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THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

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

Vol. 12.

RALEIGH, N. C., FEBRUARY 1, 1898.

No. 52

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AGRICULTURE.

THE FARMER'S LETTER BOX.

We hope every one of our subscribers will contribute a brief letter to this department. Keep us informed as to what is happening among the farmers of your neighborhood. If you have either by experiment or by any other method discovered anything which you think can be of interest to North Carolina farmers, tell them of it through our columns. Don't think "I'll wait until others start the ball rolling," but jump in and help us yourself. Let us hear from you before next week. Henceforth we hope to make this a permanent feature of THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER. Always give your real name and address, even though you wish some other name signed to your letter.

Experiments prove that excessive fertilization is unprofitable. One of my farm papers states that at a test at the New York Experiment Station (I remember correctly, 1,000 pounds of fertilizer applied to an acre of potatoes increased the crop 48 bushels in '95 and 40 bushels in '96. The same season the application of 2,000 pounds to a like area produced 53 bushels in '95 and 54 in '96, thus showing that the use of over 1,000 pounds per acre was added with a loss compared with the use of 1,000 pounds.—John Smith.

Will a stalk of corn grown in a hill with two or three other stalks produce as good an ear as if the same stalk had been grown by itself separated from any other stalk only so far as to permit perfect fertilization? Give the stalk a chance and get ears weighing two or three pounds each and measuring 12 to 15 inches in length.

The larger the ear the larger the yield and the better the quality. "Quantity and quality" are the things desired when we plant corn; everyone speaks for the largest yield of crop and the very best quality when planting the crop, and this cannot be had unless a variety is used that has been developed by proper cultivation and selection to grow large ears.—E. S. Teagarden, Boone, Iowa.

For destroying rats, the following is one of the best plans I have ever tried: Place an ordinary washtub in a locality infested by rats, and for several days bait it well with food suitable to their taste. After the rats have been properly attracted, fill the tub with water to the depth of about six inches and cover the water with a layer of wheat chaff. Then sprinkle over the chaff some wheat flour, or other attractive substance, and wait results. The first

rat that comes along will of course walk in. Others will be attracted, and thus all the rats in the vicinity can be taken the first night, provided the tub is sufficiently large to hold them. Where rats are very abundant it will be well to empty that tub about ten o'clock and prepare as aforesaid for a new crop.—Bryan Tyson, Long Leaf, N. C.

After picking the apples with the utmost care I put them in boxes of equal size, about six inches deep, without covers, and large enough to handle easily. I place these boxes in an open shed, all the boxes not quite full and set them in piles so as to make the second box cover the first, the third the second, and so on until the pile is as high as is convenient, and cover the last box with a board. I set these boxes a little one side of directly over each other so as to give a little air. I examine the fruit frequently, and if there is any moisture on the apples I slip the boxes so as to give a little more air; if the fruit is shriveled in the least, I shut off all the air. I keep the boxes out of the cellar until there is danger of freezing, and then set them in the cellar and ventilate as before. In this way I can keep my fruit until free it comes again.—O. P. Mentor, Ohio.

Mr. Editor, I see you have asked for the ideas of your different subscribers. I heartily agree with Bro. Barkley, a fatal mistake of farming is in trying to work too much land. Now, Mr. Editor, one of your correspondents a few weeks ago asked for a remedy for the low price of cotton. I will give you and your many readers my idea, which, of course, will meet with a great deal of criticism. My opinion is that the farmers of the South will never reduce the acreage of cotton to one fourth until compelled to do so. We need a remedy at once. I think the legislature of each cotton growing State should pass a law making it a misdemeanor and a heavy fine for a farmer to plant over one fourth of his crop in cotton. If this were done, my word for it, we would have a remedy, and one which after a few years' trial, none would wish to have changed. I will say no more at present. If this escapes the waste basket, I will say more in the future.—J. R. Callaway, Idalia, N. C.

PLANT LESS COTTON.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer. The disastrous result of planting too much cotton this year is already clearly shown by comparison with last year, when the acreage devoted to cotton was decidedly less.

Last year the amount of cotton marketed to January 1st was 6,398,192 bales, the average price realized was 75 cents per pound, \$37.97 per bale, or \$242,939,350.

This year 7,260,033 bales were marketed to January 1st, the average price realized was 605 cents per pound, \$30.49 per bale, or \$221,358,406.

The planters shipped to market 861,841 sales of cotton more by January 1st this year than last, and received for them \$21,580,944 less money. In other words, owing to the lower price, induced by overproduction, the people of the South have lost on cotton shipped to market by January 1st this year, the total value of 861,841 bales, namely, \$32,724,102, and \$21,580,944 besides, making a grand total loss of \$54,305,046.

In 1893-94, 549,817 bales were raised; average price was 769; proceeds \$329,932,899.

