

A MAGNIFICENT GIFT.

MR. CLEMSON'S BEQUEST TO THE FARMERS OF THE STATE.

A Visit to "Fort Hill." Amount and having heard, Conditions of the test. The Hopes and Claims of its Friends. An Old Dream Apparent Near Fulfillment.

(Greenville News.)

No event of recent years has aroused more interest among the farmers, and the people generally, than the death, last Saturday, of Thomas G. Clemson, the venerable son-in-law and heir of John C. Calhoun and his bequest of "Fort Hill," Mr. Calhoun's home during the latter days of his life, to the State of South Carolina, for use as an agricultural college.

A reporter for the Greenville Daily News went to Fort Hill yesterday to obtain particulars in confirmation of and addition to the few facts heretofore given to the public. He was fortunate enough to meet there the Hon. R. W. Simpson, Mr. Clemson's tried friend and agent and executor, who had gone from Pendleton to Fort Hill with Mr. Lee of New York, who married Mr. Clemson's daughter, and Miss Lee, a very young lady, the dead man's only grandchild and the great-granddaughter of Mr. Calhoun.

Miss Lee has not been to Fort Hill before since she was a small child and there was a very picturesque scene soon after her arrival when the old family servants, some of them with snow-white hair and beard, gathered in the old-fashioned, moss-covered porch of the homestead to see and pay their respects to the youngest representatives of the family with which they have been identified so long.

Mr. Simpson is the only living person who has seen and read Mr. Clemson's will, and as he has not yet probated it he was evidently reluctant to talk of its contents in detail. As so much has been published, however, most of it based on statements made by Mr. Clemson before his death and some of it incorrect, Mr. Simpson communicated the most important facts.

Mr. Clemson's will was drawn several years ago by the late Col. Jas. H. Pittman, but several amendments and additions more recently made were drawn by Mr. Simpson. He bequeaths to his granddaughter, Miss Lee, \$10,000 in money and securities and 330 acres of the Fort Hill place, with the provision that that tract may be bought in and added to the remainder of the estate at fixed price.

Other legacies amount to \$10,000, of which \$7,000 was paid before his death. All the remainder of the Fort Hill estate, with the buildings and the magnificent collection of rare pictures, except the family pictures, which go to Miss Lee, Mr. Calhoun's furniture and books remaining in the house and the stock's bonds, money and other securities of Mr. Clemson, go to the State for the establishment and maintenance of an agricultural college.

The Fort Hill place contains 1,150 acres. Of this 330 acres, as already stated, go to Miss Lee, but can be purchased to keep the estate intact, at a fixed reasonable price. Those intimate with Mr. Clemson's affairs estimate that the securities and cash remaining after the payment of all encumbrances and expenses will be between \$50,000 and \$60,000, available for developing and endowing the college.

The magnificence of the bequest can not well be appreciated without an understanding of what and where Fort Hill is.

It is in Oconee county just at the point where Oconee, Pickens and Anderson unite. It runs for some distance along the Seneca river and then back into rolling uplands and heavily timbered woodland. The house stands on the crest of a gently rising hill in the midst of a wide park, an avenue of old and beautiful cedars leading to it. From the front there is a glorious view directly to the mountains until their purple lines mingle with the horizon; on an other side the view overlooks the hills, and the old British fort, from which the place takes its name and which is on the Fort Hill plantation.

The residence is in sight of the Richmond & Danville railroad track, at a distance of half a mile, and is four miles from Pendleton, on the Blue Ridge railroad, four miles from Central, on the Richmonde & Danville road, and seven miles from Seneca City, the meeting point of the two railroads mentioned.

It is hard to imagine a requisite for an agricultural college which Fort Hill does not possess. It has nearly 200 acres of the finest bottom land, creek and river bottom, cleared upland, pasture land in wide stretches and a great belt of first growth timber, and its upland soil is partly gray and partly red land. It is abundantly watered with springs, wells and creeks and has all possible natural convenience for dairy, bathing houses and hunting purposes. Where a creek on it empties into the Seneca river there is good water power which has been used for a mill which did the neighborhood grinding.

A fair estimate of the value of the real and personal property included in the bequest makes it exceed \$1,000,000, without, of course, including the pictures and furniture, which are priceless. Contrary to general expectation, the library is a very ordinary one, most of the more valuable books having been borrowed, stolen or otherwise lost during Mr. Clemson's long period of retirement and partial illness.

