

The Big Stone Gap Post.

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GOOD ROADS AND ROAD BUILDING.

Mining digs up natural riches, and leaves only worthless holes in the ground. Lumbering takes from the land its protection, and leaves only rotten stumps. Agriculture draws from air, water and soil only that which will be returned to the earth. Agriculture gives to the United States by far the largest part of its current wealth, and better protection against aggression than the most powerful of navies, the strongest of fortresses could give. For the nation that can control the necessary food of other nations can get all those people can give. The power of the state rests on its farmer.

Few who know the truth will deny that the climate and soil of the South would give her enormous wealth and power, if enough farmers occupied her lands, and used them wisely. It is known that climate, soil and other natural conditions in the South are more favorable to the farmer than those of prosperous northern states can be; yet comparatively few men seek farms in the southern states. What should be done to turn the thousands of homeseekers to the sunny and fertile South.

Is there a suggestion of value in the fact that lack of easy and inexpensive transportation has been a very potent factor in causing the abandonment of many farms in the North Atlantic states? Across northern states railroads were built, canals were dug, rivers were deepened and harbors were enlarged and improved in other ways, that the harvests of the newer West might be more quickly and cheaply brought to the East; and the farmer of the eastern states were taxed to pay for these means that were to bring competition to drive him from home markets, and finally his home.

Prices of crops lowered in the Atlantic market, while expenses and taxes rose. They whose farms were a little way from the main traveled roads found that their land could hardly be made to pay cost of working. Slowly and surely the debts grew, until at last the hopeless struggle was given up, and the farm was abandoned. In one period of fifteen years of such vain effort to get a living in return for constant toil, the population of seventeen New York counties decreased by thousands a year, while the population of forty-four others of the counties of that state, in which there are large villages and cities increased 2,069,455. If the seventeen counties had gained in like ratio, 800,000 people would have been added to their rolls.

While nation and state were giving the money and the property of the people to help deepen harbors and rivers, dig canals and build railroads, to the great profit of the western farmer and eastern manufacturer, nothing was done to lessen for the eastern farmer the cost of carrying his products, his home market. Few seemed to realize that the burden of moving the harvests from the field to the nearest railway or canal was heavier than that of carrying them all the rest of the way to the consumer. Two-thirds or more of the cost of hauling crops to the nearest shipping point was as would have been burning a

corresponding amount in cash. Ten years ago New York began to see a little light on this matter. Two years ago the people of that state declared that her credit might be used to the amount of \$50,000,000 to pay for a general improvement of highways. Her several counties will furnish as much more, so that provision is already made by which a hundred million dollars will be put into road improvement. Before this work will be completed, fully six hundred million dollars will have been spent to make good the wagon roads of this one state.

It is possible that this can pay? And if perchance it may pay a state so populous and wealthy as New York is, could such an outlay, even remotely approaching this in magnitude, by any possibility pay a state like Tennessee, for example? How can such use of money pay, in a state which is largely agricultural?

New Jersey led nearly all the states in making good highways out of the canals of mud which were called her wagon roads. There, as in every other state where road improvement along sound lines has been undertaken, the farmers were strongly opposed to spending money for good roads. To do so would be to drive owners of real estate, especially of farm lands, into bankruptcy. But goods roads were made, and the farmers at once found these new highways opened to them an easy way out of the bondage of debt. They could make money on their crops, and they could sell their land for from two to ten times as many dollars as they could have got for it before the roads were made good.

In Pennsylvania one who owned 100 acres of land would have gladly sold it for \$1,000. When the road through the township was improved under state supervision, partly at the cost of the state, he sold the land for \$10,000. In Maryland a man arranged to sell his farm for \$4,700, and he who was to buy it backed out. The investment wasn't safe enough for him. Macadam road was built, and the owner of that farm let part of it go for \$12,000, and may get as much more for that part he still owns. In Daviess county, Kentucky, about a million dollars has been added to the assessed valuation, mainly because about 25 miles of road have been made good. In Tennessee 25 to 300 per cent has added to the value of land, by the improvement of highways.

Marked For Death.

