

makes a thoughtless working farmer feel that he owns his farm when in fact he is less an owner than a tenant (present or prospective) of a mortgagee. The increase in mortgaged farms is from 4 per cent. of the Oklahoma farms in 1900 to 19 per cent. in 1911—which is sure enough “going some!” The increase in actual tenantry is not slow, either: from 44 per cent. of the 213-acre farms in 1900 to 55 per cent. of the 152-acre farms in 1911. The same tendency may be observed, probably, in the farming regions of every other agricultural State; and in town and city regions, this tendency would probably stand out even more conspicuously.

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Peonage.

The inevitable development of personal slavery from land monopoly finds startling illustrations almost anywhere in the agricultural regions of the Southern States. That there may be no ground even in appearance for accusing us of sectional prejudice, we quote directly from *The Southern Cultivator*, of Atlanta, Georgia. Commenting favorably upon the tenant system of halving the crop, the *Cultivator* says, frankly even if cautiously, that—

many farmers who control large numbers of tenants under this system contrive to keep their tenants in debt, and while we are in no wise questioning the integrity of these gentlemen nor impugning their methods as in any sense dishonest, the fact exists that if another farmer wishes to remove one of these tenants he often has to pay up an old account before the tenant is free to make the change. Another bit of experience gained last fall was that out of more than one hundred applicants who applied to us for crops on the half system, the cheapest one was \$5, and they ranged from that sum up to \$175. It is a very common occurrence for one farmer to sell another farmer on account, and the Negro goes with it. Thus the Negro starts out in debt, and as he knows nothing but an antiquated system of growing cotton at the average rate of 500 lbs. seed cotton to the acre or ten bushels of corn, there is little hope for him to ever get very far ahead of anything but his landlord. Many of these farmers have made their fortunes working Negroes under this system, and there is small hope of accomplishing any reform with them, just as it is impossible to develop intelligent labor from that class of tenants. Hence for those of us who are to develop this new agricultural era we see but one avenue to success, viz.; turn to other fields for our tenants and secure another class—a more intelligent class—to do the more intelligent work.

A wise suggestion, that with which the *Cultivator* closes. But it could yield good effects only temporarily, if the legal system were continued under

which crop producers get half and land monopolizers the other half.

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In so far as the land monopolizer's share is a return for supplies furnished on fair terms, what we are about to say does not apply; but in so far as it goes to him because he has title to the farm site and its natural soil, the question is not a race question, nor a sectional question, nor an efficiency question. In the long run monopolizers of the earth will come to be the virtual owners of users of the earth. The peonage of the South, so pointedly hinted at in the above quotation, is not peculiar to the South except possibly in its greater intensity or its more visible manifestations.

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Southern Superstitions.

Every place, every section, has its superstitions. So no one need gloat over the superstitions that flourish beyond his own horizon, nor take offense if attention be honestly and good naturedly called to those within it. Boston, for instance, has indulged superstitions that have given her a somewhat derisive fame as the “Hub of the Universe”; while New York, the most provincial community of the Western world, is straight-jacketed with the superstition that provincialism flourishes everywhere else, but not there. The South, too, has its superstitions. There are two big ones, according to Jenkin Lloyd Jones, who goes South every year, and who defines superstitions as things “approved on account of being uttered so often.” You will find it all in *Unity* for April 20, 1911.

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Of the first of those two superstitions of the South—that “prohibition does not prohibit”—Mr. Jones says, as a result of an annual inspection for eighteen years or more:

I come back to say to you that there is a mighty change, in appearances at least. I walked the streets of Savannah, a city of 75,000, for a week, and failed to see any signs of the old time debauchery or the ruffianism of the old regime. The shameful list of drunks and the attendant shootings and assassinations which appeared in the daily papers are not now to be found. The saloon as a center of debauchery, coarseness, and brawls is gone. In my week's stay in the city I saw but two drunken men, both of them manifestly gentlemen of the higher order. The saloon as a center of degradation is gone. The Mississippi River, under the sanction of the United States Government, still carries on the humiliating trade. The passenger boat is a floating saloon, and at its landing it takes on customers who, once in mid-stream, lay in their stock of fire-water, then go ashore at the next landing and walk back. Still, decency is on the increase and the illicit drinking is at least subject to good manners.