lots of men want to rent. I was in ill health two years and couldn't work. Last year I rented. I could have rented a dozen farms last week—men came eager for all or part at cash or on shares. I am stronger and do greater day's work than I have done in three years, so I run it myself. I think of starting a private land bureau to help you dispose of your surplus land and aid my landless neighbors to get good homes. How does that strike you?

In reading the letters several questions arise. Why don't you get rich off such cheap land? Here we fight the long winter, the tax gatherer and high rates of interest and figure on a per cent of profit on farms that average 80 acres worth \$50 per acre.

Plenty men are raising a family in good style, paying 1 per cent taxes, making more improvements, keeping 10 to 25 head of stock and have good financial credit, all on 40 acres of ground. What do you think of a man who runs in debt for nearly all of 40 acres of such ground and pays for it from the ground in eight to ten years? And that, too, where, to speak after the manner of men, "we have eight months winter and four months of steady cold weather."

Three years ago we had a cold winter. For over forty days the snow never entirely melted off my house roof. I cut my own wood and took care of 50 head of farm stock alone. Many a time I've followed a path to the stables and on returning in about an hour found it filled with drifts three to five feet deep. With your climate why don't you get rich? Don't you work; or do you work by

proxy? The richest farmers here are the hardest workers. They'll put a check shirt, blue overalls, a hat if was old years ago, and last year boots and lead the hired man all day. If he does as much work as the boss he will earn \$25.00 a month. I can find plenty of men who get up at four in the summer, get out to the field just after sunrise and whoop it up till sundown and keep a lot of cows to milk after dark. Do you do that? Or cradle or rake and bind after a cradler three to five acres a day, or tie up after a reaper three to four acres; set up what a binder cuts, or pitch all day for two and three teams to draw hay or grain? I've known men worth thousands to do it that way.

If I have a job of work to do I expect to "get there with both feet" and "kick the tar out of it." Now if I were down there and had a lot of ditching to do, let us say, I should expect to throw my hat off get into the ditch and throw dirt all day like a "navvy." Would I lose social cast and be looked upon as "poor white trash," the peer of a negro laborer? Here a worker is respected and has good credit at the store. A farm "hired man" is as good as the proprietor if he behaves as well and is welcome in society. He usually wears better clothes on Sunday and has a few as near the front.

Do you put on a "boiled shirt," stand up collar and after bossing the hired help all day never sweat a thread? Here you'd be expected to get sweaty under the head-stall in winter, and, in harvest time, take the stiffening out of a sheet-iron collar, if you wore one.

If I settled there and worked with the hired help, white, black or "ring-streaked and grizzled" as Jacob's cattle, would I be socially ostracized?

I am offered improved lands that would be caught up as a soft snap up here at \$40 to \$60 an acre, and the price there is \$5! What on earth is the matter? If we can make a living and some money on land at \$50, why don't you coin the ducats on land at \$5 to \$10? Are your material resources so boundless as to be of little value? People are paying from \$100 to \$500 an acre for land in Southern California, \$200 to \$800 an inch for water, and wait seven years for a crop of oranges! What ails you? Your timber is a boundless mine of wealth. Lots of millionaires in Michigan made it out of pine. Why don't you get rich? But I've no business "casting the first stone." I'm not rich, and like myself, maybe you have lost your wad by fire, sickness, bad ventures and other disasters. I'll forgive you, but "do so no more." Just the same, I'll own a plantation down there inside of a year. You hear me shout!

The editor is "off his base," calling me a "Hoosier." I was born and reared in Michigan, hence am a "Wolverine." You ought to hear me growl.

Now, you boys, take my advice. Work less land, try intensive farming instead of extensive. Prowl around your work yourself, 10 to 16 hours a day, and be at home 25 working days in a month. When you get a chance give work "one in the neck," and then "kick the stuffing out of it." Respect the man that works, keep out of debt, be virtuous, let whisky alone, don't hang around the village evenings and you'll get rich and be sure there is one good citizen the more.

I like your letters and will reply.

ERNEST HOLLENBECK.

## THE VIRGINIA BRETHREN.

BUFFALO LITHIA SPRINGS,

Mecklenburg Co., Va., March 18, '89.

