

# BETTER CONDITIONS FOR SOUTHERN FARMERS

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Before The

Conference of Education in the South

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In discussing this topic, it is necessary to arrive at a just estimate of present conditions in our Southern rural districts.

Some years since, a traveller said that the farms of the South looked like a bankrupt stock ready for the auctioneer; the soils were impoverished; the brush and briar patches conspicuous; the buildings dilapidated; the fences a makeshift; the highways but little more than much used bridle paths; the churches and school houses were built upon the plan of inclosing the necessary space at the least expense; and the grave yards appeared as if the living did not believe in the resurrection.

This view point is not mine. To me the Southern States surpass all of the countries of the earth of equal area, in material resources, mainly undeveloped. Underneath almost every acre is concealed a mineral wealth of surpassing value; within almost every acre are agricultural resources that touched by intellect and labor, will reveal marvelous products. To me the Southern people are the purest stock of the greatest race the world has produced. The rural population has lived under unfortunate conditions for the best development, but the essential material of their natures is not impaired and it requires but leadership to attain great results. "Scratch a Philippino and you may uncover a Malay"; scratch a poor white of the South and you reveal a hero. Great gains have already been made and grater are yet to come. There are some retarding conditions. What are they? The following are a few of the most apparent:

- 1st. In the older states of the South the annual product per acre has greatly decreased owing to the rapid loss of soil fertility; and moderate production is only maintained at increased cost. Even comparatively new states, like Texas, indicate rapid loss of fertility.

- 2nd. Within the last half century vast areas of virgin prairie soils have been opened for settlement by the construction of railway lines and have attracted many from the older states. Economic and rapid transportation are equalizing the land values of the world, depressing them in older and more populous sections and rapidly enhancing values in the newer. This is true in Virginia, in New York, in England and elsewhere.



3rd. The large body of freedmen settled throughout the rural districts of the South has tended to lower farm values and depress Agriculture. I am not claiming that they intentionally do this or are morally responsible for the effect. The effect is not the result of color, but is caused by lower planes of living. I simply mention it as a factor.

4th. The poverty of the laboring whites should be taken into account. It takes resources to build and maintain a high civilization. If the poor whites and the colored people, constituting nine-tenths of the country population, do not have means to buy farms, nor improve them, nor purchase equipment, nor to pay current expenses, country conditions must fall to a low level. Considerable of this is due to the war between the states, which financially ruined the South. It takes a long time for the people to recover from sweeping disasters, and it takes longer when nine-tenths of them have but slight knowledge of thrift.

5th. The credit system has been a potent factor in depressing Agriculture. To some extent it might have been a necessary evil in a limited way, forty years ago; but it prospered and became dominant, oppressive and insolent. It unblushingly swept the earnings of toil from the masses into the coffers of the few. It substituted voluntary for involuntary servitude, ownership by agreement and poverty by contract under fear of the sheriff for the ownership by birthright and a government by proprietary right. So we have lived under a slavery where the chains are ingeniously forged and the bands riveted with gold. It is all the same in effect, the impoverishment of the masses.

6th. Evolutions in manufactures has wielded a mighty influence against the general development of the country. Sixty years ago most of our mechanics lived in the country upon small farms, which they and their families tilled for support and they sold their surplus labor to supplement the home income. People were honest and thrifty, because all were employed; today these mechanic farmers reside in town or city, sell all their labor and live out of a canned garden and milk a tin cow: of course their sons and daughters are idle.

7th. To foster the mechanic arts we have levied a duty upon the farmers, thereby destroying competition and increasing the cost of what they purchase about fifty per cent. This with the marvelous improvements in machinery and mechanical power has given the mechanic an earning capacity (as shown by the last census) of from four to six times that of the average farmer. This is the main magnet which attracts the best youth from the farms and deprives the rural districts of their rightful leaders.

8th. To cap the climax of depressing influences most of the money of the country has been diverted into commercial channels through the banking laws. In the olden time there were men in the country who loaned money to farmers; later all such funds have been absorbed by banks, until banks directly and indirectly control the money of the country. Farmers can deposit in a bank; but they cannot borrow from that bank, even their own money, to make a crop. It requires at least six months to make and market an average crop upon a farm. Banks can loan only for ninety days. Suppose all of the deposits of a village bank were made by farmers, that money must be loaned upon short time and hence is not available for crop-raising to any extent. Thus the banking capital of our country, a considerable portion of which belongs to farmers, has not promoted agriculture; but has stimulated commercialism and by its concentration in cities has fostered gambling in stocks. The great fluctuation in the values of farms and farm products lies in the fact that the money of the country is not backing them. It has been loaned to the merchant, the manufacturer and the speculating interests. This is not intended as an argument against banks. Banks are a necessity. The criticism holds against a phase of our banking laws, which by process of law diverts the money of farmers into commercial channels.

This backward condition of the country, as compared with the city is not a new problem. It dates from the earliest historical periods. Many of the words of reproach or opprobrium in the English language were the designation of farmers, in the several languages from which they were derived, such



as villian, heathen, clown and boor. While rural conditions were such as these names indicate, the weavers of Bruges and the train-bands of London were winning victories for liberty.

Every effort to improve the country has been more or less of an uplift. When manufactures were established in the villages of England and in New England an important step was taken in economic production. It helped the marketing of farm products and gave employment to the surplus labor of the country. This should still be the policy of manufactures, if the most economic production is sought. These villages were a social as well as an economic gain.

The establishment of country schools was another advance. They had been far from perfect and possibly should be modified to meet present conditions; but they have been an inspiration to thousands who lived remote from urban refinement. They were expensive, but infinitely cheap as compared with the barbarism of ignorance.

Another advance for the country was the establishment of Agricultural Colleges. These democratic institutions attracted the sons of farmers by their gospel of labor and the introduction of studies, helpful in vocations of toil.

It was hoped, and by many expected, that the graduates of these colleges would return to the country, become captains of rural industries and revolutionize conditions. This did not occur, but good was done. Thousands of the under graduates are upon the farms. Many of these colleges have established short courses for the tillers of the soil. Farmers Institutes have been organized to carry agricultural knowledge to the scattered homes in the country and deliver it orally. They have fostered investigations along agricultural lines and keep the necessity of more agricultural knowledge as a live issue before the people.

