

The Southerner.

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THE SOUTHERNER,

GEO. HOWARD, JR., Editor & Proprietor.

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AGRICULTURAL.



"Agriculture is the chief foundation of a nation's power, as it not only furnishes man with food and clothing, but also with materials for the mechanic arts and commerce."

FOR THE SOUTHERNER.

Swamp Lands.

Mr. Editor: To reclaim Swamp Lands you must—1st, ditch. Be careful to get a fall sufficient to settle your ditches deep. By deep draining you will lay the land dry, and in wet or dry seasons you will be amply paid for your labor. The yield in corn will be from six to twelve barrels; or, if in cotton, you will get from one to two bags per acre. While by shallow ditching and wet seasons, you will not make enough corn or cotton to pay expenses for the tilling; besides, you will have damaged your land more in one year, than two years tillage, when drained dry.

If your swamps are marshy and springy, as is the case along the river; first, cut your center ditch deep, then cut your side or spring ditches to lead into the center ditch. The best way I have found to manage these spring ditches is, to take logs about eight or ten inches through and saw the ends off square; lay one on each side on the bottom of the ditch, and then saw blocks the length of the width of the ditch and bolt and rivet them into boards an inch thick and cover two courses, taking care to break the seams of the first course with the latter, then fill up said ditch.

I tried some about ten years since, which perform as well now as at first, and the reason, is, because the ditches in marshy or springy land always keep running, and run out the sand and particles that may by chance get into the throat and thereby prevent its choking. I tried others about the same time that were not in springy lands, and they soon became of no use whatever. By covering your spring ditches, you will save a vast amount of labor in the end; 1st, because spring ditches are generally the worst to keep open; 2nd, by covering them you save the labor of cleaning out once or twice a year; 3rd, you save the labor of clearing off the hedge annually; 4th, you will grow corn or cotton over the ditches and hinder no time, turning round your mules and plows at the ditch on both sides, (instead of having a hedge and broken down corn or cotton, as you do when kept open, you will have a good stand of corn or cotton) and a longer furrow to run; 5th, when you cover your ditches well, they will last me an constrained to believe nearly an age, because I have cut across some that had been buried nine years, and the pine and gum logs were perfectly sound and appeared to be green and so was the covering.

The best way to reclaim swamp lands, is to cut down all the growth (after it is ditched) and let it lie about twelve or eighteen months; then put fire to it in a dry season and burn it off, then roll and burn the logs (be careful to save all the ashes to put in compost heaps, which makes as good, if not the best, manure for cotton of any that I have tried) and then grub the land deep and take off all the large roots and burn them in heaps and save the ashes as above, then plow the land deep and plant in corn, lay out the rows 5 1/2 or 6 feet wide, (if the land is rough, run two or three times in the same furrow so as to get into the soil,) and drill it three grains in a hill about 18 inches apart. (If too thick, thin out as your judgment may dictate) plow once or twice and hoe it well and you will have a fine return for your labor.

The second year, you may plant in cotton, break the land deep, then run out your rows about five feet wide and bed four furrows to the row and plant; as soon as it is up, block out the cotton

and side; and in five to seven days side again and put it to a stand, say 16 to 18 inches apart, and have one stalk in a hill, then work and keep the grass and weeds out and you will have a prolific growth and a fine yield.

I have heard it said, that our Conetoe swamps "were not adapted to cotton making, that it would grow too much to weed and not mature." This is a mistake, there is no land in North Carolina surpasses it for cotton. I have planted (in a small way) all kinds of Conetoe swamps in cotton, and have never failed of getting from one to two bags per acre; only on marshy or springy land, which is not adapted to cotton culture, because it grows too prolific and too late to mature while the land is new and fresh, (of this kind of swamp we have but very little in Conetoe) but there is none better for corn. The sandy light soil and the heavy clay subsoil swamps, are well adapted to the culture of cotton, and no land matures better or makes heavier crops. You may think the second year is too new for cotton. I answer, that I have tried it more than once; it matures well, and I have never failed getting a fine crop. Farmers in Conetoe, nature has done more for you, than in any other region I have seen, and you have done as little—drain your swamps and haul out of them the mud, which is a mine of wealth, worth more to you than the gold mines of California. Give your exhausted land a broad cast of swamp mud, and sow two barrels of lime to an acre, and it will more than pay you, the first year. Raise compost heaps with your swamp mud, and put one bushel of ashes to ten or twenty; it makes an excellent manure. You can make as much ashes now as you please out of dead trees. Try it, you will find on your banner the motto "Thrift;" but if you are determined to pursue the old course, tilling and killing your land, you will find this motto on your banner, "empty purses, empty barns, empty meat houses, poor cows, reeling sows and poor pigs, and last not least, hungry stomachs" brought about by a "masterly inactivity." CONETOE.