MR. EDITOR:—As I have been elected Corresponding Secretary of Sandy Fork Alliance, No. 99, my people will look for something from me in your valuable paper. This Alliance was organized the 15th of January with the following officers: Messrs. Lum Yancey, President; Watt Elam, Vice-President; W. D. Pittard, Secretary; Alfred Moore, Treasurer; Reuben Chandler, Chaplain; Tom Gordan, Lecturer; John Pittard, Assistant Lecturer; Jack Leneave, Doorkeeper, and Elbert Gordan, Sergeant-at-Arms. We now have thirty-eight members and applications coming in at every meeting. We are making great headway and hope it will not be long before we have all of the farmers of any note in ranks. Our farmers are a go-ahead people and what they do they do with a will. We have already bought our oats and grass seeds in a body. If the Alliance fails it will not be the fault of the Sandy Fork Alliance. Our Organizer, Mr. John Garland was with us last meeting; he exemplified the work and made us a telling speech. He is still organizing Alliances. I see from your paper that

a good many of the Alliances are offering many resolutions. Now, Mr. Editor, it is very easy to offer and pass resolutions but carrying them out is another thing. Before we put them in print let us send them to the State Secretary and let him send them to all other Alliances and get them all to pass the same; then we can do something. Let us all work for the same thing, the good of the laboring class of people.

P. A. COX.

## WHY ARE ALLIANCE MEMBERS DILIGENT IN DUTY?

HARMONY ALLIANCE, No. 18, Amisville, Va., Nov. 21, '89.

MR. EDITOR:—For three months I have been a reader of your valuable paper, THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER, but have not as yet seen a communication from our Alliance or from our county. By request of one of the officials of the Virginia State Alliance, I now endeavor, under the head of the above caption, to write a few lines, feeling unworthy of the vocation, but hoping they may be of interest to the order.

Why farmers who are members of the order do not discharge their duties as members is a great puzzle to the writer. Is it obstinacy, want of enterprise, because they have no time, or because they don't expect to accomplish anything? Surely it is not the latter, for the good results of the order seem so plain that no one can help seeing them. Brethren, this will not do. We have our enemies outside of the order, and they are telling us it will not profit any one, and trying thereby to break down the middle wall or partition between us and them. When they address you thus, turn a deaf ear to them and pass them by.

Let me admonish you as a brother, and as one who feels an interest in your welfare, to adhere strictly to the Constitution and by-laws laid down for our good by those who, not unlike ourselves, have felt the sting of the nettle in the hands of our adversaries. Try and impress upon your neighbor the advantages of the Alliance, put your shoulder to the wheel and keep it steadily moving, otherwise this great and noble cause will pass into dire oblivion. No one has the minutest idea what the Alliance is doing unless he reads the organs, of which THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER is one of the noblest. I have been trying to impress this fact upon the minds of the brethren since I have been a subscriber to the above named paper. Brethren, loose your purse-strings and send for it; you will never regret it. I have been informed by Bro. J. J. Silvey, State Secretary, that we have now over 185 Alliances in Virginia, with cheering prospects for the near future. Come out, farmers, and enlist under the Alliance banner, fight the good fight of faith, and in the end you will come out more than conquerors. With my best wishes for the progress and welfare of the Farmers' Alliance, I am,

Yours fraternally,  
S. B. McDONALD, Sec'y.

## "THE STATE OF WILKES!"

OLIN, Iredell Co., March 19, '89.

MR. EDITOR:—One or two of the smaller States of the Union are not so large as the county of Wilkes, of North Carolina. Hence the latter is often called the "State of Wilkes." Besides, her material resources are most wonderful. All the hard timbers are found in great quantities on her rich mountain and hillside and their rich coves. Her water-power is sufficient to manufacture all implements used in the State and grind all the grain, spin and weave all the cotton and wool of several such States as ours, while her alluvial soil, if sown properly in the different grasses and clover and small grain, would feed many more thousands of cattle, sheep, horses and hogs than ten such counties now contain; and her mineral resources are beyond conception. If her fifty or more whiskey and brandy distilleries could be converted into as many cotton and wool factories, and her ten thousand useless dogs traded for sheep, a few of the shepherd breed trained to follow and protect stock and teach the boys that it is much easier and more pleasant to herd cattle and sheep and attend other stock, at home than to go West, become cowboys or work for strangers as servants, or even the supposed lighter professional callings and clerkships now so much sought after, this magnificent country would soon be equal to any in our government. North Carolina boys are in demand everywhere, for they make men capable of filling any and every position in life, but they are needed just now more at home than elsewhere. What the future of Wilkes and other counties

of our State will be, if our young men continue to leave the farms, no one can tell. The increased non-producing part of our population, such as women and children and aged persons, will soon overbalance the producers and our lands being still more neglected, will grow up in broom-sedge, briars and pines more than ever before.