Another class of reformers is prescribing "Diversification of Farm Products", as a remedy. Diversifying is a great aid to success in agriculture, under certain conditions; but how can the man who has nothing diversify? He cannot go into dairying nor stock farming; because he cannot buy the fraction of a cow or pig. He cannot plant new crops, because the merchant

regards the move as an experiment, and he will not advance on an experiment. The only way such farmers can prosper is by remaining in the old rut and improving the rut.

Other advocates of reform are clamoring for improvement of rural conditions—better homes, passable highways, free delivery of mails, etc. These are excellent suggestions; but they do not reach the main difficulty, which is the lack of means to do anything.

I once heard a poor tenant farmer complain that he could not make a living farming; a passing stranger remarked "Why don't you quit farming, if there is no money in it and go to banking?" "Mister!" replied the poor man, "I don't know whether you are insane or an idiot. It sounds like both." To men on the farm hunting for a breakfast considerable of the advice sounds like both.

There is another remedy for the country, very popular just now, and that is the teaching of Agriculture in the Common Schools. Properly defined and understood, there is a certain amount of helpfulness in it. However, if taught universally in the country schools, no sweeping revolution will result, for the following reasons:

11 1st. Agriculture is not a science and it has but little science in it. That little science can be taught. The remainder must be acquired by observation, experience and business methods. Some instruction may be given in soils, in plant classification, in the way plants feed and grow and are propagated, in insect and bird life and in animal structure and requirements. These may go into secondary schools in a limited way. It appears to me impracticable to introduce them generally into the rural Common Schools, as they are now organized; at least till teachers are trained to instruct. If these schools can be consolidated into township schools, properly graded, it will then be possible to introduce some object lessons and primary instruction in nature studies. In the Common Country Schools, it is unwise to attempt much at present looking to agriculture beyond object lessons. These are always valuable, and oral instruction should be given with them.



It is estimated that there is a possible gain of five fold in the earning capacity of each farm laborer above his present income. Practically the whole gain is due to the following plan—fill the soil with humus; prepare a deeper and more thoroughly pulverized seed bed; better seed; proper fertilization; more cultivation; the use of stronger teams; better machinery and tools and utilize the idle lands by grazing. Four-fifths of the gain is in the economic use of better teams and tools and the introduction of animal husbandry. A majority of our Common School teachers are women, ignorant of practical Agriculture, but no more so than sixty per cent of the male teachers. How are such teachers to instruct in these branches, which require a farm fully equipped, and practical experience?

I have been talking about Common Schools. In our portion of the United States there are no Common Schools. They are most extraordinary schools. The children are given science lessons, language lessons, social economy, French, Latin, drawing, vocal and piano music, &c. Possibly later they may learn to read and spell. I asked the patron of one school how the pupils progressed in Latin. He replied, "Very well indeed, the only difficulty is that they are required to write their translations in English and they do not know how to write English."

Let us drop this farce. The need in common schools is for thorough training in the fundamental English branches. If there is time for more, let the boys study book-keeping and business methods. If still there be room, introduce nature studies and object lessons. Let the girls take for higher branches the lost sciences of cooking, house-keeping and Physiology. I am asking for a substantial foundation upon which to build a useful life for such people as must be practical, because they must earn their bread by toil. For people of means and with love of learning, I commend a life of study, broad, deep and thorough, well rounded by extensive travel and observation. We need great scholars. The common toiler needs an education that leads to easier bread.

In the centuries the American people have been at work

on the problems of rural reform, some progress has been made and we are now prepared for the complete accomplishment of what we have so earnestly sought, the placing of rural life upon a plane of profit, of honor and power. We must commence at the bottom and re-adjust the life of the common people.

1st. By increasing the earning capacity of the small farmers. More comfortable homes, better schools, improved highways, telephones, free delivery of mails and rural libraries—all require money. They cannot be installed and maintained without it; hence the basis of the better rural life is greater earning capacity of the farmer. Farm renovation and maximum crop production are now fully understood and they can be explained and illustrated in such a simple and practical way that it would be a crime not to send the gospel of maximum production to the rural toiler. It is said by some that the farmers are a hard class to reach and impress. That is not my experience; they are the most tractable of people, if you have anything substantial to offer—but they all want proof. They do not take kindly to pure theories and no class can more quickly discriminate between the real farmer and the book farmer than the men who till the soil. The message to the farmers must be practical, and of easy application. Who shall take this message? Our experience is in favor of farmers of fair education and acknowledged success on the farm. They may make mistakes, from a scientific standpoint in delivering the message, but these are easily corrected. The main thing is to induce the farmer to act; and no one can do that like a fellow farmer. Of what avail is it that the message be taken by a man of science, if the farmer will not give heed? In general it is not the man who knows the most, who is the most successful; but the man who imparts an implicit belief with his message. The greatest failure as a world force is the man who knows so much that he lives in universal doubt, injecting a modifying clause into every assertion and ending the problems of life with an interrogation point.

The process of changing the environment of a farmer is like that of transforming a farm boy into a scholar. First the



farmer is selected to conduct a simple and inexpensive demonstration. Second, a contract is drawn with the United States Department of Agriculture by which he agrees to follow certain instructions. Third, better seed is furnished him and his name is published in the papers. Fourth, each month when the Government's Field Agent goes to inspect his Demonstration many of his neighbors are invited; consequently, he will almost unconsciously improve his farm so as to be ready for company and cultivate all of his crops better. Fifth, a report of his extra crop is made in the County papers. His neighbors talk about it and want to buy seed. Sixth, he sells the seed of his crop at a high price; his neighbors ask him how he produced it; he is invited to address public assemblies, he has become a man of note and a leader of the people and cannot return to his old ways. Soon there is a body of such men; a township, a county and finally a state is transformed. The power which transformed the humble fishermen of Galilee into mighty apostles of truth is ever present and can be used as effectively today, in any good cause, as when the Son of God turned His footsteps from Judea's capitol and spoke to the way-side children of poverty.

The environment of men must be penetrated and modified or little permanent change can be made in them. The environment of the farmer is limited generally to a few miles. The demonstration must be carried to this limited area and show how simple and easy it is to restore the virgin fertility of the soil, to multiply the product of the land per acre, to increase the number of acres each laborer can till by three or four fold and harvest a profit from untilled fields by animal husbandry. This is our Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration Work.

