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

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THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER is the Official Organ of the North Carolina Farmers' State Alliance.

"I am standing now just behind the curtain, and in full glow of the coming sunset. Behind me are the shadows of the past, before me lies the dark valley and the river. When I mingle with its dark waters I want to cast one lingering look upon a country whose government is of the people, for the people, and by the people."—L. L. Polk, July 18th, 1890.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is not too late to prepare for some of the severest of winter's weather. Then it would be well to think out a plan or system for the coming spring. Man was intended to work by system; therein lies his advantage over brute creation, which generally is incapable of thinking ahead.

While eyes are turning Southward in the direction of tropical islands, it is interesting to note, according to the United States Minister to Hayti, that American capital is about to seek an entrance into that island to develop its resources. A New Jersey company is being formed to construct an artesian well and water supply in various localities. Another company proposes to develop the native woods which are very hard and susceptible of a high polish. Another syndicate is being formed to build a railroad which will open up the northern part of the island Republic. The native government is aiding these enterprises as far as possible, and desires to induce American capital to invest there and assist in developing unknown resources.

The San Francisco Call prints a description of what is undoubtedly the largest single field of wheat ever planted, in the State, if not in the country. It covers 25,000 acres or 40 square miles and is one flat, almost level plot of ground. If the day is clear every part of the field can be seen from every other part. There are no roads through the field, and every foot of the field will be made to yield wheat. Plowing and planting began about the middle of last July and will not be completed before the middle of the winter, but the grain will all mature at about the same time, when will come the herculean task of harvesting it. The owner of the Clovis wheat field, Mr. Clovis Cole, has to employ over 200 men, over 1,000 horses and a number of tons of big machinery. The entire harvesting will be done by machinery; cutting, thrashing and even sacking and leaving the grain in rows in bags, will be done all in one operation. The time of the "good old times" and the hand sickle have indeed passed.

Prof. Gilbert H. Hicks, of the Division of Botany in the Department of Agriculture died suddenly last week at his residence in Washington. He was a native of Michigan and graduate of the Michigan Agricultural College, where later he taught botany. He was in charge of the seed testing laboratory of the Department, passing upon all seeds coming into this country for the Department and Experiment Station work. Prof. Hicks perfected a very excellent system of seed examination and classification before distribution; also seed testing for impurities and adulteration, as practiced by both foreign exporters to the United States, and native dealers. He discovered and brought to account a number of firms selling highly adulterated farm and garden seeds the Department being empowered by act of Congress to publish the names of such seedsmen doing fraudulent business. Mr. Hicks

was a young man, just starting on a bright and useful career and his loss will be mourned by the many close friends he has made as well as felt in directly by the great agricultural fraternity in whose interests he was a tireless laborer.

We cannot too strongly nor too often urge the supreme importance of planting seeds that are perfectly pure and fresh. Seeds that are offered at cheap prices are almost invariably of doubtful origin and uncertain age, sure to cause the planter disappointment and loss. The thoughtful planter's only surety lies in buying seeds sent out by a conscientious and trustworthy house. Now, we have received a copy of the very handsome seed catalogue issued by F. B. Mills, Rose Hill, N. Y. Mr. Mills is one of our very best seedsmen, and we advise our readers to drop a postal to the above address for a copy of his catalogue. Do not fail to say that you saw their ad in THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER. Then, too, a vast number of American gardeners have (and have had for years) the utmost confidence in seeds that bear the name, D. M. Ferry & Co., Detroit, Mich. The present generation of planters can hardly remember the time when Ferry's seeds were not on sale everywhere each year and as regularly planted by thousands—with the greatest faith in the unvarying quality of the seeds and in the integrity of the firm that grew them. Every planter, whether already a buyer of Ferry's seeds or not, should send for Ferry's Seed Annual for 1899. It is mailed free to anyone who mentions THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

The firm of J. J. H. Gregory & Sons, Marblehead, Mass., is also perfectly reliable and catalogue free. None of our subscribers need hesitate to buy from either of these three houses.