Having spent almost the entire fall and winter in traveling among and speaking to the farmers and organizing the Farmers' Alliance and enjoying the hospitality of that very kind people, the writer has had abundant opportunity of learning their wants and their capabilities, would most gladly give them the benefit of any knowledge he may have acquired in a business life of half a century, which he hopes will be kindly received and not regarded as presumptuous bigotry. Let her citizens improve the soil, water-power, stock, orchard, field and garden and form co-operative joint stock Alliance companies to utilize the timber and other products of the county, and such a flood-tide of prosperity will set in as was never known by her people. These things will change cash capital from the greatly worn channel of extortionary money-lending to the more honorable and productive employments, prevent such a conflict between capital and labor as now exists in all the older States and countries, increase her population, wealth and happiness, and make Wilkes county one of the most desirable sections in all this vast country. If the Alliance is fostered and well worked it may do all this for the county as it is doing for others. The opposition to this honored and valuable institution has been more formidable and persistent in Wilkes than any other county where it has been introduced. Nevertheless, by dint of perseverance and hard labor the county has been organized. With a few more Sub-Alliances, the careful nursing of them and those already at work, the aforesaid and greatly desired improvements will naturally follow.

JOHN F. FOARD,  
Organizing Officer.

## THE WAY WE FEEL.

FRANKLINTON N. C., March 25, '89.

MR. EDITOR:—From the fact that we are existing and that few know it, as we have never been heard of through your paper, I have been requested to write a few lines for publication. I hope not much will be expected of us on paper, for we are convinced that our success depends more upon the handling of tools than the handling of the pen, hence the non-appearance of our resolutions, &c., in your valuable columns.

Pope's Chapel Alliance, No. 467, was organized about one year ago with a very few members. We have not grown as fast as some though we number now 68. Our motto is go slow and do the work well, and never tell or publish what we intend doing until we get there.

It grieves us to know that we have done more trading than any other Alliance in our county, yet it is some consolation to know that we can buy when it is necessary.

I sometimes feel that we think too much about buying and not enough about getting along without a great many things which we fancy.

We were slow to take hold of the State Business Agency; you will remember, however, that this is in keeping with our motto. We have required a great deal of tutoring on the subject, but I feel now that we shall soon do our part in establishing the business which we believe should be the next thing done, for surely our success depends upon it. Let's have it brethren.

Now, my brethren at large, we have a good organ, THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER, and we should patronize and support it, but let us not publish too much. I think our editor is a prudent man, and if we leave it discretionary with him he will never publish anything calculated to injure us. As above stated, in my judgement, our success does not depend so much on publishing as on secret consultations and proper management of our affairs in the field and around the house.

Now in conclusion, let me say that if you don't hear from us again soon don't be astonished, just conclude that we have something in view, and wish to accomplish our object before we make a fuss; in other words, we mean to get there first.

Fraternally,  
A. L. ALLEN.

The Catholics are to have a church in Goldsboro.

## [FOR THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.] SOME OF THE ILLS WHICH AFFLICT THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY AND OPPRESS THE FARMERS.

No. 4.

[By Maj. R. L. Ragland, of Hyco, Va.]

## MIDDLE-MEN.

One of the misfortunes which has fallen upon the agriculturists during the second half of the nineteenth century, is the multiplication of middle-men. The producers of domestic, field, horticultural and other products are treated in the most patronizing manner, and virtually informed that they have neither sense nor capacity sufficient to superintend the sales or placing of their products; and capitalists, acting also in the capacity of middle-men, encourage agents, brokers, commission merchants, factors, bummers, canvassers, dealers, drummers, peddlers, pin-hookers, speculators, sharpers, traders and traffickers, to multiply and fatten upon the substance of producers.

That there is necessity and use for middle-men, in some business departments, is conceded. The regular merchant who keeps a general stock of goods to supply the wants of the people in furnishing such supplies as are needed in exchange for money or the products of the country, is transacting a necessary and laudable business and should be encouraged, so long as he deals fairly and justly with his customers. The agent, broker, commission merchant and dealer are needed, too, in their legitimate spheres, and should be encouraged when they can serve the producer and guard his interest.

The trouble is, there are too many middle-men who manage to secure far better pay for their services in handling products than the producer does for his labor and expenditure in raising them. Middle-men are necessary, but not the hordes that are swarming around like the hungry flies around the poor dog in the stable.

We do not entertain the opinion that any industry can make itself independent, or transact properly or profitably all the business necessary in a well-ordered community. A proper division of labor is necessary to a well-balanced society, and the producer should patronize the merchant, smith, shoemaker, tanner, miller, carpenter, painter, wagon maker, plow and farm implement manufacturer, etc., or take stock in such as are most needed in the community and likely to prove profitable, or patronize such as offer reasonably low rates for the aggregate patronage of the farmers of the vicinity. If such action was general, a great saving would ensue to the farmers of the whole country.

In order to better control the sale of products, it is legitimate and proper for the owners of products to combine and conduct warehouses for their sale, to unite in the purchase or manufacture of fertilizers, and in securing reasonable concessions in the purchase of necessities at a specific discount from regular retail rates, or a per centage above cost, from the general merchants, fair and just to seller and buyer.