The second step in rural regeneration is the establishment of Agricultural banks, through which reliable men may be assisted to own the lands they till. In the United States there are over two millions of rented farms, more than one-third of the total number. The majority of these farmers would become owners if properly encouraged and aided. In addition there are tens of thousands of mechanics in the towns and cities, who were raised on farms and would return to the

country and purchase lands for homes, if slightly assisted.

Agricultural banks should be established to assist in carrying out the plan of colonizing the country with thrifty home owners. Furthermore, it is equitable, because millions produced by the farms of the nation have by the process of banking been transferred to commerce and no way has been provided, under the law, by which the money of the people can be used by the people for time investments in providing for ownership of rural homes—the royal right of American Sovereigns and more honorable than the order of the Garter or the Golden Fleece.

The third advance in the great uplift of rural conditions consists in teaching farmers wives and daughters how to feed, clothe and doctor their families. When the township graded school takes the place of the scattered district schools, it will be plain how to accomplish this work by school demonstrations.

If these three progressive steps be taken the rest will follow as a natural evolution. It is not a matter of pure deduction which assures me that the farmers will make their homes more comfortable and more beautiful, will perfect the rural school system, will construct good roads, telephones and electric railways, when they have the means to do so. Where our Farmers' Co-operative Demonstration Work has been conducted long enough for the farmers to get out of debt there is a marked improvement in buildings and farm equipment to do good work. The farmers' families are better clothed and fed; thrift and comfort have appeared in places formerly as destitute of these as the jungles of Africa.

The state can accelerate the progress of rural improvement by encouraging good works. In England better highways have been promoted by a law which provides for the general Government taking charge and thereafter maintaining all roads which the people construct and improve up to a certain excellence. In a similar way the state could encourage the building of the best Macadam or Roman type of roads by offering premiums for every mile constructed by a township or county, and important highways might even receive national aid. Such a highway as the Spaniards con-



structed from Ponce to San Juan is worthy of National aid and is more valuable to the country than a railroad and at less cost. The life of a Roman highway is more than two thousand years. Several such highways should bisect every county in the United States and be a part of a great National road system. The secondary highways will of course for many years be dirt roads; but they should be of the best type. With our waterways improved, connecting canals constructed and a system of National highways the problem of transportation will be largely solved and an immense impetus given to better country conditions.

In a similar way a wise governmental policy can foster schools, by special annual appropriations to township and county graded schools of a certain excellence. Under such a system a High School fully equipped to instruct in the practical branches required for successful farm life, could be maintained in every county.

Telephones should be made a part of the postal system and extended through the farming districts of the United States where the people have shown ability to construct and maintain a first class highway; one half the expense of installing the telephone to be borne by the rural route and a rental charge made, as for post office boxes. In addition there should be a rural express on every highway of the first class. Thus a farmer residing ten miles from his market town could make an order by "Phone" and receive the package by express in a short time. By the same conveyance the sons and daughters of the farmers could attend a Central High School.

Upon this general plan, and no other, can the country become what it should—a home making place, where the farmer will reside upon his farm. The mechanic and the merchant wanting more space for their homes, will choose it five or ten miles in the country and professional men will seek rural quiet and rest. Our Civic centres are expanding with amazing rapidity, not because men love brick walls and electric elevators, but because they there find greater earning capacity, and certain conveniences and comforts, which have become a necessity. Make it possible to have all of these amid the quiet and

beauties of nature with rapid transit to business centres and vast numbers that have sought an urban home will turn to the country for a home at less cost with purer air and water, greater convenience and beauty, cheaper food and more contentment.

Let it be the high privilege of this great and free people to establish a republic where rural pride is equal to civic pride, where men of the most refined taste and culture select the rural villa and where the wealth that comes from the soil finds its greatest return in developing and perfecting that great domain of nature which God has given to us as an everlasting estate.

To the Members of the Conference, with compliments of Leonard Tufts, Pinehurst, N. C.



*Fraunce C. Taftcouer*

Selected Sayings from Speeches of  
Dr. Seaman A. Knapp

BORN DECEMBER 16, 1833

DIED APRIL 1, 1911

*Founder of the Demonstration Work  
The South's Great Benefactor  
An Agricultural Statesman*

WITH NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS FROM

O. B. MARTIN

H. E. SAVELY

*January 1, 1918*

*A Tribute of Affection*







## Selected Sayings from Speeches of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp

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Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College, June 30, 1894.

"Wealth lies in the utilizing of waste. Our city gas works were frequently run at a loss till the by-products became of value—coal tar, naphtha, carbolic acid, paraffin and the aniline dyes. Our canned meat industry could not exist were it not for the profits derived from the offal in leather, curled hair, combs, buttons, butter, glue and fertilizers. In the waste of the farm is the fortune of the planter. If the insects and the harmful seeds could be converted into poultry and eggs; if grasses could be turned into beef, mutton and wool; if the waste of forest could add its contribution to the general good; if the apple, the peach, the pear, the plum and the cherry could everywhere be substituted for roadside thickets, briar patches and hillside coverings, it would be the inauguration of the millennium of agriculture. Applied science is to discover how these can be profitably utilized."

"Skill is the result of intelligence and practice. The man not trained to think, to observe carefully, to remember, to reflect, and to reason cannot attain great skill, except the work be subdivided and limited to the capacity of his brain, as in the large manufacturing establishments. This cannot be done in agriculture. Labor is scattered over the farm and if unskilled it becomes enormously expensive, by reason of misdirected energy, lack of judgment, and cost of superintendence. To an industrially trained young man skill is almost an intuition. It does not go through a slow process of mental reasoning. The eye grasps the object-lesson, the memory retains it, and the hand is trained to execute. This vigilant eye enables him to observe the short way of doing things."

"Is it more important that the farmer should speak classic English or that he shall understand the principles of agriculture and be skilled in the tools and machinery of the farm? Be he ever so highly educated, he will lapse into unclassical English when he pounds his thumb-nail through lack of skill."

"Now let us have an education of the masses for the masses, one that will fit them to become a great, honest, faithful, intelligent, toiling, thrifty common people, upon which great nations alone are founded; obedient to orders, but not servants; tenacious of right, but not anarchists."

"For once in the history of civilization let us have a common people thoroughly trained within the lines of their duties, full of the science of how to get a living, refined, courageous, and loyal to government and to God."

