

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER.

"You Can Tell by a Man's Farm Whether He Reads It or Not."

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Your First Duty as a Farmer.

WE CANNOT too often repeat and we cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that no farming is good farming which does not maintain and increase the fertility of the soil. Big crops are no indication of good farming when they are produced at excessive cost—a man may make a big crop and leave both himself and his land poorer for the operation. A man doing this may be anything but a good farmer. But the man who increases the fertility of his land year after year so that he can produce profitable crops with each recurring season—he is a farmer worthy of the title.

The soil is the source from which all our wealth must be drawn. He who wastes this heritage of all men and thus leaves the world poorer for those who shall come after him, commits a crime against provident nature and against mankind. He who redeems the waste places, who makes the desert to blossom and the barren fields to bring forth, is one of humanity's benefactors.

The question is: Which are you going to be—a farmer, who helps to make his country more fair and fruitful, or a mere robber who draws with selfish improvidence upon the bounty of the earth and makes no return?

It is for you to decide in this, the beginning of another farm year; and we cannot believe that you will wilfully decide to be a soil robber.

To say nothing of the moral aspect of the question—and, farmer friends, there is a moral aspect—this business of soil depletion is financially unprofitable. We of the South can see only too plainly the results of such a system, "worn-out," abandoned fields, poor stock, poor houses, few conveniences, cheap lands,—a poor people, in short, so shown by census reports and so regarded by people of other sections.

Isn't it time for us to about face and change these things? Secretary Wilson says that with seven years of good farming the average Southern land would be worth \$100 an acre. Is not that, with all that it would mean, a prize worth striving for?

It so seems to us. But how are we to do it? There are many little details to which careful attention should be given; but there are a few fundamental rules which must be observed.

(1) We must not permit our lands to wash. Whatever will prevent this, deep plowing, terraces, cover crops, is a thing not to be neglected.

(2) We must not expect to take from our lands all the time without returning something. We have the fertilizer habit, and so we are not as likely to attempt this as are farmers of some other sections; but—

(4) We must keep up the supply of humus as well as of plant food, and this we have shamefully neglected to do. This means cover crops again, and green crops to turn under, and the feeding of live stock.

(4) We must rotate our crops. The growing

year after year of one crop will inevitably deplete the soil.

(5) We must have in this rotation a liberal number of leguminous crops. With the legumes we can increase the fertility of our lands and make Southern agriculture the prosperous calling it should be. Without them we shall go on the old road toward unproductive lands and an impoverished people.

Let us ask you once again, "What are you going to do about it?" Will you not for the sake of the South, for your own sake, for your wife's and your children's sakes, begin this year to rotate your crops, to sow cowpeas and clover, to feed as much as possible of your crops to stock at home, to take care of your land by plowing it deeply and filling it with humus?

All these things you can do; in a small way, perhaps, at first, but once started, with more ease and more effectiveness each year. And the doing of them will mean a new era in the history of the South and in your own life.

This Week and Next.

THIS issue might almost be called another corn special, with the inspiring reports of Mr. Hudson and Mr. Millsaps and Dr. Knapp's pointed directions for making better corn crops. We have been paying entirely too much for our corn. Think of it, corn at 70 cents to \$1.00 a bushel and farmers saying they can make it for ten cents!

We must not make the great mistake, however, of trying to feed our stock on corn alone. To do so means unnecessary exhaustion of our soils and a distinct loss in our feeding operations. With cowpeas, soy beans and peanuts we can have all the nitrogenous feeds necessary to balance up our corn and make the cheapest and most satisfactory rations for all kinds of stock. Read what Mr. Moyer says on page 12.

We also wish to call special attention to our "\$500 More a Year" article. Good pastures are one of the crying needs of the South, and in many cases it would be so easy to have them. Many lands where now the cropper fights Bermuda all summer long could be fenced, leveled off a little and left to grow up in Bermuda, and would then yield more money every year than they now do, and with practically no labor at all. All that would be necessary would be to keep the briars and weeds cut down,—a mowing twice a year, perhaps,—and to harrow the field once a year to scatter the droppings of the animals. Read what Professor Massey says this week about the pastures, too,—it is applicable to farmers everywhere.

