

SOLVING THE LANDLORD AND TENANT PROBLEM

Prize-winning Letters From Progressive Farmer Readers

HOW A TENANT SUCCEEDED

Started Ten Years Ago With One Horse, Good Health and a Good Wife—Now Owns 500 Acres—First Prize Letter

I MARRIED when I was twenty-four years old. At the time the only thing I had was a horse my father had given me. My wife's father gave her a stove and enough furniture to furnish one room.

Three days after I married I rented a one-horse farm from a rich man who lived at my county seat—a city of about 5,000 inhabitants. My landlord agreed to let me have the farm for 1,000 pounds of lint cotton, and he would buy from me all the butter, eggs, and vegetables he needed, and promised to let it go on the rent. I gave him a rent note to the amount of 1,000 pounds lint cotton, and the next week I moved out on the farm.

My mother and my wife's mother had given us between them a good cow, and 25 hens, and two roosters. My landlord stood for me at the supply store for my supplies, and I went to work.

That year my wife and I worked harder than we had ever worked before. She looked after the cow, the chickens and the flowers and vegetable garden, while I looked after the farm. At the end of the year I had supplied my landlord with all the butter, eggs, and vegetables that he needed. Besides that, I had made seven bales of cotton, which my wife and I had gathered ourselves, and 200 bushels of corn and enough fodder for the horse. I planted no oats or wheat, on account of the year being well advanced before I took possession of the farm.

There was a ginney near my place where my cotton was ginned. My landlord demanded the first bale of cotton I had ginned, and I turned it over to him. In fact, I trusted him so absolutely and confidently that I turned all the seven bales over to him, thinking that he would treat me right. Alas! I very soon found out how my landlord dealt with his tenants.

At Christmas time I went to him for a settlement. Being young and foolish, I had made no record or price of the butter, eggs and vegetables I had turned over to my landlord. I had left the entire transaction with him. At that time cotton was bringing on an average of about \$40 per bale, and when I went to my landlord for the rent note, he said that I owed him a bale and a half of cotton, stating that he had never kept account of the actual amount of butter, eggs and vegetables he had bought from me, but he thought it would amount to about \$20; anyway he would let it go at that.

I said nothing, but I was terribly surprised, for I knew that the things I had given him easily amounted to over \$50. He told me at the same time that he had taken up the note I gave to the supply merchant, and that it amounted to \$360. I was thunderstruck, and demanded to see the bill. He produced the bill, and the prices charged me for corn and provisions were fearful. I thought awhile and decided to say nothing for I was gulping down experience at a rapid rate.

I soon left my landlord and went uptown to see the supply merchant. When I asked him to let me see my bill, he told me that my landlord had taken up the bills when the different articles were purchased and had paid cash for them, and that he supposed had added the time price on the bill, and had pocketed the difference between time and cash prices to himself, which, he said, was the

general rule of the average landlord. Then my eyes were opened, and I saw at once why landlords generally got so rich and tenants so poor.

I went home that day and my wife and I talked it over. We finally concluded it was no use to kick up a fuss about it—it would do no good; but next year we would adopt a different method.

When I finally settled with my landlord I found that all of my cotton was gone, and nearly all of my corn, and that I was about as poor as I was when I started. But I was young and vigorous, with a full determination to succeed, and I made a big vow to overcome all obstacles in spite of landlords and supply merchants, if my health would only hold out.

Fortunately, I had a good wheat and oat crop coming on and a half-grown heifer calf, and my wife had a splendid winter garden, with an increase of twenty-four more hens.

The next year I got me a note book and jotted down everything I sold and bought,—and I want to tell you

A THOUGHTFUL TENANT'S APPEAL TO LANDLORDS

Provide (1) Long Leases, (2) Divide Farm Into Fields, (3) Furnish Clover and Pea Seed One Year, Having Tenant Save Seed for Next—Second Prize Letter

TENANCY is often an evil. Tenancy from year to year is the greatest evil. Long-term leases is the first step toward the purchase of land on long-time payments; the final ownership of the land being the desired end.

I cannot see how a person can rent land for one year at a time and ever get a start. I rented a one-horse farm for one year and got possession January 1. I sowed some oats as soon as possible. Some of them were never cut; the others just about paid for the seed. I merely demonstrated the oft-repeated statement in The Progressive Farmer that one cannot grow oats successfully unless they are sowed in the fall. But a one-year tenant cannot sow in the fall, so

then the tenant can raise legumes and other feeds which will enable him to raise more and better stock which in turn will enrich and improve the land.

I believe every farm, no matter how small, can be more advantageously worked if it is divided into at least four fields. A spirit of considerate cooperation between landlord and tenant in improving the soil and in providing means for using the land to the best advantage will go far toward helping each of them to share in the \$500 more per year the average Southern farm can be made to produce. If thereby the tenant can save enough to buy a place of his own, he will be much better off and the community benefited also. The South will never enjoy the prosperity and progressiveness of the North and West until its people own the land they work, and the man who owns a large number of farms which he rents finds a more profitable investment in manufacturing and commercial enterprises.

I know one man who is doing a most commendable thing in clearing, fencing and improving his woodland and then giving a tenant two years free rent for cultivating the land and an option to purchase at the end of the two years at a reasonable price. I have known men to contract for land which would take them fifteen years to pay out, yet they have made good. It was long, uphill work, yet today they are some of the wealthy farm-owning and farm-working men of their communities.