"Our labor system is extravagant. The laborer resides in a hired house, at a high rent, and lives out of the store, paying in some cases 50 per cent profits; the family as a rule contribute nothing to the support provided by the husband and father. His remedy for all shortages is higher wages or a strike. Wages in the ongoing of the world will decline, must decline. How can the laborers meet it? Training will help, but there must be greater economy. The future laborer must own his own house and a plat of land, where he produces most of the food for his family by the aid of the family. Reduce the hours of labor to eight and the wages correspondingly if necessary. Miles of territory around every manufacturing city



should be occupied with the vine-clad homes of the thrifty wage-earners. Every manufacturing company should supply these homes at cost, to be purchased by the employees on a rental system, thus making labor permanent, economical and independent."

"The planter needs to reduce the cost of transportation; the laborer to provide homes and cheaper living; the merchant wants the country air. What opposes? Roads—bad roads."

"It is more than 270 years since the experiment of American farming was commenced by some of the most enlightened people of Europe. With what result? During this long period the roads have not improved; the average farm house is without architecture or comfort and its environments without flowers or landscape; the patchwork farm grimly watches a contest between the man and the brier, with the chances in favor of the brier."

"We are trying to harmonize a democracy of men with a monarchy of business. We do indirectly what we cannot do directly. We boast of equality before the law and charter corporations which make all men unequal under the law."

"If anyone thinks this is visionary or impractical, stop right here. The most important department in war is the commissariat. More armies have been outflanked by hunger than have been broken by bayonet charge; more men are wounded in the stomach by malnutrition and succumb to disease than are disabled by rifle or gatling. Modern wars are largely battles of the exchequer; peace or war are determined by Wall Street, Threadneedle and the Bourse."

"Colleges of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts: your work will not be done until every farm house in the broad land is united by a highway so well constructed that the common wagon is equal within the limit of its work to the exclusive car; until the railroads of the country shall cease to arrange their schedules to see how much they can wring from toil, but how much they can contribute to a nation's wealth; until our work shops are supplied with such marvelous machinery, handled with such skill and economy that in every industry we shall not only supply the wants of our own people, but we shall successfully invade every market of the world; until every wage-earner shall be a skilled craftsman and a freeman in his own home, and feel a yeoman's pride with a yeoman's privileges; until every farmer and planter shall be so well instructed that he will mold the soil to his profit and the seasons to his plans, till he shall be free from the vassalage of mortgage and the bondage of debt and become a toiler for pleasure, for home, for knowledge, and for country; until capital and labor shall unite under the leadership of knowledge and equitably divide the increment of gain. Your mission is to solve the problems of poverty, to increase the measures of happiness, and to the universal love of country add the universal knowledge of comfort, and to harness the forces of all learning to the useful and the needful in human society."

"Silence the bugle and the huzzas; lower the banners; we are only half civilized. We should not undervalue that half. What infinite labor has it taken to secure it. Through what wreckage has the car of liberty passed. It has required thousands of years of conflict to establish law and order upon the present basis; to evolve the modern nation from patriarchal chaos. At each the stronger individual, the more powerful tribe, the wealthier and more populous city or district fought to maintain its prestige and sullenly yielded its vantage ground to national necessity. We paused and called our attainments, liberty, civilization; when the greatest wars known to any age are still going on, the war of labor and capital, of employed and employer."



## The Ninth Conference for Education in the South, at Lexington, Ky., May 4, 1906.

"Others advocate an improvement of rural conditions, better highways, better schools, free rural delivery, country telephones, more newspapers; all very good and worthy of commendation. Still others call for more Farmers' Institutes and additional agricultural colleges. Excellent suggestions; but every highway may be as good as a Roman road, with a free rural delivery mail box and a telephone at every crossing, and the box stuffed with newspapers; you may hold a Farmers' Institute at every third house and establish an agricultural college on every section of land in the United States, and the flow of young men from the country to the city will not be arrested in the least, so long as the earning capacity of the average city laborer, or clerk, or professional man, is at least five-fold of what the same talent can command in the country."

"This is the key to agricultural reform: More power and better machinery on the farm, and more accomplished in a day, heavier mules and more of them. Away with the half-a-mule farmer and convert the one-mule farmer into a four-mule farmer. What revolutionized manufacturing in the United States and made us the first of productive nations? More power and less hand work. What will hold the boys on the farm and multiply the wealth of our farmers? More power and less hand work."

"Fifty years since the mechanical industries were hand crafts, slow, cumbersome, non-remunerative. The transformation was not made by placing books on the value of steam and electricity in the common schools, but by building factories all over the country and absorbing the business. The machine harnessed to power showed that it could do better and cheaper work than done by hand methods. Old methods were swept away, and lo! we are leading the world in mechanism. The sewing machine, the mower and the reaper have come into general use, not by writing books about them, but by placing them in the hands of the people for trial."

"There is only one effective way to reach and influence the farming classes, and that is by object-lessons."

"The demonstration must be simple, and, at first, confined to a small area. Two or three acres will give just as good a test as a larger tract, and at the commencement the farmer is more likely to successfully carry out a demonstration on a few acres than on his entire farm. When he sees the advantage of the better methods he will increase the area as rapidly as possible. Generally the farmer has neither machinery nor teams to inaugurate the plan on a larger scale at first."

"The men who act as field agents must be practical farmers; no use in sending a carpenter to tell a tailor how to make a coat, even if he is pretty well read up on coats. The tailor won't follow. The farmer must be a recognized leader, progressive, influential and able to carry public opinion with him. Public opinion is brought into harmony and made forceful by the support of the press and the co-operation of the best farmers and the leading merchants and bankers."

"Instructions to agents. Sometimes farmers have peculiar views about agriculture. They farm by the moon. Never try to disillusion them. Let them believe in farming by the moon or the stars, if they will faithfully try our methods. It does not pay to waste good breath on such matters. Avoid discussing politics or churches. Never put on airs. Be a plain man, with an abundance of good, practical sense. Put your arguments in a sensible, practical way. Secure the country village influence and induce the citizen to give active aid. When the tide of local opinion



has set in favor of better methods of farming it will be found easy to maintain interest. In the monthly rounds of inspecting farms, never fail to notify eight or ten of the prominent men in advance and have as large a company as possible visit the demonstration farm with you."

