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One Dollar a Year.

TAR HEEL SKETCHES.

BY J. Z. GREEN.

Replying to a correspondent in last week's issue of *The Progressive Farmer*, Mr. E. W. Dabbs says:

"Brother Davidson writes an interesting letter of what his Union is planning to do, and of the agricultural awakening in his county. I trust his experience may not be like some in South Carolina where the Farm Demonstration Work, Boys' Corn Clubs and Girls' Tomato Clubs are so highly developed, and the Union is dead, or so near so, it has no influence for good in the community. It has seemed to me that in some respects these agencies have done harm. They are all stressing the producing side of the farm—soil building and conservation of resources. All are stressing individual effort, all are subsidized by the government, county, State, and National, and by the general education board, supplemented by contributions by bankers, merchants and public-spirited citizens, while the Union that is trying to bring about business reforms and scientific marketing of the products of improved farming must depend on the small fees and dues of its members for its 'sinews of war.' And because marketing to be successful requires co-operation and is slow in showing results, our people become discouraged."

Brother Dabbs is right in his contention, but it requires some courage to come out with the truth in that connection, and if Mr. Dabbs keeps up that style, some of the other kind of benefactors and philanthropists will get on him good and hard.

The exclusive "two-blades-of-grass" men have just one remedy for the poverty of the farmers. When you tell them that the farmers receive only thirty-five cents of the consumer's dollar their remedy is "Raise twice as much and get 17½ cents." This class of benefactors evidently consider life too short to bother with such propositions as **better marketing and cutting out useless middlemen**. Just get out and hustle early and late and produce twice as much this year as you did last year, and let the middlemen alone. You might interfere with their progress. Mr. Dabbs is touch-

ing the vital, overshadowing rural problem as it affects the interests of the farmers, but if he escapes without getting some of the helpers and philanthropists (who stop right in the middle of the lesson) on him, he will do better than I did when I began to venture out in that neglected field of rural economics.

In connection with this subject I asked Brother Barrett over at Salisbury the other day for an explanation of why so many different agencies are willing to pile down the cash in almost unlimited quantities to help us produce bigger crops, that cause greater congestion of markets, and not one single philanthropist in all this country had ever put down any big plunks to teach us how to systematize marketing so as to turn our industry into profit instead of disaster. And then Mr. Barrett recalled that he had in his possession some sort of information that one or two men of means and reputation for wanting to render service to humanity that indicated that they are threatened with getting interested in the business side of farming. Perhaps so, but we will wait and see.

In traveling through the counties one can not help being impressed with the evidences of growth and progress in towns and cities which present a striking contrast as compared with evidences of progress in the rural districts. Even in the smaller villages the residences are larger, modern in architecture, kept well-painted and are usually expensively furnished. In the rural districts the residences are small and if any improvements in architecture are observed, they are usually in form of addition to the old structure instead of a new building. If it is a newly-settled place the average residence is a small building, and those that cost as much as a thousand dollars are exceptions that occur only now and then. The 35-cent dollar, which farmers receive for their products, is too small to provide modern districts.

"There has been no net profits, from the products of the soil, for those who produced them in my sec-

tion," said a farmer in the middle part of the State the other day. He was in the midst of a stock-growing section and the fertility of the land had been greatly increased by the use of clovers and other soil-improving crops. After meditating a little further this same farmer said: "Oh, yes, farmers could take stock and find that they have an increase of assets, whether they have done much soil-building or not. The speculative values of lands have advanced in many instances several times as much as their real value. You'll have to deduct rising land values from the total of your inventory to find out how much net profits your life-time of labor has produced from the land." And this wide-awake intelligent farmer emphasized the latter part of the remark quoted with a cut of the eye that signified that he knew well what he was talking about. Make a conservative estimate of what you can get for your farm on the market and deduct the difference in price per acre now and the price that prevailed fifteen or twenty years ago, and the remainder will show how much you have been able to make in productive effort, and if you don't be careful that 35-cent farmer's dollar will bob up in your mind again. It ought to keep on coming up in the minds of farmers until it makes a lasting impression.

"I don't like the moral part of the credit system," said a conscientious merchant of Union County. "It puts the hardship upon the poorer families that are least able to bear it." At that time a cash customer was handing out an article of trade for which he paid \$11.25 cash and a credit customer was carrying out the same class of goods to be paid for in the fall at \$15.00. And that is the kind of "rural credits" in operation all over the South. It is nothing new for me to call attention to it in this paragraph. The thing that is new about it is the fact that a beneficiary of the system should feel and express dissatisfaction over the "morals" of that kind of business. Business morals that touch the conscience do not figure much in our kind of civilization.