Less moving and more improving will make better tenants and eventually make the tenant the land owner.

J. M. OWEN.

Tifton, Ga., R. F. D. 1.

English Laws Protecting Landlord and Tenant

THE present laws in England and Scotland, differing in details but identical in principle, say to the tenant: You must not sell straw or mangels or turnips, but must feed them to livestock. If you sell grain, you must return to the land in some form the manurial value of the grain sold, or the man who owns the land can recover it from you under due process of law. If you buy commercial fertilizers or feeding stuffs, the land owes to you the manurial value as determined by the chemist. If the landlord raises the rent on you, because of any fertility you have added, you can not only recover the value of these unexhausted manures, but you can sue him for "disturbance," amounting to the expense of moving and any loss you may have incurred through the sacrifice of your livestock by forced sale. If you cannot agree, report to the department of agriculture, and they will send a valuator or arbitrator who is familiar with the country and its farming. If you are not satisfied with his decision, you can appeal to the court, and from this to the court of appeals, whose decision is final. If land needs drainage, the tenant must take the matter up with the landlord. If the landlord is not willing to incur the expense necessary "according to the most approved methods of husbandry" in that locality, the tenant may do it himself and charge the expense to the land. If it is necessary for good farming to lay down a portion of the land in permanent grasses for either meadow or pasture, the landlord must foot the bill. Like the buildings, this becomes a permanent improvement, and the tenant may not plow it up except with the consent of the landlord."—Henry Wallace.

Save your papers and get a binder.

TWO WAYS TO RENT

TOM Brown is goin' to move agin and so also is Brother Ben. It seems they're never satisfied, but always are content to slide—to move about from place to place—a sore spot to the human race. They never work for better schools, they always farm with broken tools; they scratch the land an' make it pore an' cuss their luck an' rip an' roar—an' dance about an' talk like sin—an' then they go an' move agin. They never rent for more'n a year—it seems as if they kinder fear they'll meet up with some fancy gent who'll make 'em rich—or President!

Now Brother John's a different sort—you never hear him rare and snort. He's always gentle as a lam'—always serene an' cool an' ca'm. When he rents land he does it right—he says he never lives to fight—therefore he makes a contract strong, one broad an' deep an' good an' long—one that will hold as tight as glue an' keep both parties straight and true. This saves him trouble every day; it shows exactly what's to pay. I b'lieve that Brother John is right an' when I reach my home tonight, I'm goin' to write a few things down—some things I know are good an' sound—an' when my landlord comes agin, I'll spring these principles on him!—H.

every farmer ought to know what a great advantage this is to keep out of debt. I had given my landlord a rent note for 1,000 pounds of lint cotton, due the 19th of the following October, and instead of going to him that year with my butter, eggs, chickens and vegetables, I peddled them out in town and received good prices for them. In this way I managed to pay cash for most of my supplies, and at the end of the year I only owed \$40 for supplies, and my rent.

This second year proved to be a good crop year, and I made ten bales of cotton, 250 bushels of corn, 100 bushels of oats and 25 bushels of wheat, besides a lot of potatoes, peas, and other truck. I cleared that year \$500, and instead of going into my landlord's pocket it went into mine. I was just getting out of the old rut, and my wife and myself were happy.

The third year I bought an extra horse, and cleared \$1,000. The fourth year I began to farm by using the improved methods, and bought a farm of my own of 100 acres, and in two years I had paid for it. After that I kept on buying land until now, just ten years later, I own and have paid for 500 acres of land, and, with the exception of 50 acres in woods, every foot of it is in a high state of improved cultivation.

So you can see, I am independent, care-free and happy—all because I would not stand for the old rut, and got out of it as fast as I could. And any man can easily do it if he has the health and strength.

M. G.
Madison, Ga.

"Why do you dislike your teacher so, Willie?" asked his mother.
"I don't exactly dislike her, mother," replied Willie, "but it's perfectly plain to me why she never got married."—Exchange.

he cannot raise oats. Neither can he raise wheat for the same reason.

There is hardly one rented farm in twenty in south Georgia that has any cross fences or cultivated pastures. Therefore a tenant cannot raise hogs or cattle and turn them into a field until all of the farm crops are ready to have stock turned on to them. So a tenant either must raise the poorest kind of piney woods stock in the woods or none at all excepting such as are hand-fed.

A tenant does not get possession in time to prepare the ground and sow any cover crop to be plowed under for fertilizer in the spring, so he of necessity plants corn and cotton and buys expensive commercial fertilizer to make them grow. Nor does he sow velvet beans or cowpeas in his corn. Why should he buy seed, plant it, and gather his corn with greater difficulty only in order that another man—he knows not whom—may reap the benefit? Thus the land becomes poorer and, if possible, the tenant also. I have only begun to describe the evils of the one-year tenant system, yet the picture is already too dark and discouraging.

But there is a remedy. Tenants should rent for several years if possible. Landowners should encourage a greater diversity of crops for their land's sake if for no other reason. Landowners should furnish velvet bean and cowpea seed to sow in the corn the first year and then require all tenants to raise them on all land where they can be grown and save sufficient seed for each succeeding year. If the landowner will furnish the fencing material, most tenants will build the fence necessary to divide the farm into several fields and