"Can agricultural conditions be changed by simply talking? No. By demonstration? Yes."

"Human society in its organization presents this peculiar phase: Some of the primary groups appear to be attached to no system of influence, and hence cannot be reached influentially except by direct contact. Rural society in the South is largely upon this plan. There is a public opinion emanating from and molded by the limited number in the canton, but rarely reached or moved by the larger public opinion of the State or the nation, and then only by personal contact. The general viewpoint is one of doubt and suspicion. If, however, one of their number can be induced to plant a trial field, all will watch it closely, and if he succeeds the people will at once swing from a stubborn doubt to an unreasoning faith, and they become the most zealous of converts. After you have proven your work for two or three seasons some way it is noised abroad among these people, and they are ready to accept at the first opportunity."

"It is an easy proposition to enlist the masses in the army of reform, if wisely managed; but impossible, if undertaken along the lines usually pursued. Frequently the first farmer in a community where a demonstration is to be made is secured by furnishing some improved seed and showing how to plant and work it so as to maintain its vigor and enable him to sell seed to his neighbors. With success in his first trial he becomes an earnest advocate of the co-operative plan. Thus the influences gather force and soon the reform has attained mighty proportions and a State has been revolutionized."

"Science loudly boasted its power to unfold the mysteries of the soil; it grandly pointed to the water, the atmosphere and the sunbeams and claimed the power to harness these to the chariots of agriculture, and bring to the earth a wealth of production, fabulous and inconceivable; but science in its relation to agriculture has, as yet, been mainly a beautiful dream and a gilded vision. So far as the masses are concerned, it is a failure of application and not of merit. Relief came, but in a way never anticipated by the people. The people expected relief by some miracle of finance, a relief without toil, the bounty of the nation or the gift of God. But when told that permanent help could only come by human effort, that they must work out their own salvation, just as prosperity, liberty and civilization can never be donated to anyone, but must be wrought out, fought out and lived out, till they are part of the being of the people who possess them, they were amazed."

"In 1886 a movement was made to settle a tract of land in Southwestern Louisiana, as large as the State of Connecticut, with sturdy immigrants from the Northwestern States. Thousands of circulars were issued and hundreds of prospective settlers came. The natives of the country were stock men. They were not farmers, and without exception they did not believe those lands were productive, or could be made so, and they took pains to tell this to every inquirer.

"The immigrants supposed, of course, that the natives knew, and we suddenly found that settlement was impossible. I recall a carload that cost me considerable trouble to secure. They arrived in the afternoon, heard the natives talk, and left before I could see them in the morning. In this emergency we resorted to demonstration. By making large concessions, a thrifty and energetic Western farmer was located in nearly every township, under an agreement to do his best. As soon as they were fairly



established, and able to prove anything, immigrants were taken to their homes where they could see things. From that time our immigration movement was a complete success, and today twenty-five thousand settlers are ready to tell you that it is the most prosperous portion of the South. We then learned the philosophy and the power of agricultural demonstration. Many of the poor Acadian natives, who had not tilled the soil, had never attended school and could not speak a word of English, were converted by demonstration and are today wealthy farmers. More than 1,000 farmers are depositors in the banks of Lake Charles, La. Of this number over 600 are natives and some are accounted among the best farmers and the most wealthy citizens of our sections. Such are the possibilities of demonstration."

"War has become a problem of finance. The wars of the future must largely become economic wars, and the invading force will be an army of industry. The nation of the greatest and the most economic production will win."

"But today I am not viewing this campaign for increased production in the country from the national standpoint. I am thinking of the people, of rose-covered cottages in the country, of the strong, glad father and his contented, cheerful wife, of the whistling boy and the dancing girl, with schoolbooks under their arms, so that knowledge may soak into them as they go. I am thinking of the orchards and the vineyards, of the flocks and herds, of the waving woodlands, of the hills carpeted with luxuriant verdure, of the valleys inviting to the golden harvest. What can bring these transformations to the South—greater earning capacity of the people."

"The time is opportune for this great work. Friends will rise up to aid it. Providence, destiny cannot be thwarted. The revolution must continue until the problems of poverty are solved, the measure of human happiness full and the reproach that has hung over our rural domain, by reason of unthrift, ignorance and poverty shall be wiped out and America shall possess a yeomanry worthy of a great nation. In advocating a campaign of demonstration for increasing the earning power of the people on the farms I would not detract from any line of spiritual or intellectual uplifting. Churches must be established, schools and colleges maintained, science taught and country betterments promoted, but they must keep step with increasing productive power. I am simply calling in question the possibility of obtaining all these grand results of a high civilization without any money to pay the cost and without earning power to sustain them."

### Conference for Education in the South, at Pinehurst, N. C., May 30, 1907.

"Some years since a traveler said that the farms of the South looked like a bankrupt stock ready for the auctioneer; the soils were impoverished, the brush and brier patches conspicuous; the buildings dilapidated, the fences a makeshift, the highways but little more than much-used bridle paths, the churches and schoolhouses were built upon the plan of inclosing the necessary space at the least expense, and the graveyards appeared as if the living did not believe in the resurrection.

"This viewpoint is not mine. To me the Southern States surpass all of the countries of the earth of equal area in material resources, mainly undeveloped. Underneath almost every acre is concealed a mineral wealth of



surpassing value; within almost every acre are agricultural resources that, touched by intellect and labor, will reveal marvelous products. To me the Southern people are the purest stock of the greatest race the world has produced. The rural population has lived under unfortunate conditions for the best development, but the essential material of their natures is not impaired, and it requires but leadership to maintain great results."

"It takes a long time for a people to recover from sweeping disasters, and it takes longer when nine-tenths of them have but slight knowledge of thrift."

"The credit system has been a potent factor in depressing agriculture. To some extent it might have been a necessary evil in a limited way forty years ago, but it prospered and became dominant, oppressive, and insolent. It unblushingly swept the earnings of toil from the masses into the coffers of the few. It substituted voluntary for involuntary servitude, ownership by agreement, and poverty by contract under fear of the sheriff for the ownership by birthright and a government by proprietary right. So we have lived under a slavery where the chains are ingeniously forged and the bands riveted with gold."

