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How to Make the Waste Wet Acres Profitable.

IN an article published in the *World's Work* some months ago James J. Hill estimated that there is in the United States nearly 120,000 square miles of marsh and swamp land which can be drained and added to the productive area of the country. This embraces only the wet areas large enough to be considered in Government estimates. Of the uncounted smaller tracts, Mr. Hill says: "In the eastern and central parts of the country most farms have a few acres of low ground which no attempt has been made to redeem because there is acreage enough without them. It seems reasonable to believe that the aggregate of wet land available for cultivation by proper drainage will be far above the largest figure yet named. Professor Shaler says that in Great Britain and Ireland fully one-fifth of the most fertile agricultural lands has been reclaimed by drainage, and that one-twentieth of the now tillable land in Europe was inundated and unfit for agriculture in the eighth century."

The accompanying map shows the area of swamp lands in each State, and practically all of these lands could be drained and brought under cultivation. It is estimated that the average cost of drainage—that is, with surface ditches—for these swamp lands would be less than \$10 per acre, and once drained they would be among the most productive of all our soils. Most of them are rich in humus and plant foods which have been largely drawn, in many cases, from the higher lands now being cultivated.

The drainage of these large tracts of swamp land must be done, in most cases, by big corporations or by the establishment of co-operative drainage districts. In some States, notably Florida, the State itself is taking an active hand; in others there has not yet even been made any provision for the formation of drainage districts by those who might wish to engage in the work.

The reclamation of these large swamps is thus a public problem, but the redemption of the little wet patches of a few acres scattered here and there throughout the fields is a problem for the individuals who own them. Nor is it only the lands too wet to cultivate at all that need drainage. Thousands and thousands of acres of land which now produce poor crops and which are in danger of flooding whenever a wet spell or a hard rain comes could be tile drained and made doubly productive, taking one year with another. Proper surface and underground drainage would solve the problem of washing for numberless fields. Indeed, the disposition of surplus water is one of the great fundamental problems which every Southern farmer has to solve.

We expect this fall and winter to treat the various phases of this subject just as fully as our space will permit. We shall have something to say about drainage laws, about drainage as a health proposition, about the making of terraces and surface ditches, and so on. The special phase of the subject we are taking up just now, however, is tile drainage. On page 2 Mr. A. L. French, and on page 5, Prof. C. L. Newman, tell each a