Most extravagant claims have been made both for and against the Midwestern Limbless cotton or the Jackson Limbless cotton, which is one and the same thing. That the claims made as to the wondrous advantages of this cotton are false, is beyond question, as this paper has more than once given facts to prove; but on the other hand the statement made that the variety is absolutely worthless, is also misleading. There were three firms in Atlanta selling seed, charging as high as \$200 per bushel, but it is probable that with the publicity which the press has given the matter, their sales have rapidly decreased. The Cotton Planter says ironically that a liberal pruning is necessary to make it limbless, that there was nothing with the Jackson Limbless cotton seed sent out; the fault lay with thick headed Mississippi farmers who were not smart enough to keep their cotton pruned. L. H. Dewey, Assistant Botanist of the Department of Agriculture, who investigated the matter at the instance of Secretary Wilson, believes the Jackson to be a good variety and useful in some sections, though not worth any fancy price. While not in any sense limbless, its limbs are much shorter than those of other varieties, which is an advantage. The heaviest yield of the cotton plant is borne on the lower branches and the weight of the bolls sinking these down near the ground, in the event of rain the cotton is certain to be bespattered and injured. This trouble is absent in the Jackson, as the limbs are short and stout and do not sag, so as to endanger the bolls being spattered with mud. Mr. Dewey regards the Jackson as one of a number of the best varieties.

"How shall we get at the wealth in the subsoil?" asks an exchange which then answers its question thus: "Why, plow to the surface, to the air and sun and frost and mix vegetable matter with it and pulverize it thoroughly."

That is good advice, but just a word of caution wants to go in here: to do it gradually, a little at a time, an inch each year. It is supposed, of course, that such advice relates to poor land; deep, rich land is satisfactory as it is. But if land which has been plowed to the depth of five inches for as far back as can be remembered is suddenly plowed a foot deep and six or seven inches of hard, clay subsoil thrown up onto the surface, it will take a mighty lot of vegetable matter to work it up profitably. We once saw in the sand hills of Florida an instance of how land could be properly enriched and deepened. Most of the land in the section referred to was about five inches deep with soil (loamy sand) and below that was a sub. of bright yellow sand,

appearing to contain humus. The "crackers," in plowing were careful never to turn up any of this yellow sand; they only worked and produced in the top soil. A farmer who knew the value of cowpeas, planted a crop broadcast and plowed them under, turning up an inch of yellow soil, which was mixed in with the surface soil by harrowing. Planting a winter crop, he again sowed peas in the spring and again turned them under, throwing up another inch of yellow soil. This, it will be seen, came next to the soil containing the first crop of peas, with which it was mixed. He had been continuing this process, when we saw his land, for six years, using a little lime, and his soil was a fine black loam nine or ten inches deep and capable of producing immense crops for that section.

The following item from a correspondent of one of our exchanges was copied by us sometime ago and seems to have attracted considerable attention:

"So, fellow farmer, I say raise more onions. Put out an acre or half acre—for experiment you might say—but I say you need not experiment, for if your soil is mellow enough to produce corn, wheat, etc., then it will produce about 3000 bushels of onions to the acre, that will bring you from one to two dollars per bushel. The implements won't cost more than \$30, and say about \$30 will pay for your labor on them. Don't tell me onions don't pay! I have tried it and know what I am talking about. If you wish you can make arrangements with some buyers for your crop at a certain price before you raise it, and so be always sure of good money."

One farmer asked us to get the author to write an essay on onion growing. This we did not do, because the author lived hundreds of miles from North Carolina, and therefore did not know the needs and environments of onion growers in this State; but we did get Prof. Frank F. Emery, of our State Experiment Station, to write us an article on the subject, and it is needless to say that he has covered the ground in every particular. Prof. Emery will continue to contribute regularly to our columns, but will not in future confine himself to dairy subjects. Hence we hope that any of our farmer readers who have any questions to ask or suggestions to make regarding the farm, crops, live stock, etc., etc., will not hesitate to send them in. And do not forget that we shall be glad to have your experience and your ideas for publication. Remember THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER is here to serve you and it always gives us pleasure to do so in any way possible.