And as this is the season when patent medicines sell most readily, don't fail to read Dr. Butler's illuminating article on page 8. Preserve your health by following the rules laid down in our last issue and let patent medicines alone.

Next week our "\$500 More a Year" article will tell how to realize a profit from the waste products of the farm by feeding them to stock. There will be other suggestions as to the care of the pastures. Dr. Butler will write on the essentials of stock raising, and we expect to have a batch of "Plowhandle Talks" fresh from the soil, and some more trenchant and pointed comments from Professor Massey on the features of recent issues.

We know an old worn-out, gullied, mistreated, hopeless-looking hillside that a wide-awake Progressive Farmer reader got hold of a few months ago. It has been a pleasure to watch the change in that barren, hungry field. The gullies have been filled up or plowed down, the land ditched, plowed and harrowed, and now at planting time the soil is almost as fine as an ash bank and barnyard manure is giving it life and richness once again. It is inspiring work—almost like feeding a starving old man or bringing an invalid back to health and strength and beauty.

Here are the Tasks on Which We Must Get to Work.

WE HAD SOMETHING to say in last week's Progressive Farmer concerning the great opportunities for better farming not only as a means of making more money for ourselves, but as a means of restoring Southern prestige. It cannot be too often emphasized that in order to bring about this greater South, we must get down to bed rock. We must begin with the ground itself. We must set ourselves first of all to bring about a better system of farming. The land itself must be better cared for. The galled and gullied hillside must become a matter of disgrace for the owner of the land. Scrawny corn and bumble-bee cotton must become matters of shame for the man who grows them. A man must come to take greater pride in growing a big corn crop than in selling side meat, tobacco and gingham at some cross-roads store. The man who takes a worn-out farm and builds it up again to life and richness and comeliness—he must have honor of men no less than the doctor who brings the bloom of health back to the cheeks of his wasted patient. And the man who becomes the leader of better farming in his township or his county, he must be praised more than the man who does the mere routine work of a sheriff or of any ordinary political officer.

Each man on his own farm must set out to excel all his own past efforts and to surpass the present efforts of his neighbors. He must manage his land better. He must plant better seed. He must cultivate more wisely. He must use better tools. He must grow more stock. He must rotate and diversify his crops. He must fertilize more wisely. He must put all the common principles of better farming into practice. More than this, the light must be carried to his uncaring neighbor. The very example of his own good farming will usually be sufficient to arouse the sluggish and indifferent farmer; but the man who would be a leader must not shut his eyes to the advantages of co-operation. We must try to get farmers' institutes in every farming neighborhood in the South; and not only institutes for farmers but for farmers' wives as well. In every neighborhood we must seek to interest the boys in corn contests and in other efforts for quickening their interest in better farming. Wherever it is possible we must seek to have demonstration work begun, and a demonstration agent selected to instruct the people in better methods of farming. Every farmer must learn to call upon the State and National Departments of Agriculture for any information he wishes: millions of dollars are spent to make these departments efficient, and the farmer must take advantage of their services. A live, wide-awake farm paper, of course, must go to each farmer's home every week. Not only the farmer boys, but old farmers as well, must take the short courses in agriculture and dairying at our State Agricultural Colleges. Farmers' organizations and farmers' clubs of all kinds must be encouraged, and made to play a part in the great agricultural awakening.

Going further, we must strive for the riches that are higher than money. We must seek to build up a more beautiful farm life, a finer social atmosphere. And here, of course, the fundamental thing is the rural school. It must be made to equal the town graded school. If it costs more money, if it means more taxes, that tax must be cheerfully paid; it is the life of the people. The money will repay itself to the country many times over, not in dollars and cents alone—although it will repay itself many times in actual cash—but vastly more in increasing intelligence and happiness among the people; in keeping a better class of people on the farm; in attracting farmers of wealth and intelligence to your community, and in bringing you to feel pride rather than shame