



## TAR HEEL SKETCHES.

BY J. Z. GREEN.

Over at Albemarle the other day, in a county meeting of the Farmers' Union, the retiring President, Mr. J. E. Crook, was presented with a gold medal as a token of appreciation of his services as President of the Stanley County Division of the Farmers' Union, which position he had held since the beginning of the organization in his county. He declined to serve longer, although strong pressure was brought to bear to induce him to continue in that capacity. He has rendered faithful service without any remuneration except that sense of duty that made him active in the service of humanity and he well-deserved the token of appreciation. I am told that when a political party wanted to "strengthen up the ticket" last year by placing Mr. Crook's name upon it as one of the candidates he positively refused to permit it to be done. If this is true, Mr. Crook deserves another medal for manfully declining to be sidetracked with a political office.

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"Some city folks are prejudiced against the Farmers' Union," said a Buncombe County farmer. "They seem to think it has come to tear down somebody's business." Under present conditions, with business interests in entire control of commercialism and government it sounds like a huge joke when these special interests pretend to be afraid the Farmers' Union is going to put somebody out of business. More than half the farmers of North Carolina have been put out of business so far as the ownership of lands and homes are concerned. When you come to think about it in the light of facts, it would seem that farmers are the folks who might consistently raise a little racket about being "put out of business."

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I arrived in Raleigh at 2 o'clock the other night, accompanied by Editor Beasley of The State Journal, and also of the Monroe Journal. We found the hotels full with lodgers, and also the lobbies were partly filled with indifferent, sleepy-looking folks. Mr. Beasley remembered where a friend lived in the city and excused himself, after a visit to all the hotel clerks. I rang the door-bell vigorously at a private boarding-house without getting any response, and

then tried to see how much noise I could raise by knocking the wall in the hallway with my pocket-knife. I didn't raise the proprietor, but got a response from an occupant of a room, who suggestively informed me that he was a guest at that place and knew nothing about any unoccupied beds there, except one in his room that was reserved for a commercial salesman. It was Dr. H. Q. Alexander, President of the Farmers' Union, and upon being recognized I had no trouble in getting his consent to occupy the idle bed. When I began to snore a little the Doctor couldn't stand that kind of noise and came over and shook me to keep me from snoring. I yielded to his wishes and stopped the racket. In a few minutes the Doctor himself was "sawing gourds" in characteristic country style. So "turn-about is fair play," I turned the job of snoring entirely over to him and didn't disturb him. If Wilson's new administration, with a good patronage distributing machine, were located at Raleigh, I could understand why all the hotels and private boarding-houses have been filled to overflowing for three weeks, but I am somewhat at a loss to understand what is causing the rush, unless Raleigh is the place where initiatory steps are taken to reach the Federal patronage counter where the thousands of postmaster-ships and other appointments are to be handed out.

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Buncombe County Union and Asheville will make a pull for the summer meeting of the Farmers' Union. Asheville would be an ideal place for the meeting. But it would be a rather long haul for the eastern delegates. However, there is nothing of very much importance for the consideration of the summer meeting, and if Asheville should be selected the counties might limit the number of delegates below the constitutional allowance if their treasuries are not well supplied with funds for payment of expenses. Whatever the Executive Committee may finally decide upon, Asheville and Buncombe County Union will bid for the convention to assemble in "the Land of the Sky" beyond the Blue Ridge.

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"With so much perishable fruit and vegetable products, and no marketing system, you people from the middle and eastern section may won-

der how we get along," said a mountain farmer last week, "but that's easy—we get along by doing without a lot of things we are compelled to have." Mr. B. F. Yoakum, a well-informed railroad man, estimates that 100,000 car-loads of products annually rot in the fields for lack of profitable markets, which means a loss to farmers at fair prices an average of \$350 a car, or \$35,000,000. A Mitchell County farmer said last summer: "We have a million bushels of apples in this county and the greater portion of them will rot in the orchards." Every year large fields of cabbage and other vegetable products may be seen rotting in the fields in the eastern part of the State. And yet the one idea that seems to predominate with city people in regard to farming is that farmers are not producing enough, hence the "high cost of living." We are living in hope that some time, in the course of years, these people will wake up to see that the trouble is not so much a lack of production on the farm, but a lack of a scientific, systematic and economic system of distribution, and will begin to assist in applying the remedy by establishing closer relationship with the producers.

Early last spring at a county meeting at Old Fort, in McDowell County, a lawyer wanted to make a few remarks. His line of thought carried him to the high cost of living. "What you farmers need is to produce more of the necessities of life. Why, I have been paying ten cents a quart for snap beans." He then figured out how profitable it would be to raise snap beans. But his beans came from Florida and were out of season here then. "I'll raise snap beans for him by the car-load for two and a half cents a quart, if he will agree to take them in season here," said a practical farmer. These city and town folks who figure out nice profits for farmers (if they will farm "right") are honest in their calculations. They really think it can be done. And the "diversification" preachers honestly believe that diversification will cure all the troubles with the cotton farmers. If farmers living in sections where they do nothing else but diversify cannot sell their diversified products profitably, the cotton farmer cannot reasonably expect to find a gold mine along the diversified route.