

A WOMAN RICE PLANTER.

The Remarkable Experience of a South Carolina Lady.

New York Sun, April 12.

You have asked me to tell of my rice-planting experience and I will do my best, though I hardly know where to begin.

Some years ago the plantation where I had spent my very short married life was for sale, and against the judgment of the men of my family I decided to put every cent I had in the purchase of it, to grow old in, I said, feeling it a refuge from the loneliness which crushed me.

From that time I have continued to plant from twenty to thirty acres on wages and to rent from 100 to 150 acres. Of course, I have had up and downs and many anxious moments. Sometimes I have been so unfortunate as to take as renters those who were unfit to stand alone, and then I have suffered serious loss; but, on the whole, I have been able to keep my head above water, and now and then have a little money to invest. In short, I have done better than most of my neighbors.

When I said something to him about preparing the wages field for the coming crop he said very solemnly: "Miss, ef yo' weak en you wrestle wid a strong man, on de Lo'rd gie you streng fo' 'trow am down once, don't you try un 'gain." I laughed, but, remembering that I would have to borrow money to plant the field this year, I determined to take the old man's advice and not attempt it.

Whether this was real or not I cannot say, but it seemed very real, and, as he has never ploughed, perhaps he really did not understand. When I said: "And this is why the wage rice turned out so badly? You received ploughing like this and I paid for it." He seemed convinced and humbled.

What is to be the result of this new departure in the way of dishonesty I do not know. It has taken me a long time to lose patience. A few years ago one could get the value of the money paid for work. Just after the war there was a splendid body of workers on this plantation, and every one in the neighborhood was eager to get some of the hands from here.

My renters here nearly all own their farms and live on them, coming to their work every day in their wagons or buggies, for the first thing a negro does when he makes a good crop is to buy a pair of oxen, which he can do for \$30, and the next good crop he buys a horse and buggy.

The purchase of Cherokee does more credit to my heart than head and it is very doubtful if I shall ever pay off the mortgage. I have lost two entire crops by freshet, and the land is now under water for the third time this winter, and though I have rented 125 acres, it is very uncertain if I can get the half of that in March is the month when all the rice field ploughing should be done. The earliest rice is planted generally at the end of March, then through April and one week in May.

Yesterday I drove eight miles to my lower place, Casa Bianca, where the foreman asked me to go around the banks with him and see the inroads of the last fall moon tides, and it was appalling, the forces of nature are so immense. It makes me quail to think of the necessity of setting my small human powers in opposition. The rice field banks are about three feet above the level of the river at high water, and each field has a very small flood gate, (called a trunk,) which opens and closes to let the water in and out, but when a gale or freshet comes, all the trunk doors have to be raised so as not to strain the banks, and the water in the fields rises to the level of the river outside.

family hold themselves as the colored aristocracy of this country. He has been a first-class carpenter, but he is rheumatic and does not work with ease at his trade now and prefers taking charge of my planting as head man, or agent, as they now prefer to call it. He is trustworthy and has charge of the keys to my barns where rice, corn, oats and potatoes are kept. I have trusted him entirely and it would be a dreadful blow to think that he was losing his integrity.

Though the pressure from the idle, shambling, trifling element of his race is very great, his own son being one of that class, he has been able to resist it in the past. I chafed Bonaparte what I had discovered and he seemed terribly shocked.

When the seed-ripe I had paid \$1.35 a bushel for and planted two and one-half bushels to each acre; the cost of cultivating and harvesting it is \$15 the acre, so that makes \$16.37 which it cost to produce seventeen bushels of rice, which sold at 80 cents a bushel, \$13.60.

It is very hard for me to say this. I have labored so among them to try to elevate their ideals, to make them bring up their children to be honest and diligent, to make them still feel that honest, good work is something to be proud of. Even last year I would not have said this, but, alas, I have to say it now.

I have just come in from the corn field, where two women have been paid for cutting down the corn stalks, so that there will be nothing to interfere with the plough. They have only broken off the tops of the stalks, leaving about eighteen inches of stout cornstalks all through the field. I shall have to send some one else to do the work and pay once more.

I must stop writing now or I will get too blue. I must go out and bathe in the generous sunshine and feast my eyes on the glory of yellow jesamine that crown every bush and tree, and revel in the delicious perfume, as my bicycle glides over the soft, brown pine needles along the level paths, where the great dark blue eyes of the wild violets look lovingly up at me.

Yes, yes, God is very good and His world a very beautiful, and we must trust Him. When these brown children of His were wild they were, no doubt, in a physical way perfect, but when they were brought under the law, like our first parents, the Prince of Darkness stepped in and the struggle within them of the forces of Heaven and hell have been holding battle there ever since.

humbly with thy God?" Thank God, there is one man of their own race striving to hold up true standards of the Cross, instead of the golden calf of the politician.

I fear this is a dull letter, but I have tried to make you understand something of the situation.

Patience Pennington. Chicago Wood, S. C.

All Their Worship in Jumps.

Grosvenordale, Conn., April 11.—F. W. Messenger, who has surrendered \$15,000 salary at the request of the owners of mills employing 1,700 persons rather than give up preaching, belongs to a sect now known as the "Holy Jumpers." Formerly it was called the Peniel Church.

Messenger has withdrawn from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the New England Cotton Manufacturers' Association, believing them to be "ungodly." He discourages the use of tobacco and liquor, although he does not deny his venerable mother the solace of the weed.

When the "Holy Jumpers" meet one another they yell and jump. Their worship consists largely of posturing, running, yelling and springing about.

Willie Bates, an orphan, became so enthusiastic a follower of Messenger that he gave all his money, jewelry and bicycle to the "Holy Jumpers." Believers are forbidden to wear jewelry, and Blanch Elliot, a young girl, who was engaged to Messenger's son, Frank, now dead, gave up the gold

chain and locket which contained her lover's picture.

Messenger says: "I am trying to live up to the sermon on the Mount. I used to belong to high-toned clubs in Boston and drank champagne and smoked, but nine years ago I saw the light and gave up my evil associates."

—Philadelphia Record. The profession of bridesmaid seems to be growing in New York. For some time it has been the habit at weddings in that city to pay bridesmaids. At a recent wedding there were no fewer than 15 bridesmaids who were all punctually paid. Besides the beautiful dresses given by the bride's father they each received \$25 apiece for appearing in the wedding train. There are young ladies who accept so much as \$100 for their office of honor.

—A woman can generally forgive her husband loving some other woman if she can twist it around to make it appear it wasn't her fault. —A clergyman was much surprised one day at receiving a basket of potatoes from an old woman in his parish, with a message saying that as he had remarked in his sermon on the previous Sunday that some "common taters," (commentators) did not agree with him, she had sent him some real good ones.

—When a man is interested in a woman and she gets married he can still be interested in her just the same unless it is to himself.

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