

EDITORIAL

A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK.

As for jest, there be certain things which ought to be privileged from it; namely, religion, matters of state, great persons, any man's present business of importance, and any case that deserveth pity. Yet there be some that think their wits have been asleep, except they dart out somewhat that is piquant and to the quick. That is a vein which should be bridled. And generally men ought to find the difference between saltness and bitterness. Certainly he that hath a satirical wit, as he maketh others afraid of his wit, so he had need to be afraid of others' memories.—From Lord Bacon's Essay, "Of Discourse."

WHAT THE SUB ALLIANCE OR FARMERS' CLUB SHOULD DO.

While new topics for meetings of all farmers' clubs are essential to their progress and well-being, there are many questions of perennial interest that should be presented and discussed at every meeting—topics that never grow old. Let us see what some of these are.

1. Since "self-preservation is the first law of nature," every sub Alliance should give attention first of all to its own life and progress. See that the meetings are made interesting and see to it that no desirable person within reach is allowed to live six months at a time without being asked to become a member of the Order. At each meeting let the members of your sub make a list of the eligible persons of the neighborhood who should be asked to join. Then appoint some member or members to see these prospective candidates and speak to them in behalf of the Alliance. Also make a list of the members' own wives, sons and daughters who should join and see that the merits of the Order are brought to their attention. Let the outside world know that you are alive and at work. Arrange open meetings from time to time with the best speakers obtainable and ask the public to attend. In your regular meetings vary the monotony of speaking and discussion by music, recitations and readings. Let the members perfect themselves in the secret work of the Order. Develop a spirit of generous rivalry between your sub and neighboring subs as to which shall have the most entertaining meetings, the best-drilled officers and members, the most interesting debates and the most active membership. Make a vigorous effort to get more women and young people into the sub and see that its social features receive proper attention. An annual picnic might also prove helpful. Other ideas will occur to our readers, for these are only a few of the things that ought to be considered at each meeting.

2. But the Alliance has a nobler object than that of maintaining a mere existence or of entertaining its members. It must stand for progress and its members must be distinguished for being a little more progressive than other people. At each meeting the members should discuss ways and means of improving their farms and homes. Every man should report any improved method of farm work that he has noticed and report also any mistake, failure or success that he thinks it would help his fellow members to know about. Any article in any farm paper, bulletin or book that a member is interested in should be presented and discussed. If practicable, prizes for the best yields of cotton, tobacco, corn, etc., should be offered. Nor should the adornment and improvement of the home and home grounds be overlooked. The lady members should be encouraged to develop this feature of the work and all members should work together toward making the homes of the Alliancemen noted for attractiveness and simple beauty.

3. Besides the improvement of their own farms and homes the members of the sub should be interested in the improvement of the neighborhood

as a whole. At every meeting the betterment of the public roads, the lengthening and strengthening of the public schools, and the introduction of such conveniences as rural mail delivery and the rural telephone should be brought up and discussed. Keep eternally hammering away at these things. Tell of the latest article you have read about them, the advantages they are bringing other neighborhoods, and of what pleasures you are robbing yourselves by failure to get them. Write for all official bulletins and circulars in regard to these matters and see that your less progressive neighbors also receive this information. Do not rest satisfied until your neighborhood has the best roads, the best schools, the best mail facilities, the best rural telephone system, and the prettiest residences, churches and schoolhouses (buildings and grounds), in the county.

4. Nor should the advantages of business co-operation be neglected. In buying and selling there is much to be gained by standing together. At every meeting the members should inquire if there are not certain supplies for farm or home—food supplies, dry goods, implements, machinery, furniture, etc.—which are needed by more than one man and which can be purchased more cheaply by buying together. In the matter of commercial fertilizers especially is there great room for improvement. Before another crop season begins, every sub Alliance should make a study of the value of different fertilizing ingredients, the needs of different crops and different soils, and the advantages and economy of home mixing. But even if home mixing is not attempted, there is considerable saving in buying in large quantities. Then too we ought to co-operate more extensively in the purchase of the more costly farm machinery. Let the members of the Alliance take up the matter of buying such things as feed cutters and stump pullers for the use of the entire neighborhood, and also co-operate in bringing improved breeding stock into the community. In some sections co-operative creameries should be established and in other communities special lines of trucking and fancy farming could be developed by a number of members acting together.

