

The Press and Banner
ABBEVILLE, S. C.

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THE INVENTORY.

This is the season for the inventory. Every well regulated business, at least once in the year, takes stock, sums up the liabilities, writes off worthless accounts, and strikes a balance which shows, sometimes, a profit, and sometimes, a loss.

And there is nothing which is so good a balance-wheel in a business as this self-examination. All the governmental supervision, and all the control of directors, sought to be injected into business in these later times are nothing as compared with the honest, intelligent examination of affairs by the managing head, because to him we must look for the correction of errors of administration and management in the future.

And a man should make an inventory of his own business. A fair valuation placed upon his own property, and a list of his outstanding obligations, carefully studied and intelligently analyzed, will perhaps cause him to call a halt here and there in useless expenditures, and wasteful habits, that will help in the next summing up.

But more than all else we should take an account of our own lives. As we approach the mile rock on life's journey, it will help us to make an inventory of ourselves in an honest effort to determine whether our lives balance in favor of good or evil. Charging against ourselves as liabilities the evils done in the body, there are few of us who can show assets of good deeds sufficient to make the books balance. And there are so many liabilities in the way of evil deeds which we might erase from the books of account. There is so much of selfishness, so much of thoughtlessness, so much of envy and hatred, so much of petty jealousy, so much of evil thinking and evil talking, to say nothing of our graver wrong-doing, that might be written off the books.

And then too, look at the good things we think we do. Are they in reality done for others, or for ourselves? Is the person who ostensibly dispenses charity, really charitable, or is it vanity and self-seeking? Do we really love others that we do good to them, or are we rather seekers after the plaudits of the unthinking, in an effort to bolster our own popularity? Do we seek to help others, or are we mere slaves to the footlights?

The man who has not gone off to himself, and really thought, and searchingly investigated himself, his own life, his own thoughts, his own acts, his own motives—who has not taken a full inventory of himself, is not yet a man—not according to that final taking-of-stock which all of us look forward to in some form in that summing up which is to follow.

And while we would wish for our readers a prosperous new year, we wish the more that they take an account with themselves of the deeds done in the past; that they make a searching examination of themselves and look forward to the future with a determination to get rid of the hard stock and worthless accounts of life.

WILL COME AGAIN.

When the hand of adversity falls, the blow is heavy, and just now the people of the city sympathize with Dr. C. A. Milford and Dr. George Penney in the financial embarrassment which has overtaken them.

But there is nothing, other than death, which can conquer Yankee pluck and determination, and we are all Yankees in that sense; and when the shock from the blow has passed, we expect to see these gentlemen on their feet again, and in the midst of the fight. They will come again. The new year is at hand, and with it will come opportunity.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

The man who praises the baby wins the mother's smile.

Some women are afraid in the dark and others are afraid of light.

A black eye indicates a revengeful nature—the other fellow's.

The man who snores in a sleeping car is likely to wake up famous.

The henpecked husband develops into a fere-thinker when his wife goes away on a visit.

Probably nothing bores a man more than to have another man begin an explanation of something that he himself was just going to explain.

ADDRESS OF HON. D. F. HOUSTON, SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

At The One Hundredth Anniversary of The Pendleton's Farmers' Society, Pendleton, S. C., Oct. 13, 1915.

I appreciate the privilege of meeting the members and friends of the Pendleton Farmers' Society on the occasion of the celebration of its hundredth anniversary. I am greatly pleased that on my first visit to South Carolina, since I assumed the duties of the office which I hold I should have the pleasure of appearing before a Society which is one of the oldest in the nation, and certainly in the South, if not the oldest. I am particularly glad to return for a brief time to this section of the Union. I do not feel that I come among strangers. I had the good fortune to spend half my life in this State and to do three years of most interesting work in a nearby county. The conditions however much changed since I left here, are still not unfamiliar to me. The hills and mountains are the same, and many of your names and faces are familiar. You have numbered among your members men of as fine character and ability as any section of the Union can furnish. Many of them I have known by reputation. Others of them I have had the good fortune to know personally; and among the latter, one who was born here stands out in my memory as one of a few men who have exercised a most helpful influence in my life. If any community can furnish a man of finer fiber, of stronger and yet gentler character, of greater integrity and of higher ideals than Major Benjamin Sloan, I should like to look upon his face. I could not forbear taking advantage of this opportunity to pay him this brief personal tribute.

