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THE STRANGE VISITOR

"THE FARMER IS OF MORE CONSEQUENCE THAN THE FARM, AND SHOULD BE FIRST IMPROVED."

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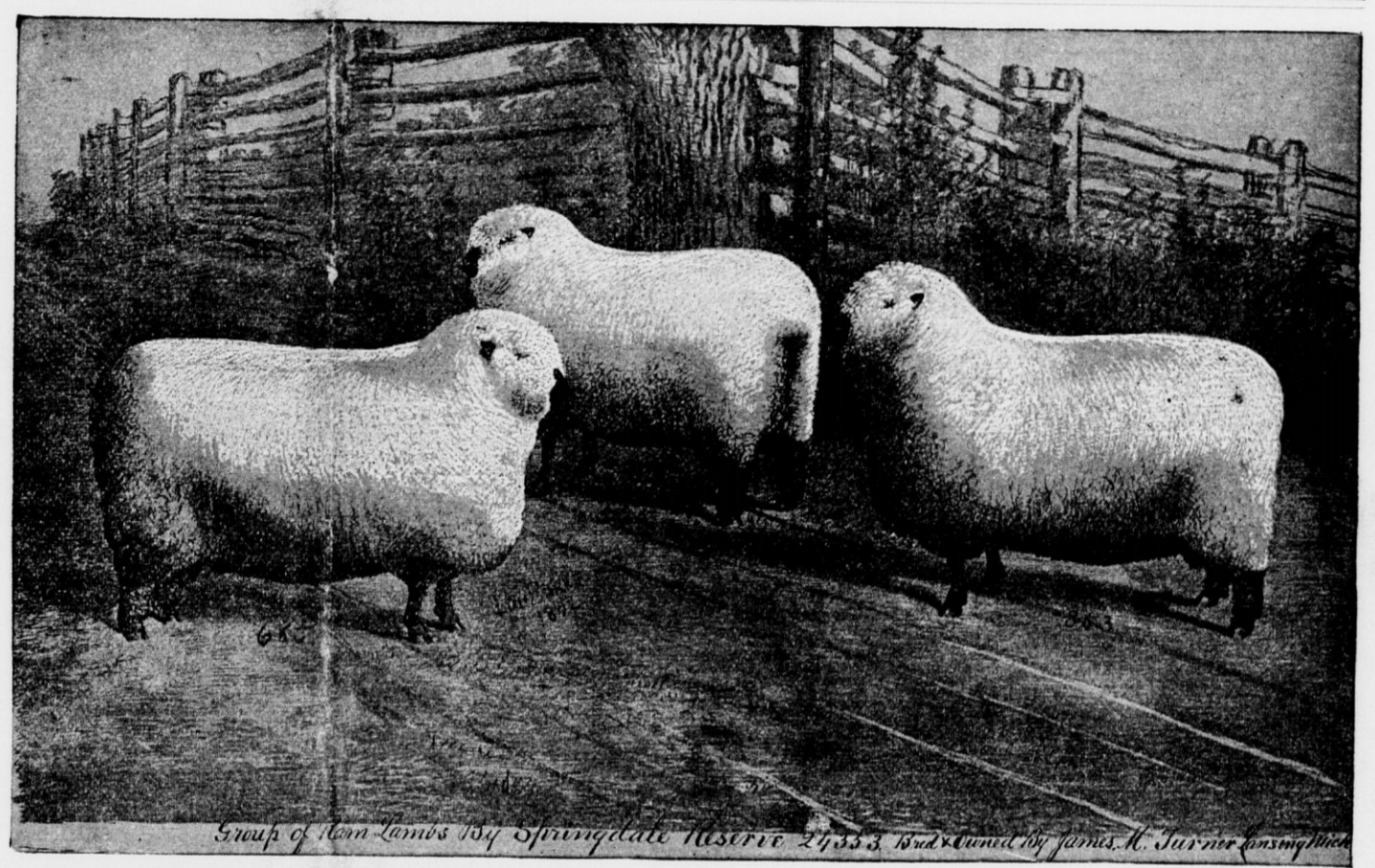
WHOLE NO. 402.

HOW TO IMPROVE ROADS AND ROAD LAWS.

HON. WM. L. WEBBER.

Drainage.