AGRICULTURE.

ONION CULTURE.

Where to Grow Onions—When to Grow Them—How to Grow Them—Prof. Emery Tells Progressive Farmer Readers all About the Subject.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer. The culture of this excellent vegetable has largely been left by farmers to the market gardeners. Too much "trouble," "too fussing," and "too much backaching hard work" for the farmer and his hired help. But it requires patient application to make successful crops of any kind, and this is no objection to the onion more than to other crops. We do not propose to interfere with the market gardener in advocating the production of onions on the farm, but the tendency is unavoidable to put more onions on the market, as our stock will not eat many of them beyond a few which can be cooked for hogs and poultry. Onions must be sold for human consumption if raised. If more were consumed the general health of the community would doubtless average better than at present. At the ruling prices for onions many thousands more bushels can be put on the market than are now grown, and find profitable sale, but the cream of profit to some growers and dealers would be lost.

LAND AND PREPARATION.

The soil must be rich, worked well, and of a fine tilth in order to produce the best crops. A previous crop of potatoes or of cow peas is best to start onions after. When once started, onions may succeed onions very well if maggots do not get into the field, in which case a new place removed by some distance from the infested field will be better than risking destructive losses from insects at the old place. The soil should be a rich loam, but may grade toward sandy, or be of a

peaty character. If the soil is a little stiff care must be exercised to handle it right so it will not bake. A reprint of an old Arabic work on agriculture says the land should be plowed three times before planting, and puts stress on thorough working the land before planting, and also on irrigation. Recent writers insist on clean land and the use of chemical manures instead of barnyard manures, because of liability of weed seeds being contained therein. If a little more care and more frequent stirring of the soil is given weeds need not be feared. But a day or two of neglect or rain at a critical time carries them beyond control, hence the value of clean land and clean, frequent culture.

SEEDING

There are a considerable number of varieties all of which may be treated alike as to seed sowing. There are some varieties which are propagated by planting out little bulbs grown in the ground or on the tops. These are not the most profitable varieties, but are good sorts to grow for home use.

The variety may be selected with reference to use to which it is to be put. Secure some seed catalogues from reliable seedsmen and find out what they represent as best according to experience for your region. Then buy about six pounds per acre, of good seed, and at once test it between flannel cloths by the kitchen hearth, or wherever you can keep the temperature between 50 degrees Fahrenheit at night and 75 degrees or 80 degrees Fahrenheit at highest during the day. Lay a flannel over a shallow plate of tin or earthenware in which you keep some water; count 200 or 300 seeds and dispose them in open order by hundreds on the flannel, spread a wet flannel over the seeds, and a dry one over it to control evaporation and cooling. Take out sprouted seeds by count every day until you know how many, or what percent. of the seed is viable, or alive. (It is well to do this with other seeds and to plant only good seeds.) If you get 90 per cent. or better per cent. of seed to grow, then five pounds per acre will be enough to sow.

SPECIAL TOOLS

needed to cultivate onions are a garden seed sower which can be used in the vegetable garden for other varieties of vegetables to advantage. It is a labor saver. In obtaining half a dozen seed catalogues you will find two or three in which these tools are illustrated and offered for sale. They may be obtained from Business Agent Parker. A combination seeder, and a light wheel hoe with changeable parts will make an outfit with which the seed can be sown and two men can use at same time in cultivation. Secure the tool to be used most with as high, light, and strong a wheel as possible. It is best for the purpose. Then there are several kinds of hand tools. Several of one or more kinds of these are indispensable. One of the most useful is in the form of a reaping hook. Cost 25 cents, or by the dozen perhaps 15 cents. A piece of scythe web, bent in the form indicated 1 to 1 inch wide and with piece of wood on each side of handle will be an admirable tool and equally as good. It should be sharpened on both edges for use in either hand on both sides of the onion row, or row of other vegetables in the kitchen garden. The piece of scythe should be about 15 inches long. These tools may be reinforced by two or three each of light steel hoes, and ruff hoes, the latter 8 or 10 inches wide and the same number of steel tooth garden rakes. To these might well be added a sprinkling cart, which can be dispensed with.

