

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

(Established 1886.)

Published Weekly by The Agricultural Publishing Company.

Entered at the Raleigh, Postoffice as second class mail matter.

Under the Editorial and Business Management of

CLARENCE H. POE.

W. F. MARSHALL,	MANAGING EDITOR
PROF. W. F. MASSEY,	ASSOCIATE EDITOR
CHAS. M. SCHERER,	
T. B. PARKER,	SECRETARY-TREASURER
C. F. KOONCE,	TRAVELING AGENT
ROBERT S. FOUNTAIN,	WESTERN REPRESENTATIVE
315 Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.	

\$500 More a Year for the Average Southern Farmer.

From an Address "500 More a Year for the Average Southern Farmer: A Practical Program of Progress and What It Would Mean to Every Southern Industry and Interest," by Clarence H. Poe, Editor of the Progressive Farmer, delivered before the Southern Commercial Congress, Washington, D. C., Tuesday, December 8, 1908.

IN TWO PARTS—PART I.*

THE captains and the kings depart": our bankers, our manufacturers, our merchants, our lawyers, our doctors, all these have brought their reports, worthy, inspiring, notable, and all of these men I honor; but here at the last I bring to you your forgotten man, the man who, of all men, is re-building and must re-build the South—the man behind the plow.

Thirty years ago and more that great-hearted and far-seeing Southern poet, Sidney Lanier, gave us the key-note of Southern development and the burden of my address in a paragraph that every Southern school-boy ought to learn by heart:

"A vital revolution in the farming economy of the South, if it is actually occurring, is necessarily carrying with it all future Southern politics, and Southern relations, and Southern art, and such an agricultural change is the one substantial fact upon which any really New South can be predicated."

It is Lanier's old message that I would bring to you to-day—and yet I bring a new message too: that at last we have definitely set about the fulfillment of his dream. To tell you what this means to you and to the South and to ask you for your support in carrying it to success, is the object of my coming.

AVERAGE SOUTHERN FARMER SHOULD MAKE \$500 MORE A YEAR.

As a background of my story and in order that we may see its large meaning in the right perspective, I must first of all call your attention to two statistical facts. First, as to the overwhelming predominance of rural interests in the South, the census showing that more than 80 per cent of our population is rural and that the South is to-day the one section of America of which it is true that there are more people engaged in agriculture than in all other occupations combined. Second, as to the efficiency and earning power of these people heretofore, the last census showing the average annual value of products per farm in the North Atlantic States as \$984, in the South Atlantic as \$484, or exactly \$500 per year less; in the North Central States as \$1,074, in the South Central, \$536—or \$538 per year less. And with this as my basis, I am ready to lay down three or four propositions which I wish to hammer home to your minds:

1. To bring up its earning power \$500 more a year for each Southern farm is the supreme task and opportunity of our generation.

2. It is not only our supreme task and ambition, but it is a realizable ideal, a workable, practicable program of progress.

3. It is not only our supreme task, and a realizable one, but is one upon whose success depends the prosperity not only of the South as a section and Southerners as a whole, but also (and more important) the prosperity of you yourself

*The second installment of this address briefly suggesting some of the methods of bringing about the \$500 more a year and the agencies to be used will appear in our next issue.

as an individual, and of every individual Southerner—the farmer no more than the banker, the merchant, the railroad man, the lawyer, the preacher, the teacher, the statesman. The prosperity of every trade, art, and craft in a community and the prosperity of every individual in the community, from the boy on the street who blacks your shoes to the master mind who organizes your railway systems or governs your State—the prosperity of every man, I say, depends upon the prosperity of the average man, this average man in the South being a farmer—and this is the greatest truth that I hope to bring you to see with me this afternoon.

4. And then the hopeful fact—the fact that already earnest men and women, working here and there in different lines of endeavor, have developed almost unconsciously the several component parts of a fairly comprehensive and well-rounded scheme of rural development, a primary and essential part of which is this getting \$500 more a year farming in the Southern States,—a scheme of education which embraces young and old, not only the farm boy in the school, but the adult farmer and the farmer's wife as well.

AN APPEAL TO THE SOUTH'S COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

And now, as the spokesman of the South's agricultural interests, I come to you to appeal for your support, to ask you as citizens and as leaders to join in a great movement for rural development in the South. And I am going to base my argument not on any plea as to what this development will mean to the South as a section, or to Southerners as a whole, but upon what it will mean to you as an individual. My hope is to show you that your individual prosperity is dependent upon the prosperity of the average man in the South, this average man (I repeat) being a farmer.

Too long, my fellow Southerners, a large element of our people have cherished a different feeling. Too long, too long,—ah, tragically too long—men have thought or said, "If I am a merchant, lawyer, manufacturer, preacher, railway man, banker, or teacher, it matters little to me (except, of course, as a matter of altruism or benevolence) whether agriculture prospers or not, whether the man in the field is ignorant or educated, is progressing or retrograding, is prospering or suffering."