From the Working Farmer.

NATIONAL

Agricultural Convention.

Whereas, the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, at its meeting held in Boston, January 14, 1852, requested its President to enter into correspondence with the Presidents of State and other Agricultural Associations on the expediency of calling a National Agricultural Convention; and whereas the Pennsylvania State Agricultural Society, at its meeting at Harrisburg on the 20th of the same month; and the Maryland State Agricultural Society, at its meeting in Baltimore, on the 4th of February, adopted similar resolutions, and recommended the formation of a National Agricultural Society; and whereas the New York, Ohio and other State Societies, through their Presidents or by published resolves, have expressed similar views in relation to the necessity of a closer bond of union between all such institutions throughout our country:

Therefore, the undersigned, believing from these indications that the time has arrived for a confederation of local Agricultural Societies in the United States, and in conformity with a resolution of the Pennsylvania Society, authorizing the Presidents of the three first named associations to designate time and place—do hereby invite delegations to meet in Convention in the city of Washington, on the 24th day of June next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

The objects of this Convention are to organize a National Agricultural Society, to which the various Agricultural Societies may be auxiliary; to consult together upon the general good, and to establish, by this Society, or such other means as the Convention may devise, a more cordial and widely extended intercourse between agriculturists in our own country and in other lands; to create additional facilities for the acquisition and diffusion of knowledge, by books, journals, seeds, and other objects of interest to the American farmer and gardener; and to act on such other matters pertaining to the advancement of agriculture as the wisdom of the Convention may judge appropriate.

For these purposes the undersigned earnestly solicit delegations from the various States, or other organizations, for the promotion of agriculture in the several States and Territories; and where such organizations do not exist, delegations from such districts, consisting in all cases of such number of persons as it may be deemed expedient to appoint.

As it has been considered desirable to name an earlier day for this Convention than was at first expected, this circular is issued before the concurrence of several of the State Agricultural Societies could be obtained. Their respective presidents are therefore requested to add their names to this call, and to give immediate publicity to the same through the papers and periodicals of the day.

A large and general attendance is confidently anticipated.

Societies will please transmit, at an early date, a list of the delegates they have appointed, to Daniel Lee, M., D. Agricultural Department, Patent Office, Washington.

MARSHALL P. WILDER,
Pres. Mass. Board of Agricul.
FREDERICK WATTS,
Pres. Penn. State Ag. Society.
CHARLES B. CALVERT,
Pres. Md. State Ag. Society.
HENRY WAGER,
Pres. N. Y. State Ag. Society.
THOMAS STOCKS,
Pres. South Cen. Ag. Society.
ARTHUR WATTS,
Pres. Ohio State Board of Ag.
JAMES TALLMADGE,
Pres. American Inst., N. Y.
JOHN C. GRAY,
Pres. Mass. So. for Prom. of Ag.
JOSEPH A. WRIGHT,
Pres. Indiana State Ag. Society.
GEORGE W. NESMITH,
Pres. N. H. State Ag. Society.
FREDERICK HOLBROOK,
Pres. Vermont State Ag. Society.
JOSIAH CHAPIN,
Pres. R. I. Society for Encouragement of Domestic Industry.

From the Southern Cultivator.

THE STUDY AND CULTURE OF THE GRASSES.

BY DANIEL LEE, M. D.

"ALL FLESH IS GRASS," and no one can produce the flesh of domestic animals, or support that of man, in an economical manner, who does not both study and cultivate the grasses. Under the natural system they are usually arranged as cereal and graminaceous plants. Cereal grasses include all that are cultivated for their seeds mainly, such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, maize, rice, millet, and the like *cerealia*. Gramineous plants are an order that contains many genera, and according to European botanists, an almost incredible number of species and varieties. It is to the consideration of a few of the more valuable *Graminae* that the reader's attention is now invited.

