

North Carolina Fair; Cotton and Tobacco Meetings.

Last week was Fair week in Raleigh. The weather was fine and the attendance every day reached a new high-water mark. Of course, the weather had something to do with the record-breaking attendance, the ordinary attractions and special meetings had something to do with it, as did also the extraordinary attraction of a speech by Mr. Bryan on Thursday. But what had most, perhaps, to do with the great attendance was the ability of the people to put up the price for the week's holiday. This big attendance is the more gratifying from this standpoint inasmuch as there was and has been all summer the Jamestown Exposition in full blast just across the Virginia border. An agricultural fair, it was attended very largely, but by no means exclusively, by the country people.

Contrasting it with the Fairs of twelve or fifteen years ago, one was impressed with the larger crowds, the better appearance in dress, the gayer attire of the feminine folk, and the happier mood of all. These things show a marked advance in the condition of North Carolina people. Better days are upon them, they have more money, they are becoming better educated, they show more marks of thrift, and if they have ever neglected what the New England Hawthorne called the "forgotten art of gaiety," they are happily picking it up again. In all of which there is just cause for thanksgiving.

The Cotton Growers Meet.

During Fair week there were two important meetings of interest to Progressive Farmer readers. One was the meeting of the Southern Cotton Association Wednesday night and the other was the gathering of the Tobacco Growers Friday night, both in the legislative halls in the State Capitol.

The Cotton Growers' Association was addressed by Mr. Harvie Jordan (whose speech at the Fair grounds during the day had been cut in two by the balloon ascension), and by its President, Mr. C. C. Moore. Short, interesting speeches were also made by Mr. J. A. Brown, of Columbus County; J. J. Laughinghouse, of Pitt; Mr. S. H. Hobbs, of Sampson; Mr. Ashley Horne, of Johnston; Mr. R. C. Reed, of Mecklenburg, and a few others.

Mr. Jordan declared that the South is just beginning to appreciate the worth of its cotton crop, and to realize its opportunities. The raw cotton exported to other countries brings back to the South every year a tide of money richer than the output of all the gold mines of the world! And yet the farmers are losing millions and millions annually because of the manner in which their cotton is marketed. After pointing out the necessity of a uniform and neatly covered bale of the size of 48 x 22 x 18 inches, and the great saving it would cause in freight, storage, and insurance, Mr. Jordan appealed to the farmers to abandon the present lack of system in storing cotton and expressed his favor for laws that compel the protection of cotton against the weather. Taking up the matter of the exchanges, he showed that even if they were removed, the spinners and growers would not be able to agree upon a price for cotton; that the advancement in the price of cotton could only come as a result of system, of organization.

The present depression in the price of cotton, he said, was due to three influences: (1) the large amount of cotton thrown upon the market flooded it; (2) a large percentage of the producers have to give liens and the merchants who take their cotton in payment for supplies were obliged to dispose of it; and (3) the severe money stringency in this country and in Europe.

A system must be devised, declared Mr. Jordan, by which the crop can be financed before it leaves the hands of the farmers. First, a system of warehouses would be necessary, then a system to finance the stored cotton, so that the weak or "distressed" cotton will not be allowed to break the market. The greatest bear of all, declared Mr. Jordan, was not the man who offers a low price, but the man who accepts the low price for his cotton.

Mr. Jordan believes that a new day is dawning for the South, and he called upon all the people to stand together in the future and do their part to hasten its coming.

President Moore Asks For a Successor.

Following Mr. Jordan, President C. C. Moore, of the North Carolina Division of the Southern

Cotton Growers' Association, said it was with the cotton growers of this State to let their organization live or die. The farmers, he said, are not supporting it as loyally as they should; their enthusiasm was all right; but the fees had not been paid.

The masses of the people he finds to be in favor of the warehouse plan. A local company can be organized at every market by a few live men—witness Scotland Neck, Red Springs, Fairmont, Concord and Mooresville. Farmers and business men are thinking more than ever before about the real commercial value of cotton, the plea for gradual marketing is being heeded, and thousands of farmers are now holding cotton where formerly they sold from the gin. The campaign of the spring of 1906 and 1907 in favor of more food and feed crops was perceptibly effective. As a result, the farmers of North Carolina have more corn, wheat, oats, truck, cattle, and hogs than at any time in the history of the State, and owe less money than at any time since the Civil War.

If the farmers and business men, said Mr. Moore, were as loyal as the newspapers generally, cotton would to-day be bringing fifteen cents a pound. If the Association had the small income of ten cents per bale, it could be a power in building up a prosperous State.

Mr. Moore reminded the Association that he had served nearly two years, doing the best he could, and devoting his whole time to the service. He asked those interested to take notice and relieve him at the January meeting by selecting another man. Meanwhile during the remaining time he would vigorously push the work as he had been doing and invoked the aid of all influential and interested men.

A resolution was offered by Mr. Parker providing a plan for raising funds by the January meeting with which to discharge the indebtedness of the Association.

Tobacco Growers in Session.

