

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF TENNESSEE FARMERS' UNION.

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A FEW FACTS THAT FARMERS SHOULD REMEMBER.

By C. W. Brooks.

It appears that the human race had its birth in what is now known as Central Asia, somewhere near the Caspian Sea. Man, for many years, had no organized society, no rule of conduct or institutions of any kind. He lived the most simple life possible, taking shelter in caves and clefts of rocks or dwelling among the hills and mountains with the primeval forest for a shelter.

By what records we have and by the aids that nature afford us, we are taught that in the infancy of the race individualism ruled. Every man was for himself and against every other man. Food, shelter and a feeling of security from the attacks of his fellow-man was man's highest ambition. For this he strove and with this he was content.

Out of this struggle for food, shelter and safety grew the first forms of social organizations. Even to the primitive mind, it was clear that man could better provide food, shelter and defense by joining with those near him than by standing alone and fighting, each for himself.

Years before man had the ability to make records of his thoughts and achievements his mutual dependence made it necessary for him to form agreements or compacts in order to defend himself from the encroachments of enemies. Nothing is more logical or natural than that society would be the result of such agreements or compacts. From these agreements came the clan or colony with its leader or chieftain. These clans scattered out into different parts of the wilderness and formed colonies, and slowly they and their successors developed higher and higher standards of thought and living.

From the clan and its chieftain to our present-day civilization is a far cry and much of the intervening space is red with human blood, deep with human carnage and strewn with the shattered wrecks of monarchies and republics whose rulers lost sight of the history-proven truth that no government can long exist that is founded on slavery and ruled by bigotry.

Although we are now, perhaps, living in the most enlightened and most highly cultured age of the world's history, a close and impartial study of present conditions and the general trend of social and commercial affairs in the United States must convince the fair-minded man that slavery with its degradation and suffering and bigotry with its short-sightedness and heartlessness is not altogether a thing of remote antiquity.

The clan with its chieftain has passed into history and human society has long ago taken on a more pretentious form of government. But through all the ages, and through all the manifold variations of human society and government, there has ever been present a class whose god was Greed and whose ruling ambition was to "lord it" over their fellow-man. The ruled, in exact conformity with their degree of intelligence, have objected, protested, rebelled, fought, and millions of them have died in struggles to obtain and maintain their freedom. Rulers and kings have been denounced, kingdoms have been pulled down and republics put up where kingdoms were before, strong-willed, broad-minded, noble-hearted men have spent their lives trying to establish a government and lay down a code of laws that will

measure out justice to all—still the masses of the people in all nations are ruled—and robbed. Power changes its name and its methods of collecting tribute but it persists and exists and continues to levy tribute despite of all the thousands of years of protest and spasmodic rebellion.

In ages past the king owned a nation. His dukes, barons and lords owned vast tracts of land. They also owned the people on the land, and all the people and the land might produce. Our present-day kings do not own nations. They would scorn such ownership. They lay no claim to ownership to land or men. They have learned that such ownership is full of troublesome details and that sooner or later it ends in rebellion, worry and war. So, the present-day king lays claim to one or more of the products of the farm, mine, or factory. For his kingdom, he lays claim to all of one or more of the necessities of life that the land, mine or factory, combined with the brain and brawn of man, can produce. For soldiers he uses dollars, his generals are law-makers, lawyers, and judges.

Thus, we have Morgan, King of Iron and Steel; Rockefeller, King of Oil; Armour, King of Meat; and on and on down the line of the "lesser lights." The masses work and produce, the kings divide the products among themselves—giving to the producers enough to keep them living that they may produce more.

These modern American kings have managed to gain title to resources and industries to the enormous value of \$32,000,000,000. Human intellect can scarcely grasp the immensity of this vast sum. In the United States there are somewhere near 12,000,000 people engaged in agricultural pursuits, and in the last two years they have startled the world by producing, each year, more than \$8,000,000,000 worth of farm products. But it would take the entire gross earnings of these 12,000,000 workers on their 6,000,000 farms for four such years to equal the holding of a mere handful of our modern kings.

The total wealth of the United States is estimated at \$128,000,000,000. The bank deposits of the United States are estimated at \$14,000,000,000. And the annual bank clearances reach \$150,000,000,000.

The cotton growers of the United States produce more cotton than all the rest of the world combined.

There is no other nation that produces as much wheat, oats, or tobacco.

There are more horses, mules, cows, and hogs in this country than in any other country on earth.

These facts prove beyond question that the farmers of the United States are not laggards. That they do not only produce enough to feed and clothe themselves, but that they annually send millions, yea, billions, of dollars' worth of farm products to other countries to feed and clothe their teeming millions. If the farmers of the United States are not independent of want, if poverty exists among them to any great extent if they, as a class, are not provided with the comforts and conveniences, yea, the luxuries of life, you will have to look to something other than a lack of energy for an explanation.

Bearing in mind the above facts, consider the following:

More than one-sixth of the homes of this country are mortgaged. More than one-half are rented. Only a little more than one-third are owned free from debt.