Great Britain has long been distinguished as a grazing country; and English grasses are now cultivated in every civilized nation on the globe. There may be indigenous forage plants in many countries superior to any cultivated in England, but their excellence is comparatively unknown. Between the shores of the Atlantic and the Pacific, of the great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, may perhaps be found natural grasses that will excel the English for all grazing purposes in the United States, as much as our native Indian Corn excels in the production of cheap bread. Of these American grasses we shall now say nothing, for we have not the data to do justice to the subject. It is no disparagement of our resources in the natural grasses, to say that there is as much propriety in the culture of the graminaceous as of the cereal plants, brought by Europeans to this country at their first settlements on the Continent. No one thinks of banishing wheat, rye, barley, and oats, because American maize is a more prolific crop than either when cultivated in the best possible way; and for reasons sufficiently obvious, the culture of the best English grasses is worthy of the attention of every farmer, with a view to give diversity to his crops, and thereby increase his chances of success. The grower of a single staple draws a high prize when the seasons, the insects and the markets all happen to favor his one idea; operations; but take ten or twenty years together, and while his arated fields will be sadly impoverished, net gains from the labor and capital employed will be much less than they would have been had he pursued a wise system of mixed tillage and husbandry. It may interest some of our readers to see this order of plants presented in a botanical as well as a practical form. Young persons who have most of their knowledge of the vegetable kingdom yet to acquire, are informed that Nature builds up vegetable structures either as a mass of little cavities, called *cells*; or as a mass

of cells and *vessels* or tubes. The former constitute one grand class of *cellular* plants; the latter another grand class of *vascular* plants. Vascular plants are naturally divided into two sub-classes, called *endogenous* and *exogenous*. The latter grow like forest trees from a common centre outward; the word *exogens* means increasing or growing outward, as one layer of wood in a tree is formed upon that below it, from year to year. The stems (culms) of grass, grain, reeds and sugar cane, grow from the outside inward; and are therefore *endogenous*, or inward-growing plants. Of this sub-class *endogenae*, a part have *glumes* (which is the chaff that surrounds their seeds) and a part do not. Both *ceralia* and *graminae* have *glumes*, and therefore, belong to *Tribe 2. Glumaceae*.

Although the *ceralia* and *graminae* run into each other so that the line of separation between them is indistinct; yet they are commonly divided into two orders—the one including all grain plants, and the other all fodder plants. The latest English authorities, based on the researches of Lindley, Hooker, Greville and Smith, divide the grasses of Great Britain, acclimated & indigenous into twenty-eight genera; while the number of species is still undetermined. We have procured an expensive volume (Hauman's British Grasses) which contains an *herbarium*, specimens of all the genera and nearly all the species known in the United Kingdom, with a botanical and agricultural description of the same. How far a condensed account of these grasses as cultivated in England and the Northern States, would meet the wishes and circumstances of Southern agriculturists, is a debatable question. The grass most imported as baled Hay, into the cities of Baltimore, Washington, Alexandria, Richmond, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah and Mobile, is *Phleum Pratense* or Timothy (common cat-tail of English farmers.) This and the *Alopecurus Pratensis* or Meadow Fox-tail, we regard as the best Hay plants now extensively cultivated. Both flourish in the District of Columbia and as far South as Richmond; and if the land were properly irrigated and manured, we think that they might be successfully grown in Florida and Southern Georgia. At this time, (May 3d) 100 pounds of good Hay bring more than the same weight of Corn; and yet 1000 pounds of Hay may be raised as easily as 300 of Corn. We have never seen finer Timothy than grows in Maryland and Virginia; and not a few Corn fields the present year will have the seed of this grass sown and harrowed in either at the last working of the crop, or in autumn after it is gathered. Not less than a peck of seed should be put upon an acre, with four quarts of Clover, or orchard grass seed. Orchard grass, (*Dactylis glomerata*) is the rough Cock's foot grass, Finger-grass, and nearly allied to the Crow-foot grass of the South, but a much larger plant. Indeed, it often grows too rank for tender herbage or mowing. When sown thick and frequently cut or closely cropped by feeding, Mr. SINCLAIR says that it is better than rye grass, (*Lolium perenne*) of which 80 tons of "green meat" have been gathered from a single acre in a year, in England. The Hay of orchard grasses are much impaired by letting the grass stand for the seed to ripen, as done some times. It delights in a deep, rich, loamy, or sandy soil; and on such, even if much shaded by an orchard, or other trees, will yield a generous return in sweet and nutritious grass.