In 1894-95, 9,901,251 bales were raised; average price was 5.79; proceeds 288,918,504.

1895-96, 7,157,346 bales were raised; average price was 8.09; proceeds 292,234,437.

1896-97, 8,757,964 bales were raised; average price was 7.42; proceeds 327,547,854.

It will be seen that in 1893-94 a crop of 7,549,617 bales sold for \$4,014,395 more than the large crop of 9,901,251 bales the next year; in 1895-96 a crop of only 7,157,346 bales brought \$3,315,933 more than the 9,901,251 crop, and that the crop of 8,757,964 bales last year brought \$38,629,350 more than was received for 9,901,251 bales marketed in 1894-95.

Cotton raising in this country is virtually a monopoly—two-thirds of the entire production each year is readily taken by buyers in foreign countries, and the planters in the South are justly entitled to a fair remuneration for their labor. An over supply is the only reason why they have to sell 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 bales of cotton to foreign spinners, without profit.

On account of the large crop and low

prices resulting therefrom, it is of vital importance, not only to the South, but the whole country, that the cotton acreage for next year be materially reduced, in order to advance the price of the greatest staple product of the United States to a paying basis.

If the planters of the South suffer loss, the people of the whole country must share in it.

The South cannot stand another cotton crop of same dimensions as this year's, without bringing about disaster and bankruptcy to planters and handlers of cotton, and relative harm to the general mercantile interest of that section.

The mere fact that a large crop has been planted affects the price adversely at once, and continues to affect it until the crop has been marketed, and if the planters of the South would determine to largely reduce the acreage, a favorable influence upon prices and the cotton trade of the world would at once become apparent.

By the systematic and cooperative action between the merchants and planters the cotton crop must be kept within reasonable trade demands or else destroy the most valuable source of profit to the mercantile and agricultural interest of the South. For the good of all concerned, it would be infinitely better any year to make a million bales less cotton than half a million bales more than necessary.—Latham, Alexander & Co., New York.

POLITICS, BUSINESS AND OTHERWISE.

Correspondence of the Progressive Farmer.

After reading your issue of January 11th, I have concluded that I would like to have a word or so on a few of the subjects treated in that issue.

The Monroe Enquirer says that the public schools are aimly attended, and that those who do not patronize them are committing a grave error. The Asheville Citizen says "the same old complaint—schools and teachers, but no scholars, good money paid out, but few to take advantage of it."

I believe that the people are more interested in education than at any previous time in history. I believe the people of this State would patronize the schools but for special and good reasons. The Citizen says "Schools and teachers," but I deny it. I claim that half the schools in the State are a farce and that percentage of the teachers are unfit to teach, and I honor the parent that would rather his child grew up ignorant and moral than to grow up learned and immoral and infidel at heart. The people have some responsibility before God, as well as the State. Anyone that will commit his children to the care of a boy or girl inexperienced and irreligious, careless and giddy, worldly and vain just because they have a little learning, will rue it some day. Let us have a law that gives the people a voice in the schools and the teachers, and there will be a vast change in the present condition. What we need is not barbarous compulsion," but a "voice" and interest.

FERTILIZERS, ETC.

Will Bro. Parker tell us why it is that we can buy 13 per cent. phosphoric acid cheaper than the Alliance brand? We did it here last year. And why it is that several things listed can be bought less than listed by him?

POULTRY.

The recommendations to go into the chicken business are becoming very frequent of late. They tell us it is a veritable gold mine. Where is it? Hens are now worth only 15 cents. Spring chickens bring about the same and come down to 7½ cents. And eggs were 15 cents only one week this winter, and they get down to five cents in trade. I see no gold mine in that.

TURNIPS.

Bro. Foster claims there is money in turnips, and that they beat cotton. I don't think turnips would better us here. In the first place our land would not make them as he does, and we could not sell them if we could; as scarce as they are here, 25 cents a bushel is all they bring. Potatoes will beat that.

TOO MUCH LAND.

We all plant too much land, says Bro. Barkley, and I guess he is very near right. There is too much planted for what we get. It may be we ought to work what we do plant better. But that farmer who does not plant much will not get much, is the general rule. And if he desires to improve and concentrate them he had better go slow if he has no bank account. There is a lot of prize farming these days where it's all brag and show and the net gain is

precious little. One man raised 200 bushels corn on one acre in S. C., and got the prize. If it paid, why did he quit? Another made four bales cotton on one acre, what did he quit for? The strain and tention was too exhaustive, I suppose.

KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

Some seem to think farmers ought to keep accounts just as merchants do. I think they ought to keep accounts, but it would be foolishness to keep it as a merchant does. All farmers ought to keep accounts so as to tell what comes in and what goes out and know what the profit is at the year's end. But this weighing of the milk and measuring the cow's feed on a common farm would be perfect nonsense. Any good farmer's wife can tell the best cow in a herd in a week's time with the exactness of a Babcock tester.

