

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER AND SOUTHERN FARM GAZETTE

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THE CHANGES OF THE LANDLESS MAN

THE advice Professor Massey gave the negro students at Hampton Institute—to get land and improve it, is advice that they are getting from every quarter. It is advice that the negroes are taking, too; and it is advice that the landless white men of the South must take if they would maintain their economic independence and their social superiority. Provided only the population of negroes in any community does not

become large enough to check the growth of an adequate white population, we believe it is well for the South that the worthy negroes on the farms should acquire homes of their own, should have the added stability and the increased incentive to thrift and industry that the ownership of land will give them; but it is as inevitable as fate that if any large proportion of the negroes acquire land, build homes and thus become to a marked degree financially independent, profiting by every movement that makes for the country's development, and sharing in the natural increase in the value of all land, that these negroes will advance faster, attain to a higher standard of living and acquire more influence, both politically and financially, than will the white men who remain mere renters, who have no home except by some other man's permission, and to whom the increase that comes in the

price of life's necessities, as the result of the increase in land values, will mean only harder times. Wages are likely to increase in the South, but they are not likely to increase as fast as land values. So it is going to be harder each year, as President Branson says on page 385, for the man who must work for wages to get land. And the white wage-earner is bound to gradually become of less importance in the affairs of his community and of his State than the negro land-owner to whose wealth the very labors of these tenants will add.

It helps the South to have the negroes prosperous, but it is necessary for the prosperity of both white and black that we have for the bulk of our rural population thrifty white farmers who own their own homes. We cannot believe that the landless white men of the South will sit still and neglect the opportunity now theirs to get homes of their own, thus putting themselves forever in the class of free men—men economically as well as politically free. The great estates, the big plantations, half-farmed, rented out to tenants whose only care is to get as much out of the land as possible without regard to how much damage their slipshod methods may do, are going to be broken up. As these estates are broken up they should be bought by the men

who are now tenants on them, and by ambitious and progressive Western immigrants who will not only enrich the South by their prosperity, but will also help greatly by popularizing stock-raising and better methods of farming.

There are few tenant farmers so poor that they cannot buy a few acres, at least, of land; and once owning a tract of soil, if a man starts to work to improve and beautify it, to make it more fertile and more home-like, he will soon find it adding to his income and to his standing and influence in a hundred ways of which he had never dreamed.

There is dignity in the very fact of possessing a freehold, and while the man who neglects his land or mistreats it may be written down in Nature's eternal book of justice as one recreant to the trust confided to him, the man who takes even the humblest home-spot and loves it and cares for it and makes it a place of refuge and a source of comfort to those dependent upon him, not only share in the reward of those who put their talents to work and thus gain others also, but also earn the gratitude of all who may come after him by making a fairer and a sweeter world for them to live in.

So, to every tenant, to every young farmer, to every landless man to whom farm life appeals, we would say: Let one of your first ambi-

tions be to get a home. Though it must of necessity be of the humblest sort, get it and keep it and see that it is given the studious attention and the loving care that such a precious possession merits. This way lies independence and prosperity and influence with your fellow men, and that most priceless of all possessions that you can leave to your children—a love of the home in which they live and an appreciation of the dignity and beauty of work that adds to the welfare of the world.



[Courtesy Bateman Mfg. Co.]

OUR MOST PRESSING PROBLEM.

Cultivation of the growing crops is right now the most important feature of the work to be done on the average farm. In many cases it all depends upon whether this work is done well or wrongly as to whether good crops or poor will be gathered next fall. The ideal cultivation is that which keeps the surface of the soil loose and mellow and free from weeds, and which does not disturb the feeding roots of the plant. The ideal tool is the one that puts the soil in good condition in the least time and with the least expenditure of human labor. The outfit shown here is one that does good work and does it economically. If one must walk, however, let it be behind a shallow-running implement. The place for the turning plow at this season is under the tool shed.

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