When this government was organized the farmer owned ninety-ninth of the wealth of the nation. At the breaking out of the Civil War the farmer owned one-half of the country's wealth. In 1910 he owned one-fifth. And the end is not yet. Each year the farmer loses more and more of his proportion of the wealth of the country. Is this country to become a nation of homeless renters? Already 175,000,000 acres of the lands of the United States is held by sixty-three owners. It is estimated that our money kings have invested the enormous sum of \$9,000,000,000 in United States land in the last five years. The same kings that own the great cotton mills of this country and of Europe are now using their millions of dollars they have coined from the sweat and blood of women and little children to buy up the finest cotton lands in the South. Not satisfied with the rich harvest they have gathered in passing the South's great staple from the producer to the consumer, they now propose to become both producer and manufacturer. It is their purpose to have these lands worked by negroes and ignorant, degraded foreigners who demand nothing more than the plainest food and the minimum of coarse clothes. And you, Mr. Southern farmer, will have to compete with this class of labor. Yet, you are sitting still and allowing this to go on without so much as taking notice of it, much less making an effort to stop it. One English earl now owns 30,000 acres of Southern land and declares his intentions of owning 100,000. This means that there will be added to the South 4,000 miserable, poverty-stricken, tenant homes, whose inmates are shiftless, ignorant, immoral families from Southern Europe and Western Asia, who will wear their lives away working for an English lord who lives in idle luxury 6,000 miles away. Is it not time the farmers of this country were awakening to dangers that lie in land monopoly and demanding that laws be enacted that will prevent a few men from becoming owners of the earth?

We, as individual farmers, may complain, lament, regret, grieve and deplore, but it will accomplish us nothing. Greed is as relentless as death. It laughs at pity, defies the laws of man and disregards the law of God. If we would cope with this monster we must meet him with a force he cannot overcome. The farmer has this power at his command. He only needs to organize his forces and put them into action. But the farmer does not yet realize that he has the population of the earth so completely at his mercy. It is only a lack of the realization of this power, coupled with a certain littleness and narrowness of mind, that brings about bickerings, strife, jealousies and petty spite that keeps the rural population from dictating the laws of our States and Nation.

We point with just pride to the more than \$8,000,000,000 worth of farm products that we gather from our fields each year, but we forget that producing is only a part of the farmer's business. If we hold our own in the business world we must be managers as well as workers; must be marketers of grain as well as harvesters of grain; we must not only till our Southern fields and gather the fleecy staple from the open bolls, but we must set ourselves to the task of solving the problem of placing this, the South's greatest commodity, on the market in the most economical and advantageous way. It is essen-

tial that the farmers of this country produce enormous crops, but it is no less essential that the farmer shall receive just and remunerative returns for his labor.

There is no better or nobler work in which a man can engage than tilling the soil. To produce the things that humanity most needs and must have—food and clothes—should certainly be a noble occupation. But if farm life ever becomes what it should be, one of the most dignified and desirable ways of earning a living, it will be brought about by a united, persistent and continued effort on the part of the farmers themselves. The farmer must take advantage of all the agricultural knowledge he can obtain. He must manage his land better. He must plant better seed. He must cultivate and fertilize more wisely. He must diversify and rotate his crops. He must make a determined effort to bring about a better system of farming. Corn nubbins and bumble-bee cotton must be looked on as pests to be classed with the boll weevil and the cattle tick. The man who owns galled and gullied hillsides must be looked on as a slothful and unprogressive fellow. The minds of the young men must be so trained that they will take more pride in growing a good crop than in standing behind a counter measuring off gingham and calico, of selling tobacco, side meat, and coal oil at a cross-roads store.

The productive possibilities of a well cared for and well cultivated farm are almost beyond belief. On the other hand, the amount actually produced on many of our Southern farms is so small that one can but wonder how the ones who cultivate them manage to provide food and raiment for themselves and family. It is pitiful, it is heart-sickening, to see so many plodding along, year after year, putting into their work enough energy and effort, if it were rightly directed, to bring them a bountiful living, but on account of their haphazard methods it is by the closest rub that they keep the gaunt wolf of hunger from their door.

It is well enough to educate and advise the farmer that he may improve his land and thereby get greater yields, but the man who stops there has done but little for the farmer. It is profits he wants. And he must receive something above the cost of production if he is to train and educate his children. But as long as the marketing of farm products is left entirely with an army of organized dealers or middlemen (one-half of whom are not needed), and they controlled by quotations sent out from institutions whose principle business is to gamble on the price of farm products (the exchanges), it matters little to the farmers, taking them as a class, whether the yield is great or small. The staple crops of the United States may be doubled but the farmers would not profit thereby unless they decrease the cost of production on the one hand and eliminate useless waste in marketing on the other.

The big cotton crop of 1911 will bring to the farmers of the South \$150,000,000 less than the much smaller crop of 1910. This reduction in price must have been brought about by artifice, because it is out of all proportion to the increase in yield, considered from a standpoint of demand, and the price of other staple commodities. The blighting effect of this reduction in the price of cotton is not apparent until we consider the fact that cotton in its raw state is not consumed by the farmer, therefore, the real economic value of a bale of cotton is measured by the amount of other things it will purchase. Competent statisticians tell us that, economically, the farmer received less per bale for the 1911 crop than for any crop in the last twenty-seven