

Work for the Plant Breeders.

There is in progress in Columbia today a meeting, the result of which will be of tremendous importance to the future uplift and prosperity of the State of South Carolina if the efforts of the broad-minded, patriotic men who are seeking to put splendid ideas into execution, only receive the proper backing.

The meeting referred to was called by David R. Coker, of Hartsville, Hon. E. J. Watson, commissioner of agriculture, Dr. A. C. Moore of the University of South Carolina, Prof. J. N. Harper, director of the experiment station at Clemson, Mr. J. Swinton Balles, of Edisto Island and President E. W. Dabbs of the Farmers' Union, and is attended by representative farmers and others from different parts of the State.

The object of the meeting is the organization of the South Carolina Plant Breeders' Association, and the object is no doubt accomplished so far as the preparatory routine is concerned; but the great task now is to push the propaganda and enlist the live, intelligent people whose support is necessary to future success.

The improvement of cotton, corn wheat, oats, and in fact, all kinds of

plants is the great object in view, and the object of this improvement is better plants and through better plants, larger and more profitable crops, and through larger and more profitable crops, increase in the general welfare, prosperity and happiness of the people. A great and glorious object, this; but not at all unreasonable or visionary, for as surely as proper interest is worked up, the results indicated must follow.

What is plant breeding? Hundreds of readers, farmer readers of The Enquirer, will say they do not know, and they really think they don't; but we venture that right now in York county, there is much knowledge of plant breeding and if that knowledge were only directed, trained and stimulated, within a very few years it could be paying tremendous dividends—much larger than now.

Plant breeding is accomplished in several ways; but mainly by intelligent seed selection, and the encouragement of intelligent seed selection is the principal aim of the association; but not all. It is hoped that there will be defined a more general knowledge of what science has learned as to grafting, crossing, etc. The members of the organization believe that there are as much good brains in South

Carolina as elsewhere and while they do not expect to interest everybody in plant breeding, they believe that they may succeed in interesting many of the people, who by nature and education are best fitted for the work and they have hopes of the general results that would follow.

Luther Burbank is generally and commonly referred to as the plant wizard. It is because he has worked so many seeming miracles on and with plants and constituted so immeasurably to the wealth, pleasure and happiness of mankind. But Luther Burbank despises the name of wizard, because he knows that there is nothing even mysterious about his achievements. He is not inclined to admit that he has done anything remarkable. All that he is willing to concede is, that by close study and communion with nature, he has discovered some simple secrets that have enabled him to improve some plants tremendously and bringing about the creation of others. The most that Burbank has ever done has been through intelligent seed selection. He has taken a given plant, selected and planted the best seed year after year until he has developed more perfect specimens. Of course he has excelled in and along all lines of plant breeding, but in none of the things that he has done, will he admit that there was more real difficulty in them than in the simple process of seed selection.

Every farmer in the county who can read, knows of the improved varieties of cotton that have been produced in the last fifty years, and that the improvement has been brought about mainly by seed selection. It was in this way that Mr. David R. Coker has improved the cotton in Darlington county, mainly around Hartsville, until Darlington county cotton now brings more money by hundreds of thousands of dollars than the same number of pounds of the kind grown a few years ago would bring.

Of course plant breeding is a slow, tedious process; but since any intelligent individual can do it by careful, persistent effort look how much genuine intellectual pleasure there is in prospect, and how much profit. Where is there greater happiness and what is more ennobling than this thing of actually getting down close to nature? The pecuniary rewards are almost always great; but those who are most successful in pursuits of this kind almost invariably reach a point where they esteem the pleasure and happiness it gives them more than they



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do the pecuniary rewards.

We are not calling on everybody to join in this movement. We recognize that there are people and people, and almost as many tastes as there are people. There are lots of farmers—pretty good farmers—who care nothing for plant breeding and who do not believe they could become interested, but there are others who feel an interest and who would like to know a great deal more than they

know now. We hope that as soon as there is a call for the organization of York county, all the people who are interested and who are in a position to do so, will join in the movement.—Yorkville Enquirer.

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