The property is given to the State to be used as an institution for instruction in agriculture, but the will directs that the college shall not be exclusively agricultural and that proper attention be given to other studies and to a general collegiate course for students. If the State accepts the gift the college is to be under the management of seven trustees, named in the will. Messrs. R. W. Simpson, D. K. Norris, R. E. Tillman, M. L. Davidson, R. E. Bowing, J. E. Bradley and J. E. Wannamaker. In case the State refuses to accept the gift these trustees are authorized and directed to proceed with the establishment of the college, using an amount specified in the will for buildings and making tuition as nearly free as they may and fit possible or advisable.

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It was no sudden break that inspired Mr. Clemson's action. As far back as 1851 he was interested in the establishment of such an institution as his will provides for, and he was then active in forwarding a scheme to procure private gifts and subscriptions for the purpose. After the tragic death of his son, killed by a railroad accident in 1851, he became more than ever before interested and eventually publicly announced his purpose of procuring practical agricultural education. Since then he has thought and talked much of the subject and his will was no surprise to those who knew him best or to Mr. Lee, his son-in-law, who knew long ago the destination intended for the property.

On returning from Fort Hill, the Greenville News representative met Central, D. K. Norris, now the foremost leader of the "Starvation" movement, and since Mr. Tillman's formal retirement at the time of his death, and persistent efforts for a state agricultural college, Mr. Norris was quiet on the subject of the Clemson bequest, but evidently deeply interested and very much in earnest.

He sold the gift out the whole matter of the college to the number of the farmers, and they could see a magnificent institution for agricultural education if they will wait the opportunity. With the amount from the fund, said now to be \$10,000, and the money from the Tillman bequest now diverted to the college, and other purposes—every cent of which he sold, was legally and morally for the use of the money for educating business—an income of \$10,000 a year would be secured for the new college, with its roundabout buildings all provided and some income from the surplus endowment. That was more than the State Military Academy and the State College, wire together, he said, and would give a splendid, thoroughly efficient agricultural college, capable of accommodating hundreds of students, without the addition of one cent to the taxes. He did not believe, he said, in legislation. That question had been settled in the case of the State college. But he thought it probable a system would be adopted by high students would be entitled to the whole, or a large part of the expenses by extra work and service in the institution.

She Wants to be School Commissioner.

Miss Eliza Garner, a Union County school teacher, is a candidate for School Commissioner and makes the following formal announcement in the Union Times:

I respectfully announce myself a candidate for the office of School Commissioner.

I propose to give \$600 worth of school books to the children of the public schools if I am elected. I have the leisure, and shall consider it a conscientious duty to give most of my time and the means which the office affords for the cause of education.

I have been teaching in the district public schools for ten years. I have visited a number of state and county normals, and I understand the new and superior systems of graded teaching.

I have read the school law of this state many times, and I believe that I am competent in every respect to manage the business of the office.

In behalf of the many children that have no other means for education, I trust the voters will give me the office.

I am hard to imagine a requisite for an agricultural college which Fort Hill does not possess. It has nearly 200 acres of the finest bottom land, creek and river bottom, cleared upland, pasture land in wide stretches and a great belt of first growth timber, and its upland soil is partly gray and partly red land. It is abundantly watered with springs, wells and creeks and has all possible natural convenience for dairy, bathing houses and hunting purposes. Where a creek on it empties into the Seneca river there is good water power which has been used for a mill which did the neighborhood grinding.

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MOUNTVILLE.

Present with the Friends. The Battle of the Plains. Exploits Much from Farmers' Club. Some Progress in Farmers and other Matters.

The Presbyterian church at Cross Hill is certainly fortunate in having secured the services of such a man and minister as the Rev. J. Bassell.

Ignoring lengthly dissertations on moral, speculative or scholastic theology and filled with that brotherly love, which is the identifying mark of the kingdom, he attacks the prevailing sins of the day, with a zeal and earnestness that presege the moral and religious elevation of the community—hitherto and hopefully do he "waxen bold in the vineyard"—a faithful servant in the vineyard, May he be granted a long career of usefulness in the great cause.

King cotton has issued his usual "Armed Proclamation," and all over the land from very morning till noon eve the noisy whistle of the plow-boy and the rattling of the cotton planter is heard.

Our Farmers Club will do a great deal of good in our neighborhood I hope, both agriculturally and socially.

Come to our meeting and if we can't interest you on farming topics we will get Benton Fuller to explain the difference between town folks and country folks, as to manners, customs, etc., or to describe his last days manœuvres home after the surrender.

We have some good farmers in the club, T. G. Tandy, Thumann and Father, et al. Harry Watts, even they say he can make more corn than either did, and Col. Bryson can take the cake on Watermelons, Potatoes and Tobacco. Dr. Cain our "independent prince" and farmers and many other.

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