

# THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

and The Cotton Plant.

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## CIRCULATION STATEMENT.

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The Progressive Farmer and Cotton Plant has—

1.—A larger circulation than any other North Carolina weekly, and—

2.—A larger circulation than any other farm weekly published between Philadelphia and Dallas.

## ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

### XI.—After-Thoughts of the Trip.

"And now this is the las' row o' stumps," as Uncle Remus told the Little Boy. With this batch of miscellaneous after-thoughts, ends the account of my trip West, and I am glad that so many of my readers have seemed to think these letters worth while.

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Irrigation is the most important subject that I have failed to touch upon at all. How I have escaped it I hardly know, for to write of the West without discussing irrigation is like writing of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" without mentioning the mad Dane. Beyond the Rockies they dream about irrigation just as the Oklahoma people dream about Statehood. Irrigation is their shibboleth and battle cry.

Nor is this strange. In Colorado they have amended the old nursery rhyme to make it read—

"Little drops of water  
On little grains of sand  
Make a mighty difference  
In the price of Western land."

All of which is easily proved by statistics anywhere. Much land in Colorado which twenty-five years ago was worth only \$1.25 per acre, has been irrigated and now commands \$300 to \$600 per acre. About Riverside, California, where land is worth \$400 per acre, was a sheep ranch thirty years ago, and the man who sold it for \$9 an acre thought he had caught a sucker. Artesian wells and irrigation have made the change.

A Colorado man told me that when a dry season comes they plant onions and Irish potatoes, and the potatoes grow so large and the onions grow so strong that they bring tears to the eyes of the potatoes, so that they have moisture enough! In spite of this discovery, however, I notice that the people are still at work trying to harness every mountain stream—big canals running from the rivers into small ditches, and smaller ditches into yet smaller ditches, and still smaller ditches into drainage rows in the fields, much like the old adage that—

"Big fleas have little fleas  
Upon their backs to bite 'em,  
And little fleas have lesser fleas,  
And so ad infinitum."

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The United States Government, as everybody knows, is now extensively engaged in the irrigation business, and about Nampa, Idaho, we found

work in progress on a system of reservoirs to cost \$11,000,000. These are expected to reclaim 400,000 acres of land, increasing the price from \$20 and \$40 to \$200 per acre. Each farmer will be given ten years time in which to pay for the actual cost of getting the water to his farm, and the government will then withdraw from the field entirely, leaving the water rights the permanent property of the farmer. Heavy crops of alfalfa, corn, sugar beets, etc., etc., are grown on the irrigated lands. And all this reminds me that Horticulturist Hume is of the opinion that our truckers in the Carolinas could use irrigation to splendid advantage—and the tests which have been made so far corroborate his opinion. More of our people should look into the matter.

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It would be rather strange if the West should ever lose all trace of the wild and woolly, for Nature herself is so eccentric and freakish beyond the Mississippi. Not only has she piled the Rocky Mountains in colossal confusion, and blistered wide-sweeping deserts, and nurtured skyscraping trees, and opened giant geysers, but she also shows a fondness for cyclones and drouths and floods entirely foreign to the demure Mother Nature we Easterners know. Usually they raise enormous corn crops in Kansas—and I saw a Kansan in St. Louis last year who in a bountiful year had burnt corn in his stove, it being cheaper than coal. But after several years of plenty, Nature may go off into a tantrum, bring on drouth, and the people actually suffer want. The ghastliest freak of Western Nature I saw was cyclone-swept Snyder, the stricken Oklahoma town. In Portland I saw a man who had spent five years building a home in Texas and had a nice house, farm, and orchard until a cyclone swept everything into the next county. Out in Western Kansas we passed through a fine wheat country, but the rains had almost drowned the corn. Fifteen years ago, we were told, it never rained here: the land was as arid as the desert. Along the western border of the Dakotas, too, where it seldom rained until five years ago, there has been enough rain three years in succession to make good crops.

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Not only does the farmer escape cyclones and drouths in the South, but land is so much cheaper with us. It looks to me as if the South ought now to be a most attractive field for the immigrant of small means anxious to build a home of his own. And now that practically all the government land in the West has been taken up, why should it not be the natural thing for immigration to turn Southward?

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The West is a land of magnificent opportunities, of course, but so is the South, and my conviction is that we have the finest people, the best men and women, in the South that are to be found anywhere. It is a good atmosphere in which to be born and in which to grow up. We have some fine old-fashioned ideals of honor, and a reverence for gentle and sacred things,

that the bustling North and the breezy West seem to me to lack.

For one thing, take our regard for women. An Oregon young man whose mother was a Texan spoke to me about this difference between the West and the South. "In Portland," he said, "not one man in a thousand will let a woman go before him in getting on a street car; not one in a thousand will take off his hat if a woman comes into the elevator; while as for giving up one's seat to a woman in a street car, I have done this when it made me so conspicuous I almost felt ashamed of myself."

But let me not do an injustice to the Western men. It is not all their fault—not by any means. The Western woman seems to have been trying so aggressively to prove herself the "equal" of man by breaking into his sphere that he does not think of her as belonging to any higher sphere. Down South the women don't vote not because the men don't think them good enough, but because we think them too good. And the experience of Utah and Colorado and Wyoming and other States where woman suffrage obtains only goes to show the striking fitness of the toast a man once proposed in one of these States: "Here's to woman—once our superior, now our equal!"

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So after a Southerner has been out West he is moved to thank God for the Southern woman and the Southern Sabbath! And our observance of Sunday is only an evidence of our old-fashioned Puritan faith in God and the Bible. There is no doubt but that at times we have interpreted both with a rigid and unlovely coldness that has been harmful; but the austere Puritanism is ever to be preferred to any sort of easy Epicureanism that nevertheless leaves man rudderless on a sea of doubt.

In a former letter I mentioned the Westerner's lack of regard for Sunday, and reported some specific illustrations. In San Francisco Sunday closing is entirely optional with the merchant or shop keeper. Saloons are full blast; the market stalls are liberally patronized; the sound of carpenters building wakes you on Sunday morning; picnic parties march through the streets with brass bands; and at night the theatres probably draw larger crowds than the churches.

Church spires not only are not so prominent in the outlines of Western towns as in the South, but of the churches a large proportion are of the freak sort—Christian Science and Universalist churches, not to mention the Mormons, whose missionary zeal has already been noticed. Somebody has represented a thorough-going Atheist as saying: "I can believe anything provided it is not in the Bible." So it is that many people who think it credulity to accept Biblical stories as true, are yet ready to credit the wildest stories of unsavory spiritualists and "mediums." I was very much impressed by the large number of fakirs of this sort who advertise in the San Francisco papers.

(Continued on Page 9.)