

Judge Seth's Watermelon Crop.

Chester Peake, in Saturday Evening Post.
 "If you do a thing the best you know how, you're going to get something out of it."—From the Sayings of Seth.

Judge Abner Seth is a sovereign citizen weighing 265 pounds, and on good terms with the world. He has the qualifications and equipments of happiness, including, of course, a fine wife, a farm, a clear conscience, a prompt appetite and the respect of his neighbors.

"Every man ought to have rules," he declared one cool, delightful evening. "He needn't be using 'em too much, but he ought to have 'em. It is the same as a yardstick in the house; even if it's used oftener to whack the cat, it comes in handy to measure with. Now, for instance, here is one rule: If you do a thing the best you know how you're going to get something out of it."

"But, Judge, suppose it is a mistake? Don't you make things worse by doing things hard in the wrong direction?"

"Apparently—apparently, yes. But wait. Have a little patience. In other words, take my crop of watermelons."

"Watermelons, Judge?"

"Yes, sir; watermelons. And let me tell you that was a case. Four years ago I had an idea it was going to be a great watermelon year. So I planted the whole place in 'em—had watermelon vines all 'round and over—fields, yards, doorsteps, fences and goodness only knows where else. Just watermelons! That's my idea. If you want to do a thing, drop all else and do it. Yes, gentlemen, I was right. It was a great, a stupendous—yes, sir, a stupendous watermelon year. Wonderful dark-green monsters fat as balloons! Long, streaked fellows as round as a stovepipe, get-up-for-glory things that would fill a linen duster—deep green, light green, yellows and grays, big as the law allowed, and when you went to bust 'em they opened just as 'ripe for eating as a widow is for second marriage. Never was such watermelons! I tell you I was proud. But pride goeth before a fall, and when I sent a carload to market, what did I get but a bill of \$40 for freight? They didn't bring enough to pay expenses. And there I was, all watermelons, and the whole dinged lot not worth a two-cent stamp."

"And thereby, Judge, you disproved your own rule."

"Did I, young man? Suppose you wait a bit. My advice is never to grab at time. If you miss your dinner, have patience for supper. Of course, on that watermelon problem I was clean, dead broke—busted higher than Bill Jones when the cyclone lifted everything off his farm except the mortgage. But I clung to my rule in the midst of it, and when everything seemed gone, the politicians came down this way looking for somebody to go on the ticket for Judge of the Orphans' Court. Said it was going to be a close fight, and wanted me to help 'em out. Well, politics was not in my line, and not being an orphan myself, nor a parent of any, I didn't know anything about orphans, and the idea of being a Judge was as far away from me as my watermelons were from a bank account. But the only way to do generally is to take everything that comes; so I took the nomination, and the more I studied over it and the more I thought of the salary of a thousand dollars a year it paid, the more I believed in a special Providence, and I said to Matilda, 'Our watermelon crop is saved.'"

"In the name of all that is sensible, Judge, how could a nomination for the

Orphans' Court save a watermelon crop?"

"Easy, my young friend; easy. Even if you should miss supper, go to bed and go to sleep in the hope of breakfast. It was just this way: As an upright citizen, I declined absolutely to spend money to buy anybody to vote for me. Of course, I didn't have any to spend, but I am against bribery on principle. At the same time I saw the opportunity. If we could get the negro vote of this section I'd be elected without a doubt. In other years the miserable scoundrels who ran most of our politics used to buy them with two-dollar notes, but I'd rather go to the poor house than do anything like that. What I did do was to borrow all the teams of my neighbors I could, and whenever the negroes had a camp meeting or a picnic there were more watermelons than they could eat, all with the compliments of Abner Seth.

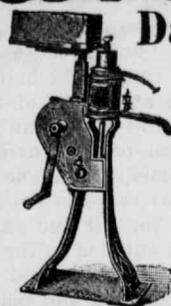
"In other years the white politicians would take money to these places. I scorned such baseness. I simply shared my big crop of watermelons. Yes, sir, it was the finest election we ever held in this county. Not a single negro was paid. It was a campaign with no bribery of any kind whatever—a real reform election—and I carried the whole ticket through with flying colors. That shows what I mean when I say that if you do a thing the best you know how you're going to get something out of it. If it had not been for that crop of watermelons you folks wouldn't be calling me Judge today.

"Of course we—I mean they, the politicians, you know—gentlemen had to buy a few votes in the last year or so because the watermelon crop hadn't been particularly fine, but it is a pleasure to me to know that my rule gave this district one absolutely honest election where no man was influenced to vote against his convictions. That's what I claim for my rules. They not only keep me and Matilda out of the poorhouse, but they help my neighbors."

Conditions Affecting Cattle Business

W. E. Skinner, general agent for the Union Stockyards and Transportation company of Chicago, has been making a tour of the west and studying the conditions in connection with beef cattle. He is inclined to think that there will be no lowering of the present prices for beef for some time to come. The shortage of some two million head of cattle throughout the country during the last two years, he says, is in a measure responsible for the present conditions, but the factor of a big crop of corn in every state that feeds cattle must also be taken into consideration. Such a bumper corn crop as the country has this year is bound to make a big demand for feeders and it will not be readily possible to supply the demand. Thus prices will be forced up still more, or if not that they will remain stationary for a while, notwithstanding that others supposedly well informed predict a drop in a short time. In addition to the good outlook for the cattlemen, Mr. Skinner thinks the sheepmen will also reap the benefit of the high prices and scarcity of feeding cattle. When the demand for cattle cannot be readily supplied, those who have the feed stuffs will turn to sheep as a channel through which to make a good price on their feed.

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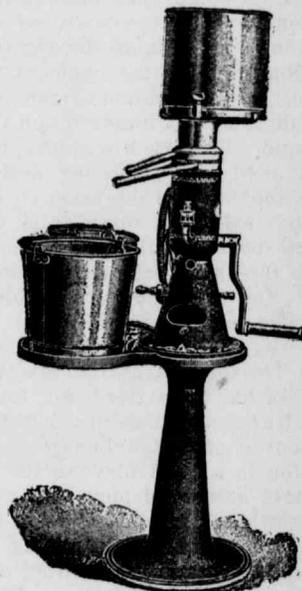
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