Some species of the *Poa*s and *Festuca*s deserve more attention than they have hitherto received in this country. *Festuca pratensis*, (Meadow fescue) constitutes a very considerable portion of the herbage of all rich natural pastures and irrigated meadows, in England. It delights in a moist soil. The seed is light and one bushel is sown per acre mixed with one of Meadow Fox-tail grass seed, and a gallon of Timothy. British farmers are now in the practice of applying more seed per acre than formerly, and the same is true with the best agriculturists in the United States. *Poa Trivialis*—Rough Meadow Grass. Although the name of this grass would seem to indicate that it is "trivial," if not worthless; yet it is said to be "one of the most valuable native grasses" of Great Britain. It possesses highly nutritive properties, arrives at perfection at the most seasonable period, and is preferred by cattle before almost any other grass. For permanent pastures in moist sheltered places, it is exceedingly valuable mixed with other varieties of herbage plants. About seven pounds of seed per acre are usually sown. Con-

trary to what is the case in almost all other grasses, the Hay of this species is best cut when the seed is ripe. This and *poa annua* are almost the only grasses that thrive in grass-plats and in small confined situations.

According to the highest English authority, *poa pratensis* (smooth-stalked meadow grass) is not less valuable than *poa trivialis*. It is earlier in leaf and requires less moisture.

Poa Nemoralis—Wood Meadow Grass is worthy of cultivation in all wood pastures along with the native Blue grass of the United States; of which we have seen several varieties. Among the aquatic or water grasses no one strikes us so favorably as the Reedy Sweet Grass *Glyceria Aquatica*. It forms a large part of the Hay in marshy lands; and is the principal winter fodder in some parts of the fens of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, where it is some times mown three times in a summer, so rapid is its growth. There are thousands of acres of wet lands in the Southern States admirably adapted to the production of aquatic grasses.

Glyceria Fluitans—Floating Sweet Grass, is eaten eagerly by horses, cattle and hogs; while its abundant seeds afford nourishment to geese, ducks and fish, especially trout. The plant does not thrive unless constantly watered.

We incline to the opinion that American canes and sedges are equal, if not superior to these tribes of plants in England, or on the Continent, for all agricultural purposes. Some of our cane bottoms can hardly be excelled in any country for grazing; but we shall take another occasion to call attention to the culture of native forage plants. A large farm devoted to the production of grass seeds for general distribution, might render the cause of agriculture an invaluable service. The expense of such a farm need be nothing, over and above the compensation realized for seeds sold. What every one desires is pure seeds of the kind described and sought; and the few dimes that it will cost to grow them at a reasonable profit he will pay most cheerfully. The want of such an establishment renders it ten times more difficult to procure seeds of indigenous American grasses, than of the natural grasses of the Old World. Our pastures and meadows, taken as a whole, are about as poor and worthless as they well can be; and a large share of our domestic animals are ditto. Now is the right time to initiate a salutary reform in both particulars. Stock-growing in skillful hands has not paid so well in forty years as it now does. A pair of good horses bring a small fortune—money enough to purchase a mile square of Government land. Why not make two blades of grass grow where one now grows, and rear horses and mules, hogs, cattle and sheep? Why pay from twenty to thirty dollars a ton for Northern Hay, when it can be grown at the South at one fifth of those prices? Independence, agricultural independence, demands an effort before it can be attained. When will the owners of Southern soil make the needful effort?

Cotton Culture.