5. And last, but not least, is the educational work of the Alliance. This has already been discussed in part in other paragraphs of this article. Every Alliance ought to have a good library for the use of its members. Every Allianceman should be urged to read good agricultural, local and Alliance papers. The publications of State and National Departments of Agriculture and of the several Experiment Stations should be read by all. Let the Secretary have a little fund for postage and whenever a new bulletin, year book, or farm advertising catalog is wanted, let the Secretary forward the names and addresses of those who wish to get it. Once or twice a year let the Secretary read a complete list of the Farmers' Bulletins issued by the National Department of Agriculture and apply for as many copies as the members desire. Let him also send to the State Department of Agriculture the names of any who fail to get the Monthly Bulletin regularly. And let young and old exchange books and magazines and discuss their contents. Let there be a revival of interest in the great old books that have stood the test of years and that will be fresh in the vigor of perennial youth after the latest popular 100,000-copy novel has been forgotten. Science, travel, poetry, mythology, history and especially nature study—let these have attention. Courses of study should be mapped out, and debates arranged for the discussion of disputed points. The Alliance and the Grange have contributed not a little to the education of thousands of men and women—have awakened interest in literature and public affairs and have developed excellent public speakers out of very unpromising material. And with a closer observance of the details suggested in this paragraph, the educational advantages of the farmers' club would be increased many fold.

Let us keep these things in mind and bring them up for discussion—and action—at every meeting of our sub Alliance. There are few places, we warrant, where this list of activities can be considered and the conclusion reached that there is nothing left for a farmer's club to do.

THE SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE.

The Editor of The Progressive Farmer spent three days last week in the city of Birmingham, Ala., attending the Southern Educational Conference. We have not found time since our return to Raleigh to write our impressions of the meeting or of the country through which we passed in going to Birmingham. In our next issue we may present a short, gossipy letter covering these subjects. Meanwhile it may be said that the Conference was a great gathering of earnest educators and public men of the South and the North to discuss the educational situation in the Cotton States and that it was marked by a spirit of rare good feeling and enthusiasm.

Especially notable at every session of this Conference is the awakening of the Northern visitors to the justice and generosity of the Southern white man in dealing with the negro and their recognition of the fact that the white South can be trusted to work out its own problems in its own way. As more than one Northern visitor expressed it, the education they received by first-hand inspection of Southern affairs is about the most helpful feature of the meetings. The South has no more influential friends in the North than Albert Shaw, Lyman Abbott, and others who have broadened their vision by attending these Conferences. And of course, the Southern members also get a broader outlook by coming in contact with strong, broad-minded men of the North.

The addresses at the Birmingham meeting were of a remarkably high order. Bishop Galloway's eloquent interpretation of the South's attitude toward the negro took the Conference by storm. Dr. C. Alphonso Smith, of the University of North Carolina, added to his reputation as an orator by his magnificent handling of the subject, "The Practical and the Literary in National Life." Dr. Walter H. Page, of New York, made, in his usual severely practical style, a strong address on "The Profit of Good Training." Other addresses of unusual value were made by Dr. Charles W. Dabney, Bishop David Sessums, and Dr. S. C. Mitchell.

The next session of the Conference will probably be held in Columbia, S. C. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

General Officers.—Robert C. Ogden, of New York, President; Edgar Gardner Muruhy, of Alabama, Vice-President; B. J. Baldwin, of Alabama, Secretary; William A. Blair, of North Carolina, Treasurer.

Executive Committee.—S. T. Houston, Texas; G. P. Glenn, Florida; Clarence H. Poe, North Carolina; B. C. Caldwell, Louisiana; C. B. Gibson, Georgia; R. H. Jesse, Missouri; S. A. Mynders, Tennessee; D. B. Johnson, South Carolina.

Not the least notable feature of educational progress in North Carolina is the constantly increasing attention to the higher education of girls. "I think that there are more young women attending new North Carolina boarding schools and colleges established since 1890," writes Dr. C. D. McIver in a personal letter to the editor, "than there were in all the boarding schools established before that time, and this is a net gain because the old institutions are holding their own in numbers. Then, too, the standard of scholarship has been raised. Our College at Greensboro confers degrees (A. B. and B. S.) equivalent in work and scholarship requirements to those conferred at the University."

We have just received the initial number of a series of "Nature Study Leaflets," to be issued by the Agricultural Department of the University of Georgia under the direction of Prof. J. M. Johnson. These leaflets are for the use of the public school children of the State, and we sincerely regret that we have nothing of the kind for our North Carolina children. These leaflets would do much to pave the way for proper use of "Agriculture for Beginners" by older pupils.