## CO-OPERATIVE STORES

have not proved a success to any extent in the United States, and as long as regular merchants are willing to concede fair prices where the patronage is made large and certain in the aggregate, it seems unnecessary for farmers to engage in regular merchandizing. In the present condition of society and organized business, middle-men, as before stated, are necessary; but it is not necessary that they should have all the profits.

## MIDDLE COTTON MEN.

It is notorious, that middle-men in the cotton trade, as warehousemen and factors are and have for years been making big fortunes, erecting immense warehouses and compresses, building palatial residences, driving spanking teams to princely carriages, and employing small armies of weighers, samplers, clerks, draymen and laborers on big salaries or wages, while the poor planters realize but a scant pittance above the cost of making the crop, and are often forced to sell for less than the cost of production, closing the year's labors in worse condition financially and physically than when we started.

## MIDDLE TOBACCO MEN.

Go to every tobacco town in Virginia and North Carolina, and among the first gigantic and costly buildings which attract the attention of the visitor are the spacious sales tobacco warehouses. Go into one of these modern tobacco marts and see the number of warehousemen, weighers, auctioneers, clerks, canvassers, labor-

ers and retainers, every one of whom are paid far more for handling planters' tobacco than those who raise it! What wonder, then, that the planter is often paid for his crop less than it cost to raise it, and he goes home disappointed, dissatisfied and dejected?

When we contrast the pay of the cotton and tobacco warehousemen, factors and employees with that of the cotton and tobacco planters, we are forced to the conclusion that the producer—the man who makes and supports these industries—is not justly and adequately paid? What is needed, is a fair adjustment between the warehousemen, factors and handlers of planters' products and the men who produce them, on the "live and let live" principle, all around.

Then, if the railroads will grant or can be forced to concede fair freight rates and manufacturers will not combine into trusts or in aid of trusts or combines, but compete freely and openly for products, prosperity to the rural industries of the people will surely and speedily come, and come to stay.

Is true, that fortune at this hour seems to smile upon those who antagonize the welfare and prosperity of the rural industries; but let all such engaged therein remember that 'tis said:

"When fortune means to men most good,  
She looks upon them with a threatening eye."

The industries are moving as never before, and they have only to catch the "tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune" to shake off the shackles of oppression and rise to the heights of manhood, independence and success.

How success is won by Organized Rural Industry will be shown in our next.

R. L. RAGLAND,  
Hyco, Va.

## CANE CULTURE.

EARPSBORO, N. C., March 17, '89.

MR. EDITOR:—In answer to inquiries as to how to cultivate cane, with your permission, I will give my method.

We have abundance of land in North Carolina as well suited to the cultivation of cane as can be found anywhere. Fresh land, close sandy soil, where there is no grass, is preferred for this crop. The land should be plowed very deep. Plant in rows, same as for corn, to plow both ways; or, if you have plenty of seed, sow in drills. If seed are scarce, check land both ways and drop seven or eight seeds in a hill and cover thinly, not to exceed half an inch. If covered deeper and the ground should get wet and cold the seed will rot. Plant from first of May to first of June. Cane being of slow growth at first, it is very essential to give it all the assistance possible. When large enough, plow deep and cultivate same as for corn. The ground should be stirred often while the plant is young. When the plant is six or seven inches high, thin out; on good ground leave four or five stalks in a hill—on lean land, from two to four stalks. When about twenty-eight inches high it may be laid by, as further cultivation will injure it. Top suckers should be kept off; if let grow the cane will not produce good, bright syrup. Cane should be cut so soon as the seed is out of its dough state. There should be about two and a half feet of the stalk cut off with the seed, as it injures the taste of the syrup. Never strip the fodder off until the cane is ready to be worked up. If cane is cut and stacked, the fodder should be left on it until ready for the mill. The fodder preserves the stalk and can stand several days or weeks without injury. Never stack in piles. Stand it in piles, with butt end on the ground. Manure as for corn or cotton. Would be glad to hear from others who have had experience in the culture of cane.

Fraternally,

C. P. EDWARDS.

## INFORMATION DESIRED.

EARPSBORO, N. C., Johnston Co.,

March 15, 1889.

MR. EDITOR:—Will some one please give us their experience with syrup cane? Tell us how and when to plant; how many seed to the acre, how thick it should be left in the drill, etc. How much will it yield to the acre? Is the syrup good? Is there any market for it? In short, tell us all there is to be told. I have got it in my head that it will pay to raise it, if we only raise enough for home consumption. If this syrup is good, why pay from 40 to 60 cents per gallon for foreign syrup? Let's live at home. Brother farmers, let us hear from you on this subject.

Faithfully,  
HOG AND HOMINY.