I clearly recognize the great service which your Society and those like it have rendered in the promotion of agriculture and of rural life. Such organizations have played a tremendous part in directing the attention of the nation to agricultural problems and in stimulating helpful investigation and practices. During the greater part of the history of the nation the supervision and encouragement of agriculture was in the hands of such bodies. They were pioneers, and out of their efforts in no small measure, have come the enormous, efficient agricultural agencies of the nation. The Federal Department itself and the land grant colleges are the outcome of the aspirations and purposes of similar societies and organizations and of the labors of great national characters.

I have experienced difficulty in determining what direction my thoughts should take today. The occasion naturally suggests a discussion of the progress of agriculture in America and a comparison of its present state with that of a hundred years ago; but a discussion of the former would carry me entirely too far afield; and a comparison would be fruitless and impracticable for the simple reason that it is impossible to compare something with nothing. When we recall that it was not until twenty-five years after the foundation of your society that the nation began to keep statistics of agriculture, we can readily understand what the situation was a hundred years ago. When your Society was founded the nation had just finished its first war under the Constitution and was beginning to adjust itself for the greater struggle of possessing a continent. It had little time to take stock of its possessions, and the data for comparisons in the national field are meager and inadequate. Nor can I even undertake to review the remarkable progress your own State had made in the field of agriculture. My purpose must be much more modest and limited; and I must ask you to consider with me agricultural problems of the present and of the immediate future rather than of the past.

I must suggest a still further limitation. I shall ask you to consider for the most part other problems than those which up to the present have mainly occupied the attention of the administrator, the legislator, the scientist, and the practical farmer. Up to a comparatively recent time, the attention of those interested in agriculture was centered mainly on problems of production. The slogan was, make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. Matters of soil fertility, plant and animal breeding, diseases of plants and animals, methods of cultivation, and many other pressing problems of production occupied almost exclusive attention. There were and continues to be production problems of tremendous importance, and they must receive not less but more attention even than in the past; but it has come to be recognized that agriculture is tremendously complex, and that problems of distribution are not less important, and are not perhaps even more complex and difficult, than problems of production. We have been brought face to face with the fact that in many directions further production waits on better distribution, and that problems of marketing or distribution, and of rural business and finance, involve in very grave ways the simple issue of justice. That there is tremendous waste in distribution no intelligent man doubts; that in many instances the farmer loses not get what he should for his product is undeniable; that frequently the consumer either has to purchase an unsatisfactory product or to pay an unduly high price; and that unnecessary burdens are imposed upon all under the present system of distribution there seems to be no question. It is clear that too little attention has heretofore been given to the matter of injecting

business into agriculture or to the economics of rural life. Obviously, all agricultural enterprises and the work of all agricultural establishments are economic in their character. There is no man in the country who needs more to be a good business man and to have a wider knowledge of business activities than the farmer. He has a bewildering variety of problems confronting him and many possible avenues of approach to them. He has to decide what he can produce, how much he can afford to produce to the acre, how he shall apportion his investment as between plants and live stock, how he can best arrange his activities so as to utilize his labor throughout the year steadily and economically, what size farm will give him the best results considering his capital, his environment, and his capacity, what cultural methods will be most helpful, and above all things from the outset what he is to do with his product when he gets it; that is, how and where he is to market it and how he shall cooperate with his neighbors in the community to this end.

Until recently neither State nor nation had made any systematic provision for the study of the vast field of distribution. The attention of the people has been too exclusively absorbed by problems growing out of the industrial life of the nation and out of its international relations. Those best trained to deal with such problems, the economists of the colleges and universities, have not recognized the opportunity presented to them and have given scant attention to the field of rural economics. Banking, taxation, transportation, international exchanges, and the economic systems of the ancient world and of the middle ages have been exhaustively examined and discussed before students and the public; but the acute business problems confronting the farmer have, relatively speaking, been ignored. Obviously, a different attitude on the part of both the economist and the authorities responsible for agricultural leadership, is demanded. There is growing recognition of this fact. In the spring of 1913 the Federal government made a specific appropriation for the study of marketing, granting the modest sum of \$50,000. In July, 1914, \$200,000 became available, and July, 1915, \$484,050.