Some of the incipient thinnings of cotton will have already been done; but the business of reducing to a stand yet remains; and in this month this important branch of Cotton making is to be attended to. Much care and good judgment is now required, and close personal attention should see that all is well done. The fate of the crop is often settled adversely, by careless, rough work, at this time. The Cotton plant is very tender, and by bruises and damages at this working, is often made to die for weeks after, when other causes are sought to explain disasters of the weed. Too much care cannot be taken to avoid these results. We have said before, that the distance must be regulated by the quality of the soil, and the probable size to which the plant will grow. We have said also that the tap root of cotton is the main feeder. The opinion has been objected to; and it is insisted that the main office of this root is to give strength to the plant. We do not admit our error; but, that we may not have been fortunate in making ourselves understood. All for which we have contended, is that this is the main root, and the parent from which all other roots emanate; and whilst we agree that the lateral roots may in strictness be the feeders, yet these supplies all come back through the common parent of them all, to send up their support to the plant; and our theory only insists that provision shall be made to encourage the vigorous and ample growth of the tap root, which we

have termed the great feeder, that it may send out a large supply of those little rootlets, that they may search for appropriate food and bring it through this common parent, to supply the stalk.

We have thought it necessary to fall back upon this explanation, for the better understanding of the opinions which we held, and that we may prepare the minds of our readers for the care which we shall advise in the culture of Cotton, not to disturb these lateral roots, after they have been formed, by close or deep plowings. At the present age of the plant not much damage is to be anticipated; but as it grows larger, the plow should run further off and shallower. In lands which are not very soft by nature, or which have been made so by previous good work, we should advise at this time, close and rather deep plowing. This is the more important to be done now, because it may be done without damage to the plant; and if not now done, cannot be safely at any other working. After the squares appear freely, if the work up to that time has been well done, no deep or close plowing will be required, or should be allowed in the culture of Cotton.

Medical State Society.

This body convened in this town on Tuesday last, the 11th of May, and adjourned on Thursday evening after a session of three days. Some forty or fifty Delegates from the various auxiliary societies, and permanent members from different Counties in the State were present. The officers who were elected for this meeting, Dr. E. S. Strudwick of Orange, Chairman; Dr. S. S. Satchwell of New Hanover, Secretary, and Dr. C. F. Dewey of Wayne, Treasurer. We are informed that it was the largest and most interesting meeting of Physicians that had ever been held in the State. The Society is increasing regularly in numbers, influence, and popularity. The Committee previously appointed to report upon the propriety of establishing a Medical College in North Carolina, reported adversely and their report was adopted. Papers on Medical subjects were read before the Society by different members.—Dr. J. H. Dickson read a paper on the Typography and Diseases of Wilmington. Dr. S. Satchwell, read an essay on the subject of Malaria; these papers were read by the Society to be published with its proceedings. The annual orator, Dr. W. A. Norwood of Hillsborough was prevented by sickness from delivering his address. It was read in the Music Hall by the Chairman, before a very respectable and intelligent audience of ladies and gentlemen on Wednesday evening. The subject was Hygiene and legislative enactment in reference to health. We have heard it very highly spoken of. It will be published week by week with the proceedings. Dr. J. H. Dickson of Wilmington was selected as the next annual orator of the Society. A committee was appointed to memorialize the next Legislature in favor of the passage of a general registering law of births and deaths throughout the State. A committee was appointed to write an address to the Physicians throughout the State, inviting those who are not attached to the State Society, or to the County Auxiliary Societies, to unite their efforts with these bodies, for the promotion of the medical profession. Dr. J. A. Dickson made a very instructive and interesting report as Delegate of the Society to the recent meeting in Richmond of the American Medical Association. Delegates were appointed to represent the Society in the next meeting of that body at New York, in May next. Appropriate steps were taken in reference to the death of Dr. Cameron of Fayetteville, one of the officers of the society. Other business of an important nature was transacted, but as the whole proceedings are to be published in pamphlet form, we omit further notice.—*W. Jour.*

Great Telegraphic Invention.—Professor J. Milton Sanders, of Cincinnati, writes to the Evansville Journal that Mr. David Baldwin, of New York, who is at present in that city, has quite perfected a telegraphic which he says will revolutionize the system entirely. By it news can be transmitted on one wire opposite ways at the same time, and as rapidly as a person can talk.

Arrest of an Abolitionist.—Charles Terry, said to be a citizen of Vermont, has been arrested at Jonesville, Va., charged with advising several slaves to abscond.