I come to you to-day to tell you that this is the feeling that has cost the South leadership. This is the sentiment that has kept our manufactures, our commerce, our literature, our education—that has kept one and all of these chained down to the unprofitable level of our unprofitable average man, our man behind the plow. Increase his earning capacity and you increase the earning capacity of every other worker in the South; free him from the chains of unprofitable, because misdirected, labor, and you cut the hindering shackles of every other worthy interest in the Southern States.

Ah, if our statesmen and public men in the South these last thirty years could only have realized the fundamental truth in Lanier's utterance—"A vital revolution in the farming economy of the South is necessarily carrying with it all future Southern politics and Southern relations and Southern art, and such an agricultural change is the one substantial fact upon which any really New South can be predicated"! Ah, if they could only have realized that the prosperity of every man depends upon the prosperity of the average man!

PROSPERITY OF EVERY MAN DEPENDENT UPON PROSPERITY OF THE AVERAGE MAN.

I do not know whether or not it has ever been worked out as a principle of political economy, but anyhow it is unquestionably true that wealth is by nature not aristocratic, but democratic. The poorer every other man is, the poorer you are. The richer every other man is, the richer you are. Every man whose earning power is below par, below normal, is a burden on the community; he drags down the whole level of life, and every other man in the community is poorer by reason of his presence, whether he be white man, or negro, or what not. Your untrained, inefficient man is not only a poverty-breeder for himself, but the contagion of his curses every man in the community that is guilty of leaving him untrained. The law of changeless justice decrees that you must rise or fall, decline or prosper, with your neighbor. You will be richer for his wealth, poorer for his poverty.

And so to-day every man who is tilling an acre

of land in the South so that it produces only half what intelligently directed labor would get out of it is a burden on the community, is dragging down the level of life for every other man in the community. Suppose you are his fellow-citizen: then because of his inefficiency, his poverty, because of his failure to contribute to public funds and public movements, you must have poorer roads, poorer schools, a meaner school-house and court-house, a shabbier church, lower-priced lands; your teacher will be more poorly paid, your preacher's salary will be smaller, your newspaper will have a smaller circulation, your town will have a poorer market, your railroad smaller traffic, your merchant smaller trade, your bank smaller deposits, your manufacturer diminished patronage, and so on and so on.

NEGRO MUST BECOME MORE EFFICIENT OR GIVE WAY TO IMMIGRATION.

The ramifications are infinite, unending. And the doctrine is true whatever the color of the man. The ignorant negro in the South is one of the greatest economic burdens with which any people has ever had to contend. From travel and observation in ten Southern States, I have almost worked it out as a principle of political economy that, other things being equal, States and communities are prospering in proportion to their white population. I do not know what we are going to do with the negro. I do know that we must either frame a scheme of education and training that will keep him from dragging down the whole level of life in the South, that will make him more efficient, a prosperity-maker and not a poverty-breeder, or else he will get out of the South and give way to the white immigrant. No acre of land will long own as its master the man or the race who mistreats it and makes it unfruitful. Either we must have the negro trained or we must not have him at all. Untrained, he is a burden on us all. Better a million acres of untilled land than a million acres of mistilled land.

Let us remember then that our economic law knows no color line. White or black, the man whose efficiency is above par is a help; white or black, the man whose efficiency is below par is a hindrance.

SOME GREAT FALLACIES AND WHAT THEY HAVE COST US.

"The farmer, the common laborer of any sort, needs no training. Educate him and you spoil him. The poorer you keep him, the richer will be the upper class." These have been our pet fallacies. And a long time have they been preached. Hugging this vampire delusion, the Southern plantation owner, has seen vast areas abandoned to broomsedge and gullies, in spite of the fact that intelligent handling would have kept them productive a thousand years.

Preaching this fatal doctrine, the merchant has sold Western meat and scooters and tobacco, when with prosperous patrons he might have quadrupled his profits by selling sulky plows and harvesters and carriages and pianos.

Deluded by this fallacy, the statesman has struggled against fate, only to die and be forgotten by people too poorly educated to read his biography, and too poor in property to build a monument to his memory, while smaller and meaner men in sections unshackled by these ancient errors, are famed in song and story.

Writing editorials in support of the aristocratic instead of the democratic theory of industry, the editor has seen his patent-outside weekly fail of support, when a properly trained and educated people would have brought him wealth as the head of a prosperous daily.

Fighting public taxation for better schools and other methods of training and enriching the average man, your manufacturer has struggled along with a small business when a prosperous average man would have given us great industries like those in the North and West.

Still arguing that education and training would spoil the working man, and that "cheap labor" is what we need, your banker has complained that the South offers no opportunities for the great financier, forgetting that cheap, unprosperous labor means small, unprosperous banks.

Opposing taxation for better schools, the railroads hauling cotton in the fall and low-grade fertilizers in the spring, have fought passenger rate reduction as a life and death matter when a well-trained people would supply the various traffic and the heavy dividends of the other sections.

Your lawyer, doctor, preacher, teacher—each falling in line with the ancient heresy, has paid