Friday of Fair week was Tobacco Day. Mr. J. O. W. Gravely, of Rocky Mount, who is the Secretary and State Lecturer of the Tobacco Growers' Association, addressed the tobacco growers at the Fair Grounds and made a tremendously strong argument for better prices. The trusts were smitten hip and thigh. They have taken from the farmers \$148,000,000 in the past twenty-one years by paying less for tobacco than it was bringing when the trusts came into the field.

At night the meeting in the Hall of the House of Representatives was addressed by Mr. C. C. Moore, Mr. Gravely and other speakers. Mr. Gravely expressed energetic impatience with newspapers that favor the trusts, and took occasion to commend the work of The Progressive Farmer and the Raleigh News and Observer. He concluded his speech with an urgent appeal to the farmers to profit by compact and thorough organization.

Mr. Moore spoke of adulteration of smoking tobacco with alfalfa and grass leaves, and suggested pure food inspection.

Mr. T. B. Parker made a practical talk on the value of better organization for the tobacco growers, and gave the greetings of the Farmers' Alliance.

Colonel J. Bryan Grimes pointed out what had been accomplished by home companies handling tobacco, citing instances at Greenville and Apex.

Colonel John S. Cunningham thought tobacco should bring fifteen cents, and urged organization.

Dr. Tait Butler did not think it would be easy to organize the dependent farmers, for it was a task to organize those who were in better condition; yet in organization was the only hope for better prices.

President R. K. Simmons, of Westfield, Surry County, who is at the head of the Farmers' Protective Association, congratulated the body on the good work done during the year, and the meeting adjourned after adopting the following resolution offered by Mr. Graveley:

"Resolved, that the tobacco farmers of North Carolina never cease their efforts till they obtain, in an honest way, profitable prices for tobacco."

Mr. J. H. Currie President.

But to get back to the Fair. Mr. E. L. Daught-ridge, of Edgecombe, the retiring President, is succeeded by Mr. J. H. Currie, of Cumberland County, as the head of the State Fair management. He is a farmer of large public spirit, progressive and successful, and in this promotion from the vice-presidency will not find his work totally new or strange.

Prof. Massey's Weekly Letter.

NOTES SUGGESTED BY RECENT ISSUES.

Mr. Blacknall is perfectly right in saying that the uplands of North Carolina will not, in their present condition, hold the rainfall even if deeply broken. And they never will if the practice of keeping them always in hoed crops is followed. But with a good farm rotation in which there is always a sod to turn under when the land is broken, the conditions will become such that there will be no washing at all if the crops are cultivated level and shallow and no furrows are made around the hills to catch a head of water. But until the soil has some fibrous matter and humus in it there is certainly need for the terraces. If the whitish surface soil around Kittrell had some of the clay mixed with it and had a sod on it frequently, there is no doubt that finally the terraces could be done away with to advantage. I know this from the experience I had with the steep red hills of the Virginia piedmont, where I worked hills steeper than any here, and while there were great gullies on the lands all around me, I never had a new one to start, and never made a terrace. But the land was kept sodded as much as practicable, and when plowed there was fibrous matter to hold the soil together. It is not only the shallow plowing, but the clean cultivation, and the wearing out of all the organic matter in the soils here that causes them to wash. They did not wash when first cleared, and will not wash now if the new ground conditions are restored and deep breaking and shallow and level cultivation are the rule, and hoed crops stay on the land but one or two seasons at farthest.

Mr. Poe is very modest in asking for a circulation of 30,000. There is no reason why a paper like The Progressive Farmer should not have at least 50,000 subscribers in the South. The farm papers North are all reaching out after Southern circulation, and they know that the South is the coming field for agricultural journalism, for in no section is there a greater waking up to the importance of agricultural improvement. If the Southern farmers will but stick by their organizations for mutual improvement and protection the South will continue prosperous, for in the great manufacturing development that is going on there are thousands drawn from the farms who must be fed by those who remain there; and with her great staple crop the South has the whip handle on the world.

In cotton, while the second picking may make as good or better plants than the first, the element of earliness will always be more likely in the seed from the earliest opening bolls. I hope that the Experiment Stations will take up this matter of the best seed of cotton, and plant separate plots from different pickings side by side. Earliness in cotton is very important in the upper South. Seed from the middle or lower part would tend to make less long limbed and weedy plants doubtless. The average of the whole Cotton Belt one season with another is not over 200 pounds. North Carolina has as good or better an average than any, but with good farming made general all over the State there is no reason why the average should not exceed Mr. Hobbs's 250 pounds. His advice in regard to selection of heavy seed is all right, and it would pay to hand-pick the seed over for a seed-breeding patch, so as to get only the best for breeding.

I had a call from a man a few days ago who says that he has a machine that will mow peas in rows and clean them as it goes. I am to have an opportunity to see the machine work in a few days, and if it does all that is claimed, it will work a revolution in cowpeas for seed, for he claims that he can mow and clean the seed at a cost of fifteen cents per bushel. Another man in Tennessee has invented a thresher that he says will thresh the mown vines and clean the seed without breaking them; and he is so sure, that he offers to pay my expenses to go to Tennessee and see it work. I want to see both machines work, for there is no one machine more needed now than one that will save the expensive hand-picking of cowpeas.

W. F. MASSEY.