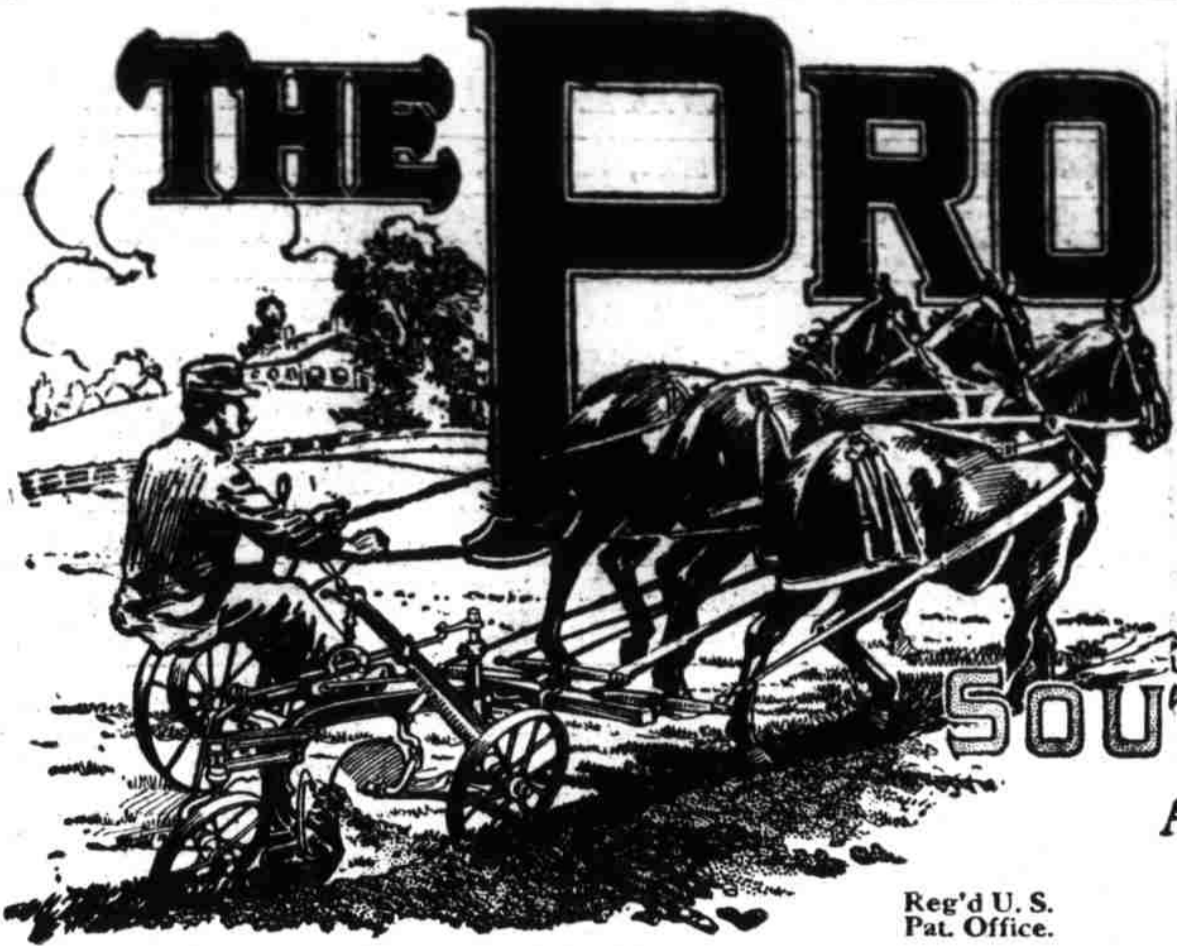


THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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Better Care Must Be Taken of the Forests.

SOME time ago we received a very thoughtful letter from Mr. R. B. Richardson, of Deatsville, Ala., on the need of better care of the forests. Among other things he said:

"There are thousands of acres in the South which are being cultivated at a loss or at a small profit, that are fast washing away or becoming depleted of soil fertility, that could be seeded to pine and would be a blessing to succeeding generations. This is the land that is keeping our average production so low and is a burden to our agriculture.

"In the face of this we hear some agricultural leaders and educators say that we need more land under cultivation. If two-fifths of the cultivated land in Elmore County were added to that growing trees and the remainder cultivated profitably with labor-saving machinery instead of by muscular labor, the county would be in a better financial condition."

Of the correctness of the first paragraph there can be no question; that the second is also correct we have little doubt. There has been too great haste to clear the lands of the South, and too little appreciation of the value of the forests.

Our correspondent goes on to say of his county what could be said of many counties all over the South:

"At one time this section was very heavily timbered with long-leaf pines from which the best of lumber was made. This timber has been to a large extent wasted. Lumbermen have hacked and slashed through it selecting the best, and in doing so have left thousands of dollars worth to decay or be destroyed by fire. In fact the country has been almost devastated of pine timber; but little saw mills are still cutting the remaining small pines. At the present rate it will only be a short time until there will be practically no building material left in this country."

It is inevitable, to our mind, that the clearing of the land go on for a long time yet, and the forest acreage be reduced as the years go by. Probably the work of clearing will go on until the planting of forests by the State becomes a necessity. This will certainly be the case, unless the people of the South come to recognize that the forests must be preserved.

It cannot be expected that the man who owns timber land and needs the money the timber will bring, shall hold that timber unused because the country needs for the forests to be preserved. We believe, however, that in most cases such man will find it more profitable to

save his forests than to slaughter them. If he is sure he needs to clear more land, let him do so, but when he comes to sell his timber, if the land is not to be cleared immediately, let him insist upon such restrictions

as to cutting, and especially as to fire, as will keep his timber land productive and give the trees left on it a fair chance to increase in value. The needless waste of timber, and destruction of future forests by careless cutting and breaking down of young trees, by preventable fires and insect damage, and by the ravages of livestock is appalling in its extent. The people of today have no right thus to rob the future.

We have felt it worth while to call attention to these things in connection with the beginning of Mr. Ashe's series on the sale of timber. Later we shall have articles on the care and preservation of the farm woodlands and on the larger problems of State forestry and forest protection. In the meantime we would urge every reader to study this question, and see if he does not agree with us that if the forests and their future welfare are not given more thought, the problem is certain to become a serious one and, that while it is our privilege to use the forests and profit by them, it is little less than criminal needlessly to waste or wantonly to destroy them, as both farmers and millmen so often do at present.



THE STREAM IN THE WOODS.

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