STATE SECRETARY.

I am glad that our State Secretary is making such a good showing. I think the people of North Carolina will be gratified to hear what he has done. They will even be glad to continue such a man in office a second term, if necessary. I think the Populists in North Carolina have done well, as a party. And with the recognized leader, Marion Butler, our Senator, I believe in trading even in politics when it can be done honestly and fairly and for the good of the people. Yes, sir, if you can't get a whole loaf, why take a half, but let it be square and honest and on principle.

FREE PAPERS AND SEED.

Why is it a crusade has started out against the free distribution of seed and documents by Congress? Do not thousands and tens of thousands get introduced to new varieties and seeds that never would see one but for the free distribution? And do not the Congressmen enlighten the public mind by the free distribution of documents and keep them posted, even as no other source would do? I think so. And I believe there is nothing that could take its place and do the good it is doing.

Why, sir, the bulletins of the Agricultural Department are devoured here as letters from dear friends.

I am glad to see the year starts out well with the Business Agent, and that we now can wear our own shoes.

Very truly, &c.,
W. T. CUTCHIN.
Shankle, N. C., Jan. 20, 1898.

COTTON CROP RETURNS AND BY-PRODUCTS.

Eds. Country Gentleman:—Cotton was formerly thought to be king of all crops, but it has wofully fallen from its former prominence, and now is of quite inferior importance among national farm products. It is a striking feature of Southern agriculture that the first value of cotton to the farmer is but a comparatively small part of its value after it has left his hands, and that it is subject to a vast amount of expense in its disposal in the markets of the world. Its first value is, however, a very important matter, for it brings in to the grower considerably more than all the gold product of the world, for what is sent to foreign countries alone (leaving a very large amount to be distributed among the factories engaged in manufacture at home) is worth 200 millions of dollars. The crop is remarkable for the amount of labor spent upon it beyond that which comes into the hands of growers themselves. Indeed, this income to the Southern farmers is not quite half of its ultimate value.

A study of the figures relating to it shows how the grower pays for the marketing of it to a far greater extent than seems necessary, thus largely reducing his profits, apparently for want of some associated method of disposing of it. First, the picking of the crop costs fifty millions yearly; this work, after so many efforts to supplant hand labor by machinery for the harvesting of it, being all done by the slow hand process of pulling the lint from the bolls. After this first cost comes the ginning, which is another outlay on the part of the grower, and then comes the baling, with cost of bags and ties—more money taken from the crop; and of course lessening the farmer's income. But the value of the seed, which was formerly wasted, except so far as it was used as a fertilizer, goes to make up fully for this loss, and the fifty millions of dollars made off this part of the crop more than pays the fertilizer bill of the growers. The seed amounts to about eight thirteenths of the whole weight of the uncleaned crop, leaving the remainder for market.

Here comes the first cost, which it seems quite possible to save to the growers by some organized system on their part. For as soon as the great army of pickers has done its work, the buyers (who number over 5,000) appear on the scene and strive to secure control of the crop for their employers. This costs more than two million dollars, the tax on the growers being 25 cents a bale. Then come the freights to the great shipping centers, the principal one being New York City. It is estimated that fully 800,000 men are employed in this stage of the business, including those who handle the crop on the railroad, the lighterers at the ports, the sailors who man the ships, and the owners of the vessels employed. But such is the competition for business that by the time the cotton reaches the ultimate market and gets into the hands of the manufacturers of the cloths, the increase of value is not over 25 per cent. of its cost to the grower. Indeed, all the modern conveniences in the moving of these millions of bales, and in the final change of raw material into the cloths made of it, and the reduction of the cost of this manufacture, do not finally increase the total value more than 100 per cent.; so that the ultimate cost of the goods is not over twice the value of the raw material.

The South produces an average of eight million bales, which is about equal to the whole product of the world elsewhere. A full crop in India is four million bales. China produces about two million, and Egypt about as much. Brazil yields much less, and with the rest of the cotton-producing countries of the world, the total product is swollen to about sixteen million bales. But our bales are much larger than those of Egypt, whose product is nearly all the long staple, which is known here as the Sea Island cotton, and is used for the finest laws and laces on account of its length, fineness and strength of fiber, and which will not withstand the heavy pressure of baling, so that bales of this sort do not weigh over 200 pounds, or half of a full bale here. Altogether, our product thus makes up something more than half of the world's yield of this staple.