If you fill a barrel with earth, level full, and then pour water upon the surface of the barrel you will find that the earth in the barrel is softened by the water. Now, if you bore a hole in the side of the barrel one-third the distance from the top the water will run out, and there will be left in the earth only so much water as is held by capillary attraction, and the earth will settle and become solid. Bore a hole in the bottom of the barrel and the entire contents will settle, all the water will be drained out, except such as is held by capillary attraction. Now, apply this practice in road making. If you have a ditch on both sides of your roadway, which stands with water perhaps half full, then the roadway in its bottom is saturated through to the line of the water extending from ditch to ditch, and is soft. Let road makers remember that water will always run down hill—if you give it a chance—the smoother the passage the faster it will run. Therefore, tile draining of roadways should be resorted to wherever necessary to ensure drainage, and road beds should be drained in all places where the sub-soil is clay or packed, so that the surface of the road will have no standing water under it to a depth of at least three feet. With good drainage heavy rains pass off at once, and do not saturate the road bed. With good drainage



Group of Horn Lambs by Springdale Reserve 24353, Owned by James M. Turner Lansing Mich.



SPRINGDALE RESERVE 24353, OWNED BY JAMES M. TURNER LANSING MICH.

expense, usually under the direction of a board of public works, and it would be well to provide that each county should have its "Board of Public Works," or, if you please, "Commissioners of Highways," who should have the general supervision and direction of the engineer, with authority to direct improvements; and put the control of the highways of the county into the hands of this board, to be handled upon a business basis, and with the intelligence which the experience of Europe and the older sections of this country has given us.

STONE ROADS.

In many sections of the State field stones are abundant. A good roadway can be made by excavating a trench, say eight to ten or sixteen feet wide and six inches deep, gathering these stones and placing them carefully on end, with the big end down, and then with gravel or clay loam, or such other material as is accessible, level up to grade. This gives you a sub-structure which is permanent, and below which the wheels will never go; and, if the surface dressing is of proper material, and if the drainage has been well attended to, a road once well made in this manner would last for succeeding generations as a good road, and would permit two or three times the load to be drawn over it with the same power that can be drawn over the ordinary roads of the country now.

Roads—Let us talk about some of these really important topics rather than wrangle over questions whose discussion is always of doubtful utility—Selected.

and reasonable attention to keep the surface smooth the ordinary earth road can be very much improved. There are very few places so level but what good drainage can be secured, and there is no one word which should be so thoroughly impressed into the minds of all connected with the making of roads, as the word "Drainage," thorough drainage, deep drainage.

HOMOGENEOUS.

Another suggestion to road makers: Never shovel sand into a clay hole, nor black muck. Homogeneous materials will unite, but if you fill a hole with sods or other material that will not adhere to the material already there the hole will be dug out again by the wheels at once. I have known many roads repaired in such a manner as to require at least six months travel to make them as good as they were before the repairing was done.

LEGISLATION NEEDED.

To secure best results our whole system of road making and repairing should be changed. Our present system was inherited, and it was an inheritance which has proved disastrous. The system arose from the necessities of a wilderness, necessities that no longer exist. I would recommend that there be a constitutional amendment, which would make every county a road district by itself, and provide for the selection of a competent engineer, under whose executive management the work of making and improving highways should be carried out, abolishing all road work. There is no city now that improves its streets and highways on the theory of road work and highway districts; it is done by general taxation, at general



Group of Horn Lambs by Springdale Reserve Property of James M. Turner Lansing Mich.

BENEFITS OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS.

HON. CYRUS G. LUCE.

In compliance with your request I submit some thoughts in relation to farmers' organizations, prefacing by saying, but few of the reasons therefor can be presented in a brief newspaper article.

Through the ages of the past agriculture has furnished one of the chief occupations of the race. In many countries it has been the great wealth producer that has enabled them to become prosperous and happy. But in none of these countries has the farmer been recorded rights, privileges and enjoyments commensurate with his contribution to the general welfare. In many of them, however much he may have done for others, he himself has been simply "a hewer of wood and drawer of water."

Of course the injustice thus inflicted upon him has brought perils upon the countries where these wrongs were inflicted.

The misery existing in Russia to-day is not caused, to any great extent, by the drouth of last year. This has only aggravated long existing and growing evils. Agriculture in Russia, as well as in many other European countries, has been oppressed, degraded and almost ruined by these oppressions. The result of all this is inflicting pain and penalty upon all other classes in Russia. The same is eminently true of Turkey, and to a great extent, of Spain and Italy. Among all the farmers of Europe there cannot be found one single farmers' organization that has for its purpose the elevation of the farmer, the improvement of his methods and the exaltation of his manhood.

And in our own country agriculture confessedly furnishes the foundation for national growth and prosperity. The fathers and mothers of Plymouth Rock were chiefly farmers. The men who fired the first guns at Lexington in the great battle for freedom that was waged and won, were farmers. The men who have produced the wealth of this country and now furnish the products that build and sustain railroads, construct cities and force the balance of trade in our favor, are farmers.

