

INTRODUCTION

One day's ride from the busy, crowded, city of New York lies the Dismal Swamp, a vast and forlorn waste. An almost tropical jungle of Cypress, Juniper, Maple, Poplar, and Gum with a well nigh impassable undergrowth, covers a portion of Virginia and North Carolina some thirty miles long by ten to twenty miles wide. Here in the dread morasses of the Swamp, the fugitive negroes found refuge during the Civil War. In the safe fastnesses of this untamed forest, slaves sometimes lived for many years - even brought up families, it is said - within a few miles of some Simon Legree whom they had fled, swallowed up beyond any danger of capture.

The great Dismal Swamp immortalized by Thomas Moore in his "Lake of the Dismal Swamp" fascinates by its desolation. The habitat of wild beasts, snakes, and water reptiles, its large area includes only a dozen or so families. George Wash-

ington in the closing years of the nineteenth century saw possibilities of its reclamation and to that end had constructed under his own supervision the Washington Ditch, a canal designed to drain a portion of the Swamp. The area, however, was too large for the Engineer of that period and the canal was used mostly for hauling logs.

The great Dismal Swamp though it is, today it is an object of reclamation. How serious must the food situation of our country have become? As Pilgrims, farmers settled upon lands of virgin fertility. The only requisite for bounteous crops was the scratching of the soil. No clearing, no draining, no irrigating, no fertilizing. Then in our agricultural history came the movement westward, the abandonment of lands whose breasts had been milked dry. Then came the day when the application of capital to the development of land was essential: fertilizers became necessary and a beginning was made toward real investment in land. Finally it has come to the point where large Capital must un-

dertake reclamation either through drainage, clearing, irrigating, or a combination of these. At this stage of our country's agricultural development, the Dismal Swamp is to be wrested from Nature's waste and by the hand of Man transferred into a garden.

AGRICULTURE, THE BASIS OF ALL INDUSTRIES

A study of the peoples of the earth in their successive appearance in history reveals the truth common to all that the fundamental factor in the constancy of the nation has been agriculture. A review of Egyptian history might be summed up basically in a few words "Culture sticks in the valley of the Nile like a mummy in its coffin."

Where fertility of the soil is, there is found a stable civilization.

While the mass of the population of any country have enough to eat and free access to the rudimentary pleasures of existence, the seeds of revolution ripen slowly if at all. Stability and constancy of nations have always been and always