"Three years ago I was marked for death. A grave-yard cough was tearing my lungs to pieces. Doctors failed to help me, and hope had fled, when my husband got Dr. King's New Discovery." says Mrs. A. C. Williams, of Baco, Ky. "The first dose helped me and improvement kept on until I had gained 50 pounds in weight and my health was fully restored. This medicine holds the world's healing record for coughs and colds and lung and throat diseases. It prevents pneumonia. Sold under a guarantee at J. W. Kelly's drug store. 50c and \$1.00. Trial bottle free.

NEW COAL COMPANY.

The Continental Coal Corporation has been incorporated for \$300,000 capital stock by Erle Martin and others to operate coal mines in Bell county, Kentucky, taking over the mines of Highland Rim Mining Co., at Rim, Ky., Black Raven Coal Co., and others.—Manufacturer's Record.

JOHN FOX, JR., MARRIED.

The Bristol Herald-Courier gives the following account of the marriage of John Fox, Jr., the popular author of this place, which occurred at the home of his brother, R. K. Fox, in New York, on Sunday December 13th:

Friends here have just learned with much delight of the marriage of John Fox, Jr., the novelist, of Big Stone Gap, to Mme. Fritz Scheff, the comic opera star, which occurred in New York, where the bride is now playing, last Sunday.

The announcement is of peculiar interest here, owing to the fact that the celebrities recently visited Bristol on their return from Mme. Scheff's pre-nuptial visit to Mr. Fox's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Fox, Sr., at Big Stone Gap.

A Quiet Sunday Wedding.

The marriage occurred Sunday afternoon at the country home of Rector K. Fox, the publisher, who is a brother of the author and was performed by the Rev. Mr. Wallace, of the Mount Kisco Methodist Episcopal Church. They returned to the city and are spending their honeymoon at the Plaza Hotel. Mme. Scheff returned to her engagement at the Knickerbocker Theater, where she is having a great run in "The Prima Donna," and when the curtain rose Monday night she was greeted with continued applause which she smilingly acknowledged.

It is to Walter Damrosch, the musician, that the American stage owes credit for the bright star, Fritz Scheff, for it was he who heard her sing in a Venetian theatre and realized her possibilities on the American stage. Her success has been phenomenal from the moment she set her foot on American soil and she is just now in the prime of her stage career, in "The Prima Donna," a new Parisian comic opera by Henry M. Blossom and Victor Herbert, authors of the "Modiste." It had a great run in Chicago and is easily the chief attraction on Broadway this season.

Fox Announced Plans.

The romance, which has attracted so much attention, was intensified a few weeks ago when Mr. Fox made the first definite announcement of their wedding plans while in Bristol with his finance. This was immediately following the visit of the bride-elect to the parents of Mr. Fox, at Big Stone Gap. He stated to a Herald-Courier reporter that the marriage would occur about the holiday season, as he left for New York with Mme. Scheff.

Fritz Scheff in her tuneful new Parisian opera comique, has been more generally admired than any star on the American stage this season. The "Prima Donna," after a remarkable run at the Studebaker theatre in Chicago, is meeting with greater success in New York. It is a piece scintillating with clever humor, funny skits, and tuneful music calculated to bring out the possibilities of Mme. Scheff's wonderful voice.

It is expected that Mr. Fox will soon bring his bride back to Virginia and that the noted couple will spend much of their spare time recuperating in the Virginia mountains, where the scenes of some of Mr. Fox's most successful books have been laid.

BUILDING OF C. C. & O. ENGINEERS AT WORK.

Such a Road Planned by South Carolinians Nearly 75 Years Ago.

[From Manufacturers Record.]