But until within the last quarter of a century, no permanent farmers' organization existed in this country that had for its purpose the development of a higher manhood and womanhood, or to continue the education of those who live in rural homes and cultivate the soil, or to promote and defend all along the line the interest and rights of the farmer. And still there is no portion of the American people that so absolutely require the benefits of association and co-operation as the tillers of the soil.

Men and women engaged in other pursuits are brought in contact with their fellows in the prosecution of their calling. The farmer in following his occupation is necessarily comparatively isolated. There is not the same keen competition in his case that actuates and stimulates other men to their utmost. Hence, the only way open to him to realize the benefits that contact with others bring to all people, is to organize, and maintain organization for his own benefit.

Through organization the mighty achievements of the age in which we live have been wrought out; without the strength and force of these, but very little is accomplished.

The farmer who passes along the highway, rides on the cars, visits the city, attends fairs, witnesses the evidences of all these if he travels with eyes and ears open. And if those engaged in other pursuits have been enabled to secure opportunities, privileges and advantages essential to their success, these truths apply to the farmer more forcibly than to any others.

Organization for the benefit of other men, erected upon a sandy foundation, crumble and fall when the storm overtakes them. So will farmers' organizations if the foundation does not rest upon solid rock. Their promoters have no reason to expect exemption from the common lot that has overtaken others.

A farmers' organization to be permanent and useful must be in

harmony with the laws that govern our civilization. Its first and highest purpose should be to increase the knowledge of its members; and the first and most important branch in which knowledge is secured, relates to his own calling and the methods which he should pursue. There is no calling known to the head or hand of men that requires a broader, deeper, or more profound knowledge than it does to properly cultivate our acres, and manage our own business affairs.

The ideal farmers' organization should not undertake to accomplish the impossible. Energies have often been exhausted in trying to do what mortal man cannot do. The organization should teach its members to adjust themselves and their operations to the conditions which surround them; to meet bravely and well emergencies as they arise.

We cannot change the rising and setting of the moon, we cannot change the course of the stars, we cannot prevent the rain, nor do I believe call down the rain from the clouds at our bidding. We cannot prevent the early frosts that nip the still growing grain or the early blooming fruit. But these casualties and difficulties that confront the farmer should be met heroically, wisely and well, and a farmers' organization can assist its members in doing these very things.

It should not be established, nor should it exist for any one single purpose. If this is the limit of the object, when it has accomplished the single purpose it is ready to die, and if success is not achieved, then discouragement follows.

It should be broad and comprehensive in all of its purposes. It should command the respect and confidence and the kind wishes of men engaged in other legitimate pursuits, because it can make its members wiser, more successful and more extensive contributors to the welfare of society, of commerce, and of business.

Because of the isolated condition of the farmer, he has been less ready to perceive the force and influence exercised by wisely conducted organizations. But he cannot longer run the race before him, successfully, without the influence and aid rendered by them. He cannot exercise the influence as a citizen of the state and nation as the very best interests of all require, without receiving the educational benefits that can be secured within the halls of some farmers' organization.

And there is now all the more reason for seizing hold of this engine of power, because their numbers are relatively reduced. The census of 1890 proves what thoughtful men knew before to be true;—that the rural population was gradually going to the cities. Much of this change is brought about through natural causes. Two farmers can now at the average farm work perform as much labor, produce as much, as three could thirty years ago; so that if the same number of men remained on the farms as formerly, there would certainly be an overproduction of farm products. The men that used to live in the country and work on the farms are now making machinery that accomplishes these great results, and this is to go on more and more as we use more machinery.

There is really nothing alarming in this tendency, and if there were, we could not prevent it. It has come in as a part of the machinery in our civilization. But it imposes obligations upon those who do remain upon the farms. The relatively smaller number become stronger, broader and more influential, and we must, to secure the perpetuity of our institutions and the very government itself, hold the balance of power out in the rural homes. And I say without hesitation that we cannot do this without securing the benefits of organization to aid us.

The farmers' influence must not be reduced or obliterated in this country. When danger to business, manufacturing, or in any other way, comes, they are not found on the farms. Indeed, to govern all the farmers in this country would not require a soldier, nor the expenditure of but very little money. And if ever another flag besides the stars and stripes should be raised anywhere, whether it be red

or black, it will not be seen out on the farms.

Farmers are generally home owners, and this begets patriotism, and the student of history will readily believe that all of this patriotism is and will be required in the coming years. So this furnishes another reason why he should avail himself of all the opportunities that organizations can give him.

