

LITTLE JOURNEYS TO THE HOMES OF GOOD FARMERS.

(Continued from page 622.)
 chased, Mr. Cobb is planning to put up some thoroughly modern barns and take up hog-raising and cattle-raising. He is too long-headed not to realize that there is no permanently profitable farming without some stock-raising, in addition to his ample supply of work stock and milk cows.

III.

It was a treat to go over Mr. Cobb's 200 acres in watermelons and 200 in cantaloupes. The very sight of a growing watermelon is a joy to me. We raised them only for home use, and, as a boy, the sight of each one on our farm meant a red, juicy-meat treat in which I would personally share; there is still for me the same joyous suggestiveness about the sight of a growing melon, calculated to produce what Charles Lamb describes as "a premonitory moistening of the nether lip." I like cantaloupes, too, but the cantaloupe seems to represent a certain dignified culture, while the watermelon stands for a certain reckless,

half-barbaric delight. The cantaloupe should be eaten with salt, pepper and decorum at the family table, in a fashion such as might a college professor; while a watermelon is eaten out in the open with more or less disregard of the effects on your face or on the proprieties of table etiquette. But at any rate Mr. Cobb has 200 acres in cantaloupes and another 200 in watermelons. The watermelon he grows is the Eden, originated I understand by Luther Burbank, who has combined in it the shipping qualities of the Kolb Gem with the sweetness of the Georgia Rattlesnake.

IV.

I don't know how many thousand dollars a year Mr. Cobb clears on his 500-acre farm (his gross 1909 receipts on it and 300 rented acres were \$33,000), but it is a good round sum, and it results not only from the most modern and progressive methods of farming but also from business-like methods of managing labor and selling his products. "The Jersey melon crop is ten days late," he said to me as we rode past his cantaloupe field, this being only an illustration of how he keeps himself informed as to the general crop conditions in order to handle his own shipments wisely. Nearly every acre of his land grows two crops a year. The flourishing young corn and cotton which I saw were on land from which crops of potatoes, peas, and beans had already been harvested. Some of his corn land had grown no other crop, this year, but we may say that he will get two crops on this land also because he will get a good crop of peas along with the corn, and he is making two crops a year on some land which his father thought would not grow a crop at all. And all this as a result of better methods than people knew about in other days. Mr. Cobb is making efforts to get his whole farm thoroughly drained. He showed me a field which he drained by putting down three poles with straw above them. You could tell by the improved appearance of the crops right where the system of draining ended. A cypress swamp which he is planning to clear up will be first cleared and he will then let the weeds grow up and the undergrowth rot before taking it in for cultivation. Most farmers would burn off this weedy, trashy growth, but Mr. Cobb knows the value of humus. Of course, he also knows the value of improved implements and machinery and has maintained the pace he started when he was the first farmer to begin with a two-horse plow. His farming equipment now includes gasoline engines, shredder, hay press, manure spreader, grain drill, reaper and mower, hay rake, hay loader, disk and drag harrows, cultivators, etc., etc. The water-works and electric lights for his beautiful home are furnished by a \$180 gasoline engine. A little earnest effort on the part of any thrifty farmer should insure these conveniences for his home.

V.

In short, Mr. Cobb is a captain of industry. During the busiest season over one hundred hands are employed—all being paid cash, Mr. Cobb being at no time in debt to them, nor they to him, when Saturday sundown comes. He is as surely a captain of industry as is the cotton manufacturer, while as to healthfulness and advantages for physical development there is no comparison between Mr. Cobb's laborers and those who are cooped up at monotonous work in the cotton factory. The ideal community is one in which every family owns its own home, but many laborers do not care to run farms of their own or have not sufficient money or

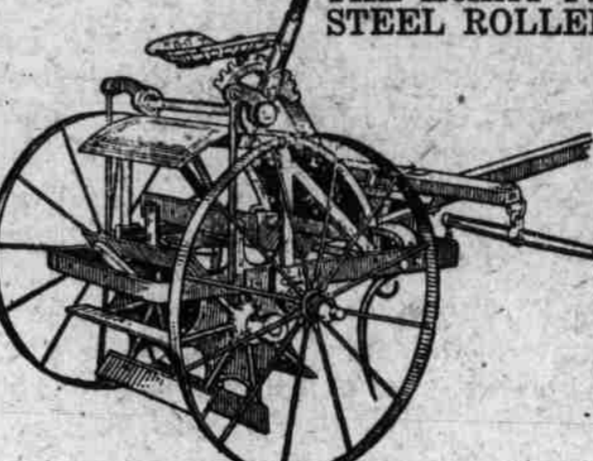
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skill, and all such people are benefitted by working under the direction of a capable and progressive executive. Consequently there are and will always be great opportunities in the South for men who undertake the business-like management of farm labor and run plantations such as Mr. Cobb has in charge. By wisely directing them he can pay them as much as they would make for themselves and at the same time earn a good profit on his own account. We need, therefore, more rather than fewer men who will do such work as Mr. Cobb is doing. It is the absentee landlords who are doing most to hold back progress in Southern farming—men who do not live on their farms, as Mr. Cobb does, but leave them to the management of overseers and tenants.

Mr. Cobb is not only a good farmer, but he is interested in everything that makes for the improvement of farm life or the development of his community. He is president of the Robeson County Farmers' Union, and he has had not a little to do with making this organization perhaps the most useful county Union in North Carolina. He is especially interested in agricultural education, both in getting agriculture into the country schools and also in establishing agricultural high schools.

VI.

All in all, the story of Mr. Cobb's 17 years of farming experience since he took hold of the farm at the age of 18, ought to prove inspiring to many other farm boys. And may we remind all our young men on the farm that what Mr. Cobb has done they in a large measure may also do? In the language of John Ploughman, "Said I to myself, here's a lesson for me, For this man is a picture of what I might be."

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