"Sixty years ago most of our mechanics lived in the country upon small farms, which they and their families tilled for support, and they sold their surplus labor to supplement the home income. People were honest and thrifty, because all were employed; today these mechanic farmers reside in town or city, sell all their labor, and live out of a canned garden and milk a tin cow. Of course, their sons and daughters are idle."

"Another class of reformers is prescribing 'diversification of farm products' as a remedy. Diversifying is a great aid to success in agriculture, under certain conditions; but how can the man who has nothing diversify? He cannot go into dairying nor stock farming, because he cannot buy the fraction of a cow or a pig. He cannot plant new crops, because the merchant regards the move as an experiment, and he will not advance on an experiment. The only way such farmers can prosper is by remaining in the old rut and improving the rut."

"I have been talking about common schools. In our portion of the United States there are no common schools. They are most extraordinary schools. The children are given science lessons, language lessons, social economy, French, Latin, drawing, vocal and piano music, etc. Possibly later they may learn to read and spell. I asked the patron of one school how the pupils progressed in Latin. He replied, 'Very well, indeed. The only difficulty is that they are required to write their translations in English, and they do not know how to write English.'"

"In the centuries the American people have been at work on the problems of rural reform some progress has been made, and we are now prepared for the complete accomplishment of what we have so earnestly sought, the placing of rural life upon a plane of profit, of honor, and power. We must commence at the bottom and readjust the life of the common people."

"Farm renovation and maximum crop production are now fully understood, and they can be explained and illustrated in such a simple and practical way that it would be a crime not to send the gospel of maximum production to the rural toiler. It is said by some that the farmers are a hard class to reach and impress. That is not my experience. They are the most tractable of people, if you have anything substantial to offer—but they all want proof. They do not take kindly to pure theories, and no class can more quickly discriminate between the real farmer and the book



farmer than the men who till the soil. The message to the farmers must be practical and of easy application. Who shall take this message? Our experience is in favor of farmers of fair education and acknowledged success on the farm. They may make mistakes, from a scientific standpoint, in delivering the message, but these are easily corrected. The main thing is to induce the farmer to act, and no one can do that like a fellow-farmer. Of what avail is it that the message be taken by a man of science, if the farmer will not give heed? In general, it is not the man who knows the most who is the most successful, but the man who imparts an implicit belief with his message. The greatest failure as a world force is the man who knows so much that he lives in universal doubt, injecting a modifying clause into every assertion and ending the problems of life with an interrogation point."

"The power which transformed the humble fishermen of Galilee into mighty apostles of truth is ever present and can be used as effectively today in any good cause as when the Son of God turned His footsteps from Judea's capital and spoke to the wayside children of poverty."

"The environment of men must be penetrated and modified or little permanent change can be made in them. The environment of the farmer is limited generally to a few miles. The demonstration must be carried to this limited area and show how simple and easy it is to restore the virgin fertility of the soil, to multiply the product of the land per acre, to increase the number of acres each laborer can till by three or four fold, and to harvest a profit from untilled fields by animal husbandry. This is our farmers' co-operative demonstration work."

"The third advance in the great uplift of rural conditions consists in teaching farmers' wives and daughters how to feed, clothe, and doctor their families."

"Let it be the high privilege of this great and free people to establish a republic where rural pride is equal to civic pride, where men of the most refined taste and culture select the rural villa, and where the wealth that comes from the soil finds its greatest return in developing and perfecting that great domain of nature which God has given to us as an everlasting estate."

### **Meeting of Agents in Demonstration Work, Macon, Ga., September 16, 1910.**

"We have tried to think out the plans of the demonstration work carefully and lay them along lines of practical utility; to form a substantial basis of evolution or revolution for changing the conditions of the common people, especially among our rural population."

"Also, take another proposition—that farming cannot be successfully carried on in any country without live stock. I have noted how the nations, as the lands have advanced in price, have changed from tillage crops to grass crops. When I was a boy, three-fourths of England was under tillage. Today less than one-fourth is under tillage, and the population has multiplied many fold."

"It is on the thrift, prosperity, and independence of the average man that our citizenship is based. Now, where must we start? In thinking out this problem the main point is to start at the bottom. In attempting to raise the condition of the colored man we frequently start too high up,



and in talking of the higher progress talk right over his head. When I talk to a negro citizen I never talk about the better civilization, but about a better chicken, a better pig, a whitewashed house."

"It is also realized that the great force that readjusts the world originates in the home. Home conditions will ultimately mold the man's life."

"The home eventually controls the viewpoint of a man; and you may do all that you are a mind to in schools, but unless you reach in and get hold of that home and change its conditions you are nullifying the uplift of the school. We are reaching for the home."

"If the home lacks culture and the boy fails to get the right training, there is a weak spot in his character that no future teaching can help very much."

"The matter of paramount importance in the world is the readjustment of the home. It is the greatest problem with which we have to deal, because it is the most delicate and most difficult of all problems."

"Your value lies not in what you can do, but in what you can get the other people to do."

"Get that sense into a boy and he will take up farming, and if he knows a few fundamental principles he will apply the rest. Teach him the importance of knowing a few things well, of system and thrift."

"Get down to where people can understand, touch the bottom, and lift."

"We try to teach the farmer greater thrift, to raise his own provisions, to can his vegetables, so that he may have them the year round; that he must put this money into a better home, and so percolating and drifting through his home there will be a broadening element and there will be a gradual uplift of conditions, and as there is an uplift and improvement of conditions the men themselves will become a little broader and a little straighter and a little firmer, till by and by this home society where he must live, this rural society, will be a great dominating force in the land, and we shall become a pattern, not only to our own country, but to all countries, showing how a great and free people were able to readjust their conditions."

"Our project would have been sufficiently ambitious if we had said: 'We will increase the wealth and give the people greater earning power.' But other things that we teach incidentally are that we must improve the moral tone, the moral conditions, and the whole prosperity of the people, to try to turn all avenues of the wealth that we create into the proper channels so as to create a better people. But even this is not quite enough. We may have wealth and social prosperity and home comforts and not be a high-minded, stalwart, courageous, and brave people. We must teach that."

"I want you to feel today that you have hold of one of the greatest lines of social uplift and development and greatness that exist."

"I do not glory in the wealth of a few, but rejoice in the general distribution of wealth and prosperity for the common people."

**Southern Education Association, Chattanooga, Tenn., December, 1910.**

"A large proportion of the vast wealth created annually from the soil ultimately enriches the city, instead of developing and improving the resources of the country."