Farmers' organizations are growing, and they will continue to grow. They are now a force and will be a greater one, a result which every patriot should desire.

IF CHOLERA COMES.

DR. R. C. KEDZIE.

People naturally inquire what to do in case cholera invades our State, and what precautions to use to escape its danger. A word of suggestion may be acceptable on these points.

1. Cholera is caused by a germ, but it is nourished by filth, and finds a ready home in weakened and enfeebled bodies. Cleanliness is a matter of first importance. Keep clean if you would keep clear of cholera—not only clean in your person and clean in your life, but clean in your dwelling from cellar to garret, clean in your back yard and alley. Clean out your privy and bury its contents, and then make the vault wholesome and sweet by dissolving three pounds of copperas in a pailful of boiling water and dash this into the vault so as to wet the walls and thus destroy all foul odors. Especially look to your well and see that no filth can flow or soak into your well. If in doubt about the water, boil it before you use it and thus kill all germs.

2. Use plain, wholesome, nutritious food. Avoid tainted meats and decomposing vegetables—wilted and mildewed food of any kind. Use food fresh and sweet from nature's hand. Well ripened fruits, tomatoes, etc., especially if well cooked, are good. The same may be said of all garden vegetables when well cooked. Raw cucumbers I leave alone.

3. Be of good courage. Nothing depresses the system like fear, and it is the weakened and depressed system that is most liable to cholera. The story of the Turk who insured his life is a good illustration. A Turk visiting Paris insured his life for a large sum. Returning to Constantinople he was seized with the plague and his friends told him he would surely die. He replied he had provided against such an event by insuring his life in Paris. He knew the company was perfectly responsible and his life was safe. He recovered.

Don't give way to fear, or get up a panic, but bravely meet your fate, for safety lies along that path.

4. Don't doctor to keep well. Drugging to keep off sickness kills more than it helps. Let stimulants of every kind alone. Avoid spirits and fermented liquors. Habitual drinkers furnish a large body of victims for cholera. Be temperate in all things.

5. Avoid needless exposure to the disease. Humanity and Christianity alike demand that the sick be nursed and the dead buried. But it is reckless to needlessly expose one's person to the disease. Some doctors say the cholera cannot be carried by the air, and is always taken into the body by something we swallow. But that is an unproven assumption, and it is not wise to risk life upon an hypothesis. Do your duty but take no needless risks.

Agricultural College.

BRAZILIAN AGRICULTURE.

EUGENE DAVENPORT.

It requires but a short residence in this peculiar country to discover that it is a region by nature adapted to agriculture, but inhabited by a race with no love for the calling and with a distinct aversion to all forms of industry. Larger than the United States, with a greater range of latitude and elevation and a proportion small though it may be of wonderfully productive soil, it is capable of producing large quantities of nearly every valuable food plant known to man.

But her methods are not those of intelligent, industrious people,

improving as the world improves. On the contrary, her agriculture is built upon and about the institution of slavery. And now that this institution is abolished, agriculture seems to have lost both foundation and prop. The agricultural facilities are the blundering creations of the ignorant slaves, unadulterated by any perceptible leaven of superior intelligence, but crystallized by time and thoughtless practice into unchangeable method, almost hereditary instinct.

Few of my readers will understand the force of what is meant when I say that the practices of a country (i. e. a people), cannot be changed. They certainly cannot from without when they have once settled into this petrified condition. Internal causes may exert an influence to break them up, and new methods may spring up from within, but from without—never.

I knew a wealthy farmer of Chili, owning 60,000 acres of land, who would like to have his oxen yoked by the necks. To draw him out I said, "Why don't you have them yoked as you desire?" Said he, "Probably your short experience has already taught you what mine long ago taught me—you can't change the practices of a whole country. If you expect to have to do with them at all, you are obliged to take them as they are, make the best of a bad state of affairs, and make the recompense low enough so there is a margin of profit." In this little circumstance I give the gist of the whole South American problem, and of the problem of ignorant labor everywhere.