The building of the Carolina, Clinchfield & Ohio Railroad, in honor of which Spartanburg gave a great banquet last month is one of the most remarkable enterprises of the day. Its completion will fulfill the struggles of South Carolina when its great statesman, Hayne, and others nearly three-quarters of a century ago sought to construct such a road. They saw its importance as a freight and passenger carrier, but they saw ever more. They realized that such a connecting link would unite the West and the South into closer business relations, and that out of this would come a broader national development which they believed would prevent the impending war. They indeed, saw with prophetic vision that "the development of the South would mean the enrichment of the nation." But the leaders in this great plan were diverted from their task by the pressure of the politics of the middle of the last century, and thus one of the most magnificent schemes of the greatest leaders of the old South went down. Other men—great leaders in finance—have taken up the work, and though their motives may be the selfishness of desire for gain, they are building a line which will prove immensely valuable to the South and the West alike. It is said that the line already built has cost largely over \$100,000 a mile, which for a road of such length will make it one of the costliest ever built in this country, probably surpassing in this respect the somewhat similar line which Harry H. Rogers is building from the coal fields of West Virginia to Norfolk, and into which he has already put \$30,000,000. The Clinchfield line will form a connecting link between the West and the South Atlantic coast. It will open up a coal region which has been rightly called "The Heart of America," it will bring into the line of active development a region of unsurpassed natural resources, of marvelous beauty of scenery and one of almost unequalled climate attractions. Its effect upon the development of the whole region extending from Southeastern Kentucky through Southwestern Virginia and the Carolinas to the ports which it will ultimately reach, probably both Charleston and Savannah, will necessarily be very great. Its importance to all that territory can hardly be overestimated. The people of Spartanburg did well, therefore, in making a joyous occasion to celebrate their victory in securing this line.

ATTEMPT TO BREAK JAIL.

Jailer Dougherty discovered an attempt to break jail Saturday morning, four prisoners having made an attempt to secure their liberty. They had worked the mortar from around a rock, leaving the outside intact. It seems they worked at night and put back the mortar in the morning, also hanging their clothes over the place. Mr. Dougherty heard them at work, and making an examination, checked their intent. He put the four men in the cage.—Gate City Herald.

THE 1908 CROPS.

Raised By The Farmers Of The United States a Record Breaking and Worth Eighty Billion Dollars.

The annual report of the Secretary of Agriculture will show a record breaking year for the farmer. The value of this crop will be in round up numbers \$8,000,000,000, an increase of about \$500,000,000 over the preceding year. Even at the rate at which Congress is now appropriating money, it would take the body eight years to dispose of it. In other words, enough money is now being extracted out of the farms of the country in a year to pay for running the Government for eight years. Last year the total amount of crops was under \$7,500,000,000.

Secretary Wilson now has experts engaged in figuring out the value of the farm crops. He is getting ready to incorporate the facts in his annual report. In recent years Secretary Wilson's annual reports have attracted wide notice because of the paens that have sung to the prosperity of the farmers; of the almost fabulous presentations they have made out of the corn and hay and cotton and other crops, this year will not be an exception. In fact, the Secretary will be able to tell a story of prosperity, of wealth and riches in the land of the United States that will read like a chapter from "Arabian Nights." Not only will it overshadow past reports, but it will set forth the facts about a farm production that has no parallel in any other country. Broadly speaking, the farmers of the country are better off this year than in previous years in two respects. The crops are better than the average and the prices are much higher.

It is not so much however, by reason of increased production this year that the farmers are better off as it is because of the high prices. The corn crop will head the list around the billion and one-half figures.

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A PLEA FOR GOOD ROADS.

Can Wise County, Va., have good roads without excessive taxation therefor?

In order to intelligently consider and answer the above question, it is necessary for the taxpayers to know the average annual rate per cent gain over the preceding year of taxable values for county purposes of this county for several gone by years, as a reasonable safe basis for determining the amount of her taxable values 20 year average time hence, upon which the payment of a bond issue, running 40 years for a reasonable amount, say, \$300,000 could be easily made.

We will now show her ability so to do; The average rate per cent from and including the year 1904 to and including the year 1907 is 4 1/2 per cent gain, each year, more than the preceding year.

The assessed taxable values of this county for county levy purposes for the fiscal year 1908 being \$9,489,468.00 which sum includes, say, \$489,468 of town lots, etc., charged with back taxes, deducted from said total assessment would give \$9,000,000.00 as the amount of her taxable values for the fiscal year 1909, which taken as a basis on the annual 4 1/2 per cent increased valuation of each preceding year, will at the average, on 20th year payment into the sinking fund amount to 240 per cent of the base, being 2.4 times \$9,000,000.00 which is \$21,600,000.00. And a 1 cent levy on the \$100 value thereof would yield the handsome sum of \$2,160,000.

Your obdt serv't,
Wm. J. KILGORE.
Wise, Va., Dec. 10.