With the plot of land well prepared for seed

SOME GOOD DAY IN FEBRUARY, earlier in Eastern and later in Western North Carolina, try the seeder with the onion seed in it and set it to deliver 15 or 20 live seed to each foot of row. Do this test in the house or barn and be sure you have enough to account for the percentage of seed that did not grow. Then put the seed in the ground, and in this process let the little covering wheel behind the seed dropper roll heavily on the row and walk on the row yourself. Then do not fail to see that you know by examination whether plants come up first where you did or did not step in the row. Put the rows 15 inches apart for this crop.

The plants being up so the rows can be seen, take the large wheel tool and slicing bottom part and run through twice in a row. Do this yourself and try to see how near you can come to the onion plants and not disturb one in

the row. Going twice insures close work by machine on each side and less hand work. If you have a straddle wheel machine set the tool on either side to come as near as you can trust yourself at a walk without disturbing the plants. This writer prefers the single wheel machine.

NEXT THE HAND WORK.

With the hand tools and a coarse bran sack folded as a pad and tied over each knee, start in where the wheel hoe began and clean the ground in the row of every vestige of a weed and scrape over every square inch that the wheel hoe did not clean. There may not be a weed in sight, but two or three may be under the square inch neglected ready to come up the next morning after you have passed and clean culture is the rule for good profit in onion culture. Repeat this often. Every time a shower causes a little crust to form, go over with the wheel hoes. As often as a weed can be found go over with the hand weeders. The lazy row will yield least onions and of poorest quality.

WHEN THE ONIONS ARE RIPE, which will be July or August, they may be raked loose from their roots with the above named rakes and lie in windrows of about five onion rows each and dry out.

In order to hasten the ripening and help the bulbs in some cases a light barrel is rolled over the tops in June or July, say when the earliest healthy plants begin to ripen. This checks top growth and may change the character of growth from a large top and poor onion to a marketable onion.

When the tops have withered and the bulbs are quite dry twist off the dry tops and haul to shelter. This should be done in dry weather, and it may be well to say there should be little or no rain on the crop after raked up in windrows.

Store the crop in a cool dry place ready to be put on the market. If early and you are in the East, you must

WATCH MARKET REPORTS CLOSELY and ship at the earliest moment you see prices will pay. Ship North or South, wherever you can get most net money per bushel. In order to do this you need in addition to THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER the best reliable market reports from New Orleans round the Gulf and Atlantic seaboard to Boston.

Subscribe for three newspapers which give this information. You may need a Northern and a Southern paper to get it.

One of the first things to do will be to secure a little treatise on gardening, or onion culture. These can be had through your paper publishers. As to

LAND AND MANURES.

Almost every writer will warn against animal manure because of weeds. You should know whether you feed weedy hay or grain, and be your own judge whether you can use your own stable manure. We should use ours and do use it in garden. Then add probably only acid phosphate and kaini, or muriate of potash. Or better, if you have a large amount of wood ashes at hand use these. Onions love potash.

Without stable manure as high as 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of complete chemical manure has been recommended and used. This to contain about 7 pounds potash, 6 pounds phosphoric acid and 4 pounds nitrogen per hundred weight. On rich land use less nitrogen. But only high manuring with

CLEAN CULTURE will pay well. This is intensive farming. FRANK E. EMERY.

THE PEANUT TRUST.

