

The Possibilities of the Farmer

W. H. Faust, President Oglethorpe (Ga.) County Union in Farmers Union News.

The Committee on Topics at the meeting at Shawnee, Oklahoma, last September was peculiarly happy and wise in its selection for discussion during the present year. Our leaders have recognized for a long time that the crucial period in the history of a local union was when first enthusiasm was beginning to wane, and for lack of interest the membership was beginning to drop out. The trouble was that no program had been made beforehand, no speakers came prepared to discuss entertainingly and instructively the questions of vital interest before the people. Now this has been remedied and new life and enthusiasm as well as information is received by one who attends the locals in their various meetings. The first subject for February is appropriate and should invoke much thought, and induce many qualified to go to the meetings ready by previous study to dispense information of an exceedingly helpful nature. The possibilities of the farmer to-day are almost innumerable, and one scarcely knows where to begin, inasmuch as the subject is so broad. Many causes continue to make the present day peculiarly the Farmers' Day. Among them might be mentioned:

1.—The R. F. D. System.

No greater benefit was ever conferred upon the rural section than to have them traversed by the mail carriers daily; leaving the best of books and papers and magazines at the disposal of the country people. They are to the minds of the world the most susceptible to knowledge. In the quiet of their homes, without the thousand and one distractions of city life, they can read and ruminate, digest and store away in their minds the many splendid things they read. President Elliott has given to the world his famous 5-foot book-case. The contents of which, if digested, will, according to his claims, make one a life-time member of the educated class. For years the fellows who till the soil have used their hands to work and make a living with, and about all the need they had for heads was to hang hats on, and for the purpose of washing in the cool water when the bell rang for dinner. Slowly but surely the daily mail and the advent of papers bearing on their technical needs have entered into the homes, and like snow before the morning's sun, ignorance and aversion to new and scientific methods are disappearing. Men who four years ago scoffed at the idea of making one hundred bushels of corn per acre are to-day making that much or more. Boys are making from one hundred and fifty to two hundred bushels of corn per acre. "Paper and book farming" does pay. This has now been practically demonstrated in every community in every county in every State in the Union.

2.—The Rural School.

Gradually the percentage of illiteracy is being pushed down by the splendidly equipped schools in our rural sections. Teachers of the first grade are being placed in every school-house, on nearly every hill, and Hunnicutt's Agriculture, Physiology, Hygiene, Scientific Cooking Housekeeping are by no means unusual in the school curriculum. Our normal schools have put their ear to the ground and heard the ground-swell rumblings and prepared their curriculum accordingly, until after a careful examination of schools and colleges and newspapers, one would think that the farmer is the

biggest man in all the community. Possibly the most potent of all agencies that go to making the farmer what he ought to be is the present educational system.

3.—Fertilizers and Deep Plowing.

By degrees, though slowly, Georgia farmers are commencing to re-discover,—or better, should one say discover?—a new America. Few of us have ever tickled the ground more than three or four inches with a one-mule plow until the last few years. Now two- and four-mule plows and harrows and steam plows and dynamite are used, and it is no uncommon thing to break land from twelve to fifteen inches. I can remember when a boy that we put about one hundred pounds of guano per acre—so thinly distributed that if a cotton plant were to set out in search for a dust of the fertilizer it would mature and open before it found it. To-day a ton of high-grade fertilizer is used per acre, and in the next decade there is no end to the amount that will be used. We have spent entirely too much of our valuable time in cutting down grass and weeds and briars around stumps in addition to knocking down and bruising cotton and corn plants. It is wisdom to use a few sticks of dynamite and remove the stumps and rocks and let live stalks of cotton and corn and sorghum stand where stumps and rocks now occupy space. In almost every community one sees land that will rent for ten dollars per acre that could have been bought twenty-five years ago for two dollars per acre. The readers, I'm sure, will pardon a personal reference. I was never much of a farmer, was brought up in a cotton raising section and taught that grain couldn't be raised at a profit. Yet last year I raised, on one acre of volunteer oats, sixty-five bushels at a total cost of six dollars, and in addition cut two tons of hay off the same acre, which was worth forty-five dollars. Our soil is tremendously fertile. Yearly we are producing more and more corn, grain, hay, and cotton per acre, and the end is not yet in sight, though some yields are almost fabulous.

4.—The Ability to be Happy Belongs to the Farmer Peculiarly.

For a long period of time the drudgery of farming made it especially unpleasant. Now we have guano distributors, grain drills, wheat separators, manure spreaders, pea threshers, mowing machines, rakes, cream separators, gasoline engines, wood saws, automobiles, telephones, and goodness knows what else to add to his pleasure. He can raise practically all he needs on his home farm. Hogs, turkeys, chickens, cows to furnish his meat, wheat, corn, rice, to make bread, potatoes, vegetables, fruits ad infinitum. He can of all men rest under his own vine and fig tree with none to make him afraid. No tin horn labor day to bother, no boss to go to ask if he can take an afternoon off. Picnics, barbecues, political speakings, he can go to it he desires. His own boss, and time these long winter evenings and cold days to read and improve the mind. The clerk standing on his feet all day and driven by the whims of a hard-to-please public comes to his room at the close of his day tired and worried almost past the limit of endurance. Not so the man who has spent a half day possibly in feeding his stock and a little light farm work in the fresh atmosphere. He can

study for a period of three or four hours, and that is one reason why so many of our great men come from the country home.