"A love for the soil is not created or enhanced by the study of a book on agriculture, or any pedagogic lessons in soil manipulation. It is founded on an intelligent and successful farm life and the environments of an orderly and thrifty country home. The pupil at this stage is not thinking about tendencies any more than the nursing child thinks about growing. He is simply developing."

"The most failures in farming are on the business side and not on the scientific side."

"This learning agriculture, which is a compound of the following ingredients—one-eighth science, three-eighths art, and one-half business methods, out of a book—is like reading up on the hand saw and jack plane and hiring out for a carpenter."

"A town farm, and especially a farm owned by the public, can never be economic. It might be healthful because the public would laugh at it."

"Agriculture in most sections consists simply in a series of motions inherited from Adam."

"No young woman is quite half educated who is not a post-graduate in household economy, especially in preparing the food needful for the farmer, in making and repairing the clothing, in the orderly arrangement of the household, in the laws of health and care of the sick, in the management of the domestic fowls and in the knowledge of the trees and plants required for useful or ornamental purposes."

"An idle saint only differs from an idle sinner in a coat of paint and direction."

"The lessons in domestic science should be such as are directly applicable to the farm; the better home should be the farm home; the better cooking should be the simple, homely but nourishing dishes of the farm. I recall an instance where an effort was made years since to establish a school of domestic economy in connection with an agricultural college. The lady in charge made a preliminary report, by items, showing that it would be necessary to expend twelve hundred dollars for kitchen equipments. The simple foods she expected to prepare to demonstrate her work could only be afforded by the rich, and, if eaten regularly, would kill a bear. Plain, sensible women who understand the requirements of rural homes, should be placed in charge of domestic economy instruction. Such a woman in every township could be of infinite help to the people. While she lectures to the pupils about foods and clothing and the laws of health, she could be a means of infinite good to the farm homes by suggestion and direction."

"Equal facilities should be afforded girls in the lines that will fit them to take charge of a household."

"Every lesson taught in the school should be immediately applied to the farm and home."

"The great battles of the future will be industrial battles. England, Germany, France, Japan and the United States are putting forth every effort to gain industrial advantage."

"If by any process of training, it matters not how costly, we could implant in the American youth a universal love of industry and a universal knowledge of agricultural and mechanical arts, they would blend with our native genius, skill and ability to do masterful things, and Americans would become the industrial arbiters of the world."



## From Yearbook of Agriculture for 1908.

"A prosperous, intelligent, and contented rural population is therefore essential to our national perpetuity. The world's experience has shown that the best way to secure this is to encourage the division of all the lands into small farms, each owned and operated by one family."

"There are two ways to look at a small farm: One view—the common one—is that it is a place to make a living, but rather a hard place, and should be sold as soon as anything easier is found; the other is that the ownership of land is a mark of honor, that a patent to land is a title of nobility, a right to sovereignty."

"The practical and sane way of accomplishing the result is to induce the farmers to try better methods and note the result in improving their farms—to make tillage less expensive and production more certain, to double the crops to the acre and halve the cost. While the farmer successfully solves the problems of the farm his experience widens and he becomes a broader man, till he is broad enough to size up the whole situation and has the means to execute his plan. As men broaden they have higher aspirations for their children, and better scholastic education will accompany the general uplift."

"This education of the farmer upon his farm by working out problems in the field and receiving the answer in the crib or granary is, like all education, a personal matter, and each man must acquire it for himself. This points to the small farm, personally worked, as best for the man, for the land, for society, and for the state."

"No nation can be great without thrift."

"It has been observed for years that the sons of small farmers develop managing ability. From their earliest years they are compelled to do things and to act independently. It is from this source that the greatest number of managers of the various enterprises of our country have been drawn."

"It is impossible to impress upon anyone that there is dignity in residing upon a farm with impoverished soil, dilapidated buildings, and an environment of ignorance."

## From Circular 21, U. S. D. A.

"The farmer is necessarily conservative, but offer him a genuine thing and prove it and no one is more responsive. He will not accept what has not been fully tested, and he must see it to believe, because he has been frequently deceived. He wants all that the best civilization can give him if he can get it. Increase the net income of the average farmer and all the wages of the rural toiler and the first step necessary to the uplift of the rural masses will have been taken."

"Every step is a revelation and a surprise to the farmer. He sees his name in the county paper as one of the farmers selected by the United States Department of Agriculture to conduct demonstration work; he receives instructions from Washington; he begins to be noticed by his fellow-farmers; his better preparation of the soil pleases him; he is proud of planting the best seed and having the best cultivation. As the crop begins to show vigor and excellence his neighbors call attention to it, and finally when the demonstration agent calls a field meeting at his farm the farmer begins to be impressed not only with the fact that he has a good crop,



but that he is a man of more consequence than he thought. This man that was never noticed before has had a meeting called at his farm; he concludes that he is a leader in reforms, immediately the brush begins to disappear from the fence corners and the weeds from the fields; the yard fence is straightened; whitewash or paint goes on the buildings; the team looks a little better and the dilapidated harness is renovated. Finally the crop is made and a report about it appears in the county papers. It produces a sensation. A meeting is called by the neighbors and the farmer is made chairman; he receives numerous inquiries about his crop and is invited to attend a meeting at the county seat to tell how he did it."

"The agents of the demonstration work are thoroughly drilled in progressive steps. When the rudiments of good farming are mastered the farmer secures a greater income for his labor. An important part of this greater net earning capacity is good farm economy and greater thrift. Farm economy dictates the production of the largest crop possible to the acre at the least expenditure of money and without impairing the productive capacity of the soil. It also includes the planting of crops of the greatest value to the acre, provided the cost of production is not proportionately increased, and it teaches a more economic support of the family, team, and stock, which is based upon home production of all the foods and forage crops consumed. For the family more use must be made of milk, eggs, the vegetable garden, and fruits; for the stock there should be better pasture and hay, especially the abundant use of legumes. Thrift demands the proper housing of family, teams, and tools, and the more economic expenditure of the greater gains of the farm arising from greater earnings and more economy. The only way to successfully attack such problems is by an example."