In our "passing events" column last week reference was made to the fact that James E. Campbell, of Ohio, with some others, would probably get control of the peanut business in Norfolk.

It has been passed around since that time that the peanut cleaning concerns have about completed arrangements for a peanut trust, and that the conditions on which those not going in will remain alone is that they can buy their proportional part of the crop outside.

It would seem, then, reasonably to the farmers' interest for them to sell their peanuts to whatever agents or buyers they can find who represent concerns that do not belong to a peanut trust, or do not propose to go into a trust.

As Halifax county is one of the finest peanut sections in the country, this matter is one of importance to our people.—Scotland Neck Commonwealth.

CAROLINA HOPS.

Soil and Climate of a Portion of North Carolina Admirably Adapted to the Growth and Early Maturity of Hops.

Hops of a quality only equalled by the best Bohemian are grown here, says a Southern Pine, N. C., correspondent of one of our exchanges, and made ready for market weeks before the New York or Western grower can begin the picking of his earliest variety and as the cost of production is less than in any other hop growing region it is plainly to be seen why these people early became owners of land and are now utilizing it to their profit. That they are doing so is attested by the fact that they already have more than four thousand acres in fruit, several hop yards of five to twenty acres each and a considerable number of mixed farms, large and small, within convenient working distance of their homes in town.

It is unquestionably true that North Carolina is the native home of the hop, as it is of the grape and it is equally true that the best section for hop growing is the one where nature started the business.

In this section where the soil is a sandy clay loam of great depth, are hop vines which are known to have produced crops annually for more than seventy five years. These native vines are prolific, the hops produced varying greatly in quality and size and time of ripening. They usually contain an abundance of lupulin. The cultivated varieties transplanted from the North do well here. The English cluster grown here differs materially from the cluster grown in New York in that it contains a much larger per cent. of lupulin, is seedless and has an aroma that is considered finer than that of any hop grown in this country.

The cultivation of the hop in Carolina is different from the cultivation given to it in New York fields and is done at less cost. Cow peas are grown in our hop yards, the peas being gathered and the vines cut after the hops are off. The pea vine hay is stacked around poles in the yard and is used the following spring as a mulch around the hop vine. Cotton seed is an excellent and cheap fertilizer, is applied and turned under with the pea stubble at any time during the winter. The cow peas thus grown and utilized, is a paying crop, lessening the work of cultivation and greatly improving the land.

From one yard of ten acres was harvested a considerable crop of hops four and a half months after planting and sold at 25 cents a pound when choice New York hops were quoted at 17 cents. The crop of a six acre yard was put through the kiln in July. By a judicious selection of varieties the picking season is extended from the middle of July to late October.

Hops have never been grown for market by Carolina farmers and the business for some years to come will undoubtedly be in the hands of men coming from other sections. Some experienced hop growers from Germany are now clearing land and planting hops near here. They tell us our hops are as good as the best German and that they can grow hops here cheaper than in Germany.

Experience has demonstrated the fact that the business of hop growing can be carried on under more favorable circumstances and with greater profit in the native land of the hop than elsewhere. Here in Carolina, climate, soil and other natural conditions are favorable to hop culture and these conditions combine to produce the earliest and the best and to make the cost of production less than it is in any other hop growing State in America.

Good field labor costs less than half as much and the cost of picking is not one fourth as much as in New York. Buildings cost much less. Hop poles cost \$25 to \$45 per thousand. Two crops are grown upon the same land for less than it costs to grow a single crop at the North. Hop growers at the North and West alike should note and remember that the Carolina hop is ready for market long before any other American hop and therefore commands a higher price than is ever paid for the earliest, but later coming New York hop. Being seedless it has a still greater selling value and this selling value is still further increased because of its greater strength and finer quality. Note also the fact that hops grown in other sections cannot be put on the market until after the Carolina hops are out of the grower's hands. These facts make it apparent that growers of

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8.)