5.—The Political Possibilities.

A mercantile journal recently went on to enumerate how the drummers and retailers could carry any political measure by standing together and getting a few farmers among their customers to advocate their pet measure. It was mistaken. True, a few farmers are just such fools as was suggested, but the vast majority are on to their jobs and can be induced to do only those things that will be to their best interest. The parcels post will go as soon as the rural dwellers write their Representatives in Congress what they want. It is glorious to think of a rural parcels post that will permit the farmer to get packages weighing twenty-five pounds for ten cents. That will mean that a man will not have to stop his plow in the busiest of grass-growing season and ride to town and lose a half day to get some coffee and sugar or other groceries, but can have his local merchant send them out by his R. F. D. carrier.

Everything, from the farmer's viewpoint, is optimistic. In the words of Hunnicutt: "Still the corn tassels are fanned by the breezes and the cotton blooms are made fruitful by the busy bees, wheat and oats raise their heads to the sunshine, and their roots and stems add vegetable matter to the soil. The cowpea gathers nitrogen from the air while it gives peas to mankind and hay to stock. Sweet potatoes crack the ground, and peanuts send their tendrils into the sand to grow food for our hogs. Hay grows uncultivated, and melons turn water into juice better than wine. The peach tree gathers nectar from the clay, and strawberries turn sap from the soil into a flavor sweeter than the sugar. The apple blossoms dispense their fragrance over the hills, while the pecan gathers delightfully nutritious food from the sands of the plains further south. Why lose heart? There is absolutely no sufficient reason for despondency."

The dawn of a brighter day throws its sunbeams across the farmer's horizon. All things are his inasmuch as the Lord has called him unto the Kingdom for just such an hour as this. The eyes of the world are upon us. We can but make good and press forward to occupy still higher and better places. Men, to-day is our day; let us use it wisely like men, and future generations will rise to call us blessed.

BRAIN LEAKS.

There are some judges we do not care to recall.

Idle dollars, like idle men, help depress the market.

The man always looking for the worst of it doesn't have to look far.

The best part of life isn't what you get out of it, but what you put into it.

If all of us got what was really coming to us, most of us would be complaining worse than we are.

The owl has acquired a reputation for wisdom by looking solemn and saying little. But who wants to be an owl?

When a man has done his level best—really his level best—he gets credit for doing all. But not from his fellow-men.

This is time of year when we're thankful we have outgrown the sassafras tea and sulphur and molasses stage of boyhood.—Will Maupin, in the Commoner.

Despise not the day of the one-horse farmer, for it leads to a two-horse team.

WE MUST QUIT SPLICING.

Editor Beasley Defines Action of the Protective Tariff as Uncle Sam Works It.

Our good friend Beasley of The Monroe Journal is not only one of the best writers in the State, but is one of the soundest men in the State on the tariff question. In writing of the present policy of tariff patching, Editor Beasley has the following to say:

"Two machinists were once engaged in trying to make improvements on a very delicate and valuable machine before it was brought to its present state of perfection—the wonderful Mergenthaler linotype. For a long time they followed the plan of putting on additional pieces here and there to control some other part that didn't work right. By and by it became apparent that the machine would be spliced over and over with this thing and that to correct some fault, and one of the workmen, seeing the futility of this, said: 'Stop right here; we will go back and begin over and make the machine so it won't do these things, instead of trying to put on more parts to keep it from doing them.' The result was an important advancement towards the wonderful simplicity and perfection of the present machine."

"For forty years the Government of this country has been operated on the splicing system: coddle some one here, another there, and then another in order that the others shall not get more than their share. Help the manufacturers, then help the farmers, then some one else, and finally, in order to balance off, help everybody who has got strong enough pull to demand help. This idea is the root of the evil, not only because it is impossible to help all by burdening all, as Governor Aycock pointed out, but what is worse, only the strong will be able to get their share when the distribution is going on. The only hope of the average, every-day man who works, is to combine for the destruction of all privilege, and to demand that the Government shall return to its rightful function of seeing that equality of opportunity is maintained. The first citadel of privilege that must be stricken down is the protective tariff. That is the mudsill of the fabric of patches, and Governor Aycock, Woodrow Wilson, and other eminent Democrats are right when they say that this is the year for attacking the beginning of evil. Temporizing on this question means the negation of any possible reform in all the other things where splicing has been done. Those who cannot see this are in very much the frame of mind of the Irishman when he said that if a thing were too short he could splice it, but if it were too long he didn't know what to do with it. Till protection is destroyed other reforms are merely saving at the spigot and losing at the bung. 'You can never get where you want to go till you start on the right road.'"

SMALL LOCAL, BEAUFORT COUNTY.

Am glad to note the progress the Union is making, although must confess that our local is not doing much. We have done some business through the Union Agency and have saved money on every article purchased. Would that we could get every member to read The Carolina Union Farmer. It is, in my judgment, by far the best paper published in the State. Hurrah for the warehouse system! The farmer is fast coming to the front. Let's everybody join hand and push the Union to greater success.

SMITH LEE,
Secretary-Treasurer Small Local, Aurora, N. C.