"Long-time customs cannot be overcome by writing a book. One might as well write a book to teach better sewing. Poor farming is the natural result of a lot of bad practice and must be treated rather as a defect in art than a lack of intelligence. It is not assumed nor is it the intention to assert, that agriculture is not one of the greatest sciences, but at the beginning it must be treated as an art and the best methods adopted."

### State Teachers' Association of South Carolina, July, 1907.

"Our large cities are danger places on the map of our republic. Homes are so costly that only the rich can own them—the poor and even those of considerable earning power are tenants at will. The industrial enterprises are vast and it requires enormous wealth to handle them. Each supports an army of employees—all dependent upon a managing will."

"The true representative of liberty is the man who owns his farm home in the country. He is not obliged to vote for his job and his segregation breaks the spell of mass leadership. He stands for an independent political unit instead of the mass units of cities."

"The farm must be made a place of beauty, so attractive that every passing stranger inquires: 'Who lives in that lovely home?' The house is of minor consideration—the gorgeous setting of trees and shrubbery holds the eye."

"We must have the richest training. The greatest schools for the human race are our homes and the common schools—not our colleges and universities—greatest in amount and value of the knowledge acquired. A country home, be it ever so plain, with a father and mother of sense and



gentle culture, is nature's university, and is more richly endowed for the training of youth than Yale or Harvard."

"Peerless among all teachers is that high priestess of the home, whom we know as mother. She inspires as well as instructs. Next to her in work and worth are the common school teachers. They supplement the home training and lay the foundations of knowledge along the lines of wisdom. The greatest event in human life is the awakening of the infant intellect."

"We all recognize the great value of higher education and believe in colleges and universities. They have their work and it is noble; but it is just as out of place to put part of a university into a common school as to put a common school into a university. A university can only be a tandem attachment—what is needed is to widen the common schools by broader instruction in common things. The young farmer who breaks his harness upon a lonely road blesses the teacher who taught him to always carry an extra string. Any quantity of Roman history in the head is not equal to a string in the pocket for mending broken harness. A landlord sometimes attempts to supplement deficiencies in food and service by a band of music, but there is no music for a hungry man like a well-cooked meal."

"The greatest of all acquisitions is common sense. Common sense is simply a wide and perfect knowledge of common things and how to use them."

"If much can be done for boys to interest and instruct them in their life work, more can be done for girls. Teach them to mend and sew and cook; how to doctor; how to dress a wound or make a ligature; how to adorn the simple home and make it appear like a palace; how by a simple arrangement the environment of the home can be transformed into a place of beauty. In the United States the art of cooking is mainly a lost art. There are communities where not to be dyspeptic is to be out of fashion. If we could have some lessons on how to live royally on a little; how to nourish the body without poisoning the stomach; and how to balance a ration for economic and healthful results, there would be a hopeful gain in lessening the number of bankrupts by the kitchen route."

"Our greatest need being a wider knowledge of common things, the teacher who really enters into country life and seizes its opportunities for developing the resources of the country, for increasing the harvests, improving the landscapes, brightening the homes and flooding the people with knowledge about helpful things, will never want for friends nor for places to teach. How joyfully will such a teacher be welcomed! The sound of her footsteps on the approaching walk will be sweeter music to the cottage inmates than ever came from organ or piano even under the touch of genius."

"Most of the rich men of the United States were born poor. They rose above their fellows, not by superior genius, but by greater thrift."

"Training can do much towards making a people so prompt and alert that the baneful word tomorrow will cease to be a part of our business language."

"I am ashamed of the young man who is afraid of toil, and I pity the girl who keeps soft, white hands. Let the young man glory in his rugged physique and let the young woman be proud of the common things she can do and not of her delicate hands."

"We are rapidly becoming a nation of idlers. In the towns more than half the population does nothing towards earning a support if we count all the men, women and children who could do something. These half-



grown boys and girls could make a garden and raise the fruit and poultry to support the family if they would. It might brown their skins and soil their hands, but it would help them to do something and to know something. It would aid the family pocketbook and help the family character. There is no sufficient reason why every American family should not own a good home and have a snug sum laid by for a rainy day, except our laziness, our lack of thrift or possible sickness, and nine-tenths of all sickness is due to malnutrition, which is another name for ignorance."

"Teachers! You must help create sentiments of thrift and establish habits of industry or this nation will drift to wreckage. The greatest opportunity in the history of the world for the molding of a strong people and the establishment of a mighty nation will culminate in disaster if we discard such corner-stones as labor and thrift. Idleness and lack of thrift will undermine intellect, weaken physical vigor and personal courage, and waste the fairest heritage that ever fell to the fortunes of men."

"Politeness is the material expression given to human kindness."

"There is many a man planning to sell his paternal acres in the country for a pittance and invest the proceeds in a cottage in the town—and then earn the support of his family by daily toil. It is the act of an irrational man. He does not stop to think that that farm will give him a home and support and soon quadruple in value. He fails to note the possibilities of rapidly increasing his wealth by the planting of valuable trees, and he voluntarily exchanges the rights of a king and the privileges of a free-man for a daily wage and the badge of service."

"If we have no more time than necessary to become perfect in the knowledge of one country, let that country be our own. Study the history, the language, the soil, the climate, the animals, the birds, the plants and all the conditions that make for home success and comfort. If still there be inclination, leisure, and means, then extend the researches into foreign lands."

"A great nation is not the outgrowth of a few men of genius, but the superlative worth of a great common people."

"What can you, teachers, do to help our rural conditions? Everything. You are an essential part of the greatest of all universities—the home. You have charge of the extension courses. You can inspire in youth a love of knowledge and make all its avenues look delightful. You can unlock the books, which are treasure houses of human wisdom, and give them a golden key. You can cause the soil to become more responsive to the touch of industry and the harvest more abundant to meet the measure of a larger hope. You can add to the comforts of the home, shape its environment into lines of beauty and increase its attractiveness, till the home shall become the greatest magnet of our people."

"You can create a love of investigation and give it direction. You can enlarge the knowledge of the people in common things and thus lay the foundation of common sense. At your instance, fingers will touch the lines of deftness, mechanical skill will become universal, and thrift and alertness will transform the toilers into captains of industry."

"Your mission is to make a great common people and thus readjust the map of the world. The keystone of American civilization is the home; by some mysterious social convulsion it has become loosened; you can reach it from the pedestal of the common school, push it to its place and cement it in a way that will be enduring."