The money of Brazil has been made either from her mines or her soil—mostly the latter—and mainly by uncompensated slave labor. Now that the slaves are free and in a country where a minimum exertion will supply the bare necessities of life, they are thrown back upon the country an ignorant, idle, dirty burden. Upon the other hand, the methods of the planter have been so crude and wasteful while labor cost him nothing—for the slave must raise his own living in addition to the service rendered the master—that he now finds it impossible to pay even the paltry wages of 30 cents per day, except in the coffee fields, and make enough to pay the labor. So, since the abolition of slavery, Brazilian agriculture is "up a stump" so to speak. Labor has been the business of the slave only, and is regarded everywhere as the badge of poverty, a measure to be resorted to from dire necessity. The wealthy man positively will not labor at all and the poor man will not till compelled by hunger or other force. And the cry goes up from all Brazil—"Give us laborers." Italian or any other immigration is courted, till the country is flooded with a host of poverty stricken laborers who will not labor. Coolie importation is talked of. The latter would be under the "contract system," but anybody who is acquainted with the conditions down there knows that this is but an innocent name for practical slavery—all this in a country where not one in ten can read, and not one adult in five is worth enough to buy food to last himself alone through one of our winters. I would write the truth in full strength on this point if it would be believed, but I feel obliged to stop far short of its limits in order to be respected for veracity. This is the condition of labor and of laboring people in this great agricultural country, and it is rare to find one who desires to better his condition.

Of farming methods there is little to say. Like all slave methods they are those of hand labor almost entirely. The universal practice is to abandon the land after one or two crops, and shortly it is covered with a thick growth of bushes and coarse grass in great variety. It becomes then a rotation between crop and wilderness, and at any given time a majority of the country is in the latter condition—picturesque at a distance, scraggy and forbidding close at hand. The rapidity with which a cultivated field will revert to jungle is astonishing. The most stubborn roots and grubs are never subdued during the period of cropping, and on abandoning but a short time elapses till they spring up and cover the soil completely, for vegetation is practically constant, being hardly checked in winter. They are therefore always

clearing land, and the agriculture is always that of pioneers.

When a new piece is to be cleared it is cut about two feet above the ground with a long handled knife called a *focce*, and after a few days burned over. Only the larger brush and small trees escape the fire. These are drawn for wood and burned "full length." Then a tool, by courtesy called a plow, is drawn about among the stubs by a span of mules weighing about 600 or 700 pounds each. The plow is not capable of "cutting off" over six inches of furrow, but the furrows are generally two or three feet apart.—The field is usually plowed two or three times in different directions, always in little short narrow lands. Very few harrows are used. Often a brush is drawn over the ground, but generally a gang of about ten men go over it with heavy hoes weighing eight or ten pounds, and moving in a line across the field, and all after culture is done in the same way.

In this manner are raised—coffee in the highest and reddest lands; next in order of choice and profit are cane, corn, cotton, beans, mandioca, rice and a variety of vegetables. Wheat, oats, barley, rye and potatoes are possible only in the extreme south or the higher elevations.

Of fruits, the orange, banana and pineapple are about equal in favor, and all grow wild though not native. The lime, lemon and grape are common and thrive well. The guava is native and more common than our elderberries. Neither apples, pears, cherries, plums, or any of our small fruits are raised, though the strawberries are known to do well.

Horses are used only for riding or for carriages in cities. Bullocks and mules do the labor. Pigs are in high favor and fatten on corn and raw cane more rapidly than any I have ever seen. Nothing eats so much there as here, and I am satisfied that a Yankee could make pork in Brazil for a cent a pound.

Very little milk or butter are used. Laboring people live almost exclusively on beans and rice, eating great quantities of raw cane. Healthy people add meat, and all drink liquor and coffee and smoke to excess.

Of the wonderful resources of soil and mine and the natural beauty of the country under proper management, no language can express too much.

But that it is cursed by its idle, ignorant, treacherous, filthy inhabitants and their religion, I never knew an Englishman or an American to question. Neither did I ever know one who could discover or suggest relief, but all who have seen this fair country and its blot will say, "How long, Oh Lord, how long?"

Woodland, Mich.

NOTICES.

Our State secretary sends in the following notice which she requests us to call to the attention of Patrons:

Patrons will please notice that the residence and address of the Secretary of the State Grange has been changed from Marcellus to Ann Arbor, Washtenaw avenue, Mich.

Secretaries are especially requested to bear this in mind in buying money and express orders, and see that they are made payable at Ann Arbor.

Further, it is necessary in order that your subordinate Grange be entitled to representation in the next State Grange that the fees and dues for the quarter ending March 31, 1892, are paid. Please be sure that your Grange holds its receipt for that quarter's remittance.

JENNIE BUELL,
Secretary.

Patrons will please take notice that the address of the State Lecturer hereafter will be Ypsilanti, No. 222 Summitt street. I particularly call the attention of Lecturers of Subordinate Granges to this as the reports for September are now in order, and I sincerely hope a complete list to report from to Bro. Whitehead.

A. J. CROSBY, JR.,
Lecturer.

If you want a paper fair to all sides try the VISITOR.