The utilization of the seed for the oil it contains is scarcely considered as to the magnitude of the business, which has mostly all grown up within the past twenty years, and since the invention by the French of that well maligned product, oleomargarine. This is made of the oil of the cotton seed mixed with refined tallow, and has given more worry to the butter and cheese makers than all the rest of their business combined. Last year, more than a million and a half tons of seed were crushed for the oil contained in it. As one ton of seed yields 40 gallons of oil, worth 40 cents a gallon, this total value is added to the economic value of the cotton crop; and although there is a wide and strong objection to the use of this oil, a vast quantity of it—nearly the whole of it, in fact—is surreptitiously disposed of for other kinds of oil, chiefly that of the olive. The culture of the olive for its oil product is almost wholly abandoned in Europe, the cotton oil having really equal value as a food product, and selling at a lower price. It cannot be justly charged against the cotton oil that it is in any way unwholesome or injurious, and there is doubtless a vast quantity of it going into both of our dairy products (butter as well as cheese), both in the hands of factories and private dairies; for it is quite possible to mix this oil with the cream of milk, in quantity of 25 to 50 per cent., and in cheese to the extent of nearly as much as of the natural butter oil, and this without detection except by careful chemical analysis.

Another product of cotton seed is the meal of the crushed seed after the oil has been expressed. Taking out the weight of the oil from the quantity of seed crushed in the mills, there is about one half million tons of the meal left to be accounted for. Some of this is used for fertilizing Southern crops; the bulk is used for feeding cattle; a large quantity is exported; and all the money thus made goes to add to the actual value of this great crop, which, however, is no longer a king, except like some other kings now dethroned. It is a remarkable fact, showing the rapid extension of the use of this cotton seed meal, that I was the first who used it for feeding cows in the North. A shipper of the meal to England applied to a New York agent to find a home market for it. The agent came to me (I then being actively engaged in dairy farming) to test the value of it, and after feeding a few bags I reported in favor of it, finding

it not only exceedingly nutritious, but tending to improve the quality of the butter made. Some meal had been used before this, as I afterwards learned in the South, but not, as I believe, in the North. For each ton of seed there is left 750 pounds of the meal, and the value of all of it is to be added to this great staple crop.

I might add some conclusions in regard to the culture of cotton, considering that the average yield is not over 150 pounds of lint to the acre, whereas it is quite possible to produce a full 1,000 pounds, and easily 800 pounds. What would be the result if Southern farmers should all cultivate this crop in the best manner, making the present product from seven million acres instead of twenty million, occupying the remainder thus saved in the culture of grass and other feeding crops, keeping cattle, pigs, and sheep, and on the same system of culture producing full yields of these, as well as of all other products? I put the question, but refrain from further comment on these quite possible opportunities for agriculture in the South.

H. STEWART.
Macon county, N. C.

NOT QUITE SATISFIED.

There are, and probably always will be, people who look persistently on the dark side. One of these was Uncle Jerome Saunders, who, for many years, had taken the Widow Creighton's farm "at the halves." Everything seemed to prosper under his hands. The fields seemed to grow more fertile, and to yield more abundant pasturage, and all the crops ripened in plenty, but still Uncle Jerome was not satisfied.

"Farmin' aint now what 't used to be," he grumbled. "Things don't go as they did. Farms are gittin' all run out."

Finally, there came a fall, when nature outdid herself. There was such a yield of apples as had not been seen for years; the potatoes were great, mealy fellows, and the corn seemed not to offer a worthless ear.

"Well, I hope you're satisfied with the way things have come out this year, Uncle Jerome," said Mrs. Creighton, as the two were one day taking account of their ripening store.

"Pretty well, pretty well," said the old gentleman, almost as dimly as ever. "I could ha' mentioned things I'd ha' liked different."

"Aren't the apples as fine as ever you saw them?"

"Wal, I s'pose they'll do."

"Now, Uncle Jerome, you know you can't find fault with the potatoes. When were they ever bigger or better?"

"I don't know's I can exactly tell, but I aint purposed to say I never see sich taters afore."

"Now look at those pumpkins! The field is yellow with them, and there's hardly room for another one on the ground. What fault can you find there?"

Uncle Jerome looked severely critical. "There be a good passel on 'em," he said at last; "but seems to me I have seen 'em yellorer!"—Ex.

NEGLECTED SUBJECTS.

This is the time of year when the farm publications are telling us that an educational institution the "Institute" is, giving us "one hundred hints on dairying," telling us how we ought to fix up for the winter, "how to make hens lay in a sitting posture," how to shelter and feed sheep and hogs, and so forth, all of which is very well. They tell us how, in a most scientific and practical way, to make money and save it, and still there is one question of great expense and vital importance to the agriculturist which receives very little attention at the editor's hands.

Fences, farm fences, lawn, chicken and ornamental fences. Every one of us have to use them, and while we believe that all are now agreed that the new fences must be made of wire, yet the question arises, "which one is most economical?" We further believe that almost all are agreed that the wire must be woven, because just stretching up a lot of horizontal wires will not control the stock. Not these long wires must be tied together at short intervals, or the animals can push the wires apart and go through it.