

An Appeal to the Farmers of North Carolina.

Office Secretary,
N. C. Farmers' Alliance,
Raleigh, N. C., Sept. 1, 1903.

To the Farmers of North Carolina.

Brethren:—It was my privilege to attend the mass meeting of farmers, and others interested in the tobacco situation, at Rocky Mount the 21st, and I was so impressed with the spirit of organization that prevailed among all the people at that meeting that I feel constrained to send this appeal to the intelligent farmers of the State urging them to take action at once in effecting a strong organization among themselves.

The meeting at Rocky Mount was addressed by strong men representing different professions, callings and vocations, yet there was but one opinion expressed by them, and that was the necessity of organization among the farmers of the State.

Lawyers, doctors, editors, merchants and warehouse men vied with one another in advising organization and co-operation among the farmers of the country for their mutual benefit and protection.

Hon. B. H. Bunn, of Nash County, a former Congressman from that district, said: "Organization is necessary to success. If you unite you can succeed." He was very emphatic in what he said along these lines. Hon. R. A. P. Cooley, of Nash, declared he was in thorough sympathy with the movement. He said: "If you can't be organized you are not men of your word. When men have been driven to it they will do what they say." The local editors of the News and Observer, and the Morning Post of Raleigh, and the editor of the Nashville Graphic spoke and advised organization, as did every speaker who addressed that large gathering of farmers. The farmers appreciate the spirit of help and co-operation that was there manifested. Several prominent farmers at that meeting told me Alliances could be reorganized in Edgecombe, Wilson and Nash Counties now. This same feeling prevades other counties. The time for active work seems to be at hand. This appeal is sent to you for the purpose of soliciting your active co-operation in our efforts to reorganize the Alliance and make it a strong factor in unifying the farmers and bringing them in closer touch and relationship one with another. I am sending copies of this to other gentlemen of influence in your county with an abiding faith in your and their good judgment and desire to see the farmers of your county and the whole State come together in a strong organization, controlled by intelligent men, with only a desire to better the condition of the farmers of the State mentally, morally, socially and financially, placing them on the highest planes of citizenship where they will command the confidence and respect of all well intended people.

The State Alliance, at its meeting near Hillsboro recently, took an advanced step toward the reorganiza-

tion of the Order by arranging for one or more lecturers to engage in active work during the year. The meeting was harmonious and every one present predicted a bright future for the Alliance.

Many of the editors of the State have published encouraging editorial notices of that meeting and advise immediate reorganization of the Alliance. I should be glad to quote many of the encouraging things said about the Alliance by these editors, but have space for only one article. The following is taken from the Morning Post:

"Our friends of the Farmers' Alliance had a splendid session at their annual meeting Wednesday, with every evidence of growing influence and opportunity for good. There never was so good an opportunity for real uplifting work on part of those who till the soil as is now presented, and only through thorough organization can the best results be obtained. Another healthful and most promising feature of the present organization is the fact that intelligent and successful farmers dominate its management and direct its councils. A glance over the names of those present and conspicuous in the control of affairs will satisfy all that there is not a politician among them, that class who would farm the farmers rather than counsel and aid in developing the farms of the State. This is well and encouraging."

Brethren, can it be possible that these people who are not directly connected with farming are more interested in our own welfare than the farmers themselves are? If it is true that they are more interested than we are, or if they see more clearly the necessity of organization among ourselves than we do, then indeed we are in a bad state and should awake ourselves from the lethargy that has come over us, and look squarely at the situation that confronts us.

The lawyer, the doctor, the merchant, the manufacturer, may all be willing and anxious to help us, but unless we are willing to help ourselves, their help can avail us but little. The farmers themselves are the source of their own strength, and from their own exertion deliverance must come.

Other people can encourage us and give us their moral support; they may be willing to hold up our hands in the fight; but unless the farmers stand firm and perform their part well the battle will be lost, and no man can force just what the results would be.

The present low price for tobacco may be the signal for a battle royal between manhood and mammon; between right and might; between justice and greed; therefore it should be known clearly on which side every man stands. He is not for us is man stands. He that is not for us is against us.

The farmers of the State are the last people who should make war on capital rightfully manged; but when it is converted into a grinding power and made to crush the hopes, opportunities and industries of the peo-

ple, it should be speedily forced into its right channel. Now is the time for the manhood of the State to stand out clear and distinct, refusing to be bled by the monopoly.

If, as is claimed by some, the American Tobacco Company has enough tobacco on hand and does not want to buy more at present, the farmers should not endeavor to force their tobacco on them, but encourage independent buyers, if such can be found, to come into our midst and pay living prices for their products. True, the American Tobacco Company has acquired and crushed other factories until they seem to have a monopoly in the bright tobacco markets, but that should not deter our people in their resolution not to sell at a sacrifice. If the American Tobacco Company does not need the tobacco now it will need it later. Let the farmers refuse to put their tobacco on the market, and refuse to sell at a price that is not remunerative. This will require nerve and backbone, but with grim determination the farmers can hold on and become masters of the situation if they will organize and co-operate with one another.

While the present low prices directly affects only the tobacco grower, it indirectly affects all farmers. If the tobacco grower is forced to abandon or materially curtail the tobacco crop, it will of course enter into growing cotton or some other crop in competition with the farmers who are now growing those crops, and without organization and unity of action, the fate of those farmers may soon be the same as that now threatening the tobacco farmer, hence the necessity of all farmers standing together in solid phalanx whether they grow tobacco or not.

This article has been written hurriedly to meet the pressing demands of the hour; hence much has necessarily been left unsaid that could, with propriety, have been included. Details as to the best thing to do and how best to manage can be worked out later. The thing to do now is to organize; to come together as a band of brethren determined to stand together and to give to one another such support and encouragement as will come through co-operation. I would not advise a hasty or unjustifiable step; but it seems to me the time for action is now upon us and further delay is dangerous. I shall esteem it a favor if you will give me a list of your neighbors and their postoffice address who will join with you in this movement. Also the names and address of any person of influence in your county to whom I can send a copy of this letter, who would likely take hold of the

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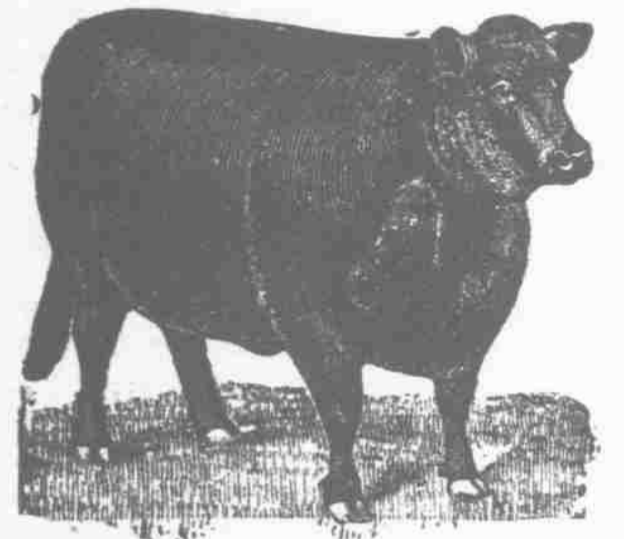
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