In a new and untried field of this nature, the first concern must be to secure the requisite number of experienced and trained men who may successfully undertake the several lines of investigation and furnish practical guidance. In such a new field the development of an efficient organization is a matter of great difficulty. Satisfactory headway has been made, much valuable information has been secured, and the foundation has been laid for much more effective work and for the utilization of larger facilities in the future. More than money will be required. Reason and patience on the part of the public are essential. It will be very easy to go in the wrong direction; it will be difficult to go in the right direction. The problems of marketing are difficult and complex, and the whole solution will not be reached this year, or by the next election, or within the immediate future.

One thing is clear. The solution of the problems of marketing and of injecting business into rural finance must be found in the development of legitimate and helpful co-operation among the individuals in the several communities, and in the enactment of additional legislation by the States and the nation. The individual farmer, especially the small farmer, alone is practically helpless in the marketing of most agricultural products. The family unit farm of approximately 100 acres may be, as it is asserted to be, the most economical producing unit, but it is certainly not the most economical marketing unit. It does not produce in sufficient volume to secure transportation facilities on reasonable terms, and its owner can not usually command the necessary service for skillful and efficient disposal of his product.

If this position is sound, it has peculiar application, it seems to me, to the problems with which you are confronted in this State and in this Piedmont section of Carolina. That you are considering what you shall produce, I assume as a matter of course. That improvements might be made, I have no doubt you will admit. I am more and more convinced each day that the path of diversification is the path of prosperity for the South as for other sections of the Union. A one crop system is uneconomical in normal times and is a menace in times of disturbance, as has been so sharply demonstrated within the last twelve months. It means the uneconomical use of labor and capital; it means the prevalence of a bad agricultural economy; it means the absence of rotation, which is essential for the preservation of the soil and for the laying of a foundation for live stock, without which good agricultural economy is impossible. Consider the facts. Perhaps 80 per cent of the land, labor, and capital in South Carolina today in agriculture are devoted to the raising of cotton and corn, and a State which is largely agricultural is dependent in considerable measure on outside communities for food for human beings and for animals. At a most conservative estimate, South Carolina imports annually more than twenty-five million dollars worth of wheat, corn, oats and hay alone. Notwithstanding the fact that it has, with the rest of the South relatively speaking, a more favorable climate and a longer grazing season, its attention to poultry, swine, cattle, horses and other live stock is tremendously inadequate. The State has fewer cattle and swine than it had 55 years ago, or in 1860, or fewer than it had in 1840. And yet there is no section of the Union to which we should look more hope-

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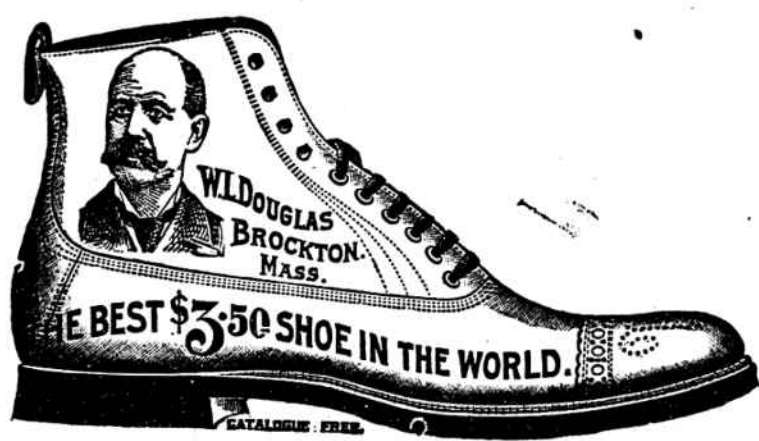
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