

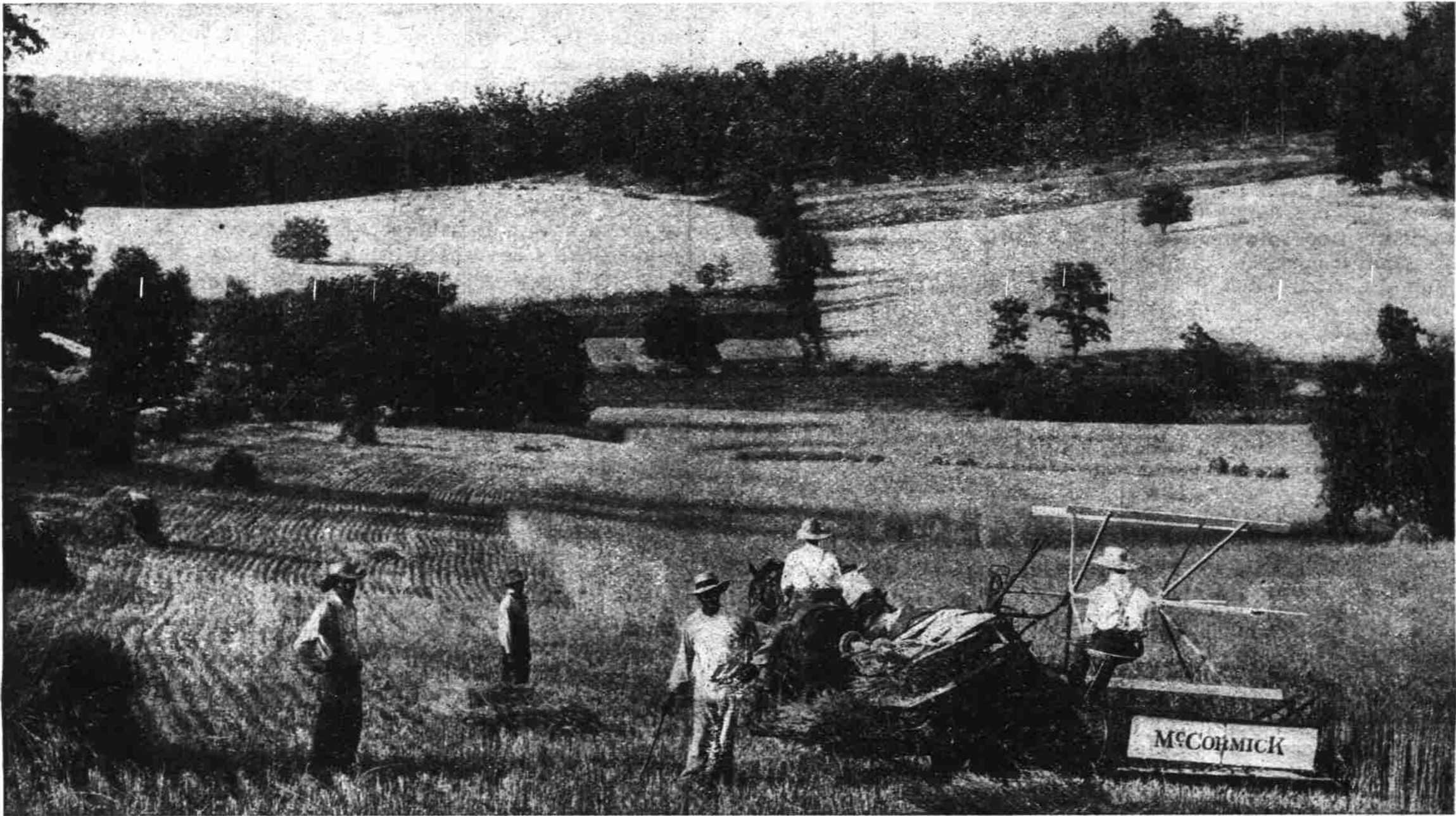
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HARVEST DAYS IN OLD VIRGINIA.

What farm-bred man or woman ever thinks of June without thinking of wheat harvest—or of July without thinking of threshing time? And every acre of stubble land gold with ripening grain in June should be green with a luxuriant growth of cowpeas in July. "Land resting," as Mr. French points out this week, is folly; not the idle life, but the strenuous life, is what your soil demands.

"LAND RESTING" IS FOLLY.

Crop Diversification and Stock Raising the Only Way to Win Agricultural Wealth.—No. 29 of the Sunny Home Stock Talks.

Messrs. Editors: The theory of land resting seems to be favored by a great majority of Southern farmers. We believe the theory entirely unsound, as the term rest is generally used by our farmers—that is, turning a field out to grow up in brush and weeds for several years or even one year. I think the general conditions of our country when compared with other sections where the practice is not in vogue, bear me out in my contention. What this system is costing the Southeast can hardly be computed, but we can get at it in measure by a comparison of an average section of our country with an equal area of a section where this system of land resting is not practiced, and having about an equal farming population per square mile.

A Comparison of Two Counties.

So let us take, for example, the writer's home county (Rockingham, N. C.) and compare its wealth agriculturally with that of the county in Ohio (Huron) where he was born, as their area is almost exactly the

same, the North Carolina county having the advantage of having been settled a good many years before the Ohio county.

The farmers of Rockingham County, N. C., pay tax on about \$1,600,000 worth of property, while Huron County, Ohio, farm property is taxed at around \$13,000,000. About four-fifths of Rockingham County land is resting each year, whereas nine-tenths of the Ohio county is producing some crop each year. (These figures are exclusive of the area in either county devoted to the production of valuable timber.) And I believe the number of people engaged in agricultural pursuits to be nearly the same in both counties. And I believe further, that in natural productiveness of the soil there is not a great difference between the two counties, and that if the same system of farming should prevail in one county as in the other little difference, if any, in the productiveness would be noticeable.

And yet the fact stands that the Ohio county has more than seven

times the taxable value of the North Carolina county.

Now, I believe that the one great reason for this difference in wealth is that in one of these sections a system of crop rotation and live stock production is the rule, while in the other the single crop system and "land resting" prevails, with live stock holding an insignificant place in the farm economy. Other factors enter into the question, of course, such as the use of better machines for doing the work, the soil being in a better state of culture enabling the individual farmer to produce more in the one section than in the other.

Grow Clover or Peas Instead of Resting Land.

But what makes this better state of cultivation? Is it not the rotation of crops?—these crops being fed to live stock on the farms and the manure from them being returned to the soil, the rougher portions of the farm, instead of growing up in brush and briars being seeded down for permanent pastures, and thus every part of the farm contributes something each year to the general income.

Have you ever considered how resting improves farming lands? Is it

not simply that a cover crop of weeds or briars is produced, which falling down makes a mulch, protecting the surface of the soil from the direct rays of the sun and tending to conserve the rainfall, allowing it to penetrate the soil instead of running off with a rush, carrying the particles of the soil with it? And is there any reason why a crop of cow peas or clover would not answer the same purpose and at the same time provide a hay crop worth at a low estimate, six or seven dollars per acre above cost of production for stock food?

I am glad to know that a great many of our farmers are coming to look at the question from this point of view and acting in accordance with their convictions. My earnest desire is that tens of thousands more will see the matter in this light and that there will soon be an end to the production of broom straw and blackberry bushes in The Progressive Farmer's territory.

A. L. FRENCH.

R. F. D. 2, Byrdville, Va.

"The Supreme Court has not yet decided which is the weaker man—he who is not able to see his own weakness, or he who has no faith in himself."