

**THE AGRARIAN CRUSADE:
A CHRONICLE OF THE
FARMER IN POLITICS**

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The Agrarian Crusade: A Chronicle of the Farmer in Politics by Solon J. Buck

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PREFACE

RAPID growth accompanied by a somewhat painful readjustment has been one of the leading characteristics of the history of the United States during the last half century. In the West the change has been so swift and spectacular as to approach a complete metamorphosis. With the passing of the frontier has gone something of the old freedom and the old opportunity; and the inevitable change has brought forth inevitable protest, particularly from the agricultural class. Simple farming communities have wakened to find themselves complex industrial regions in which the farmers have frequently lost their former preferred position. The result has been a series of radical agitations on the part of farmers determined to better their lot. These movements have manifested different degrees of coherence and intelligence, but all have had something of the same purpose and spirit, and all may justly be considered as stages of the still

unfinished agrarian crusade. This book is an attempt to sketch the course and to reproduce the spirit of that crusade from its inception with the Granger movement, through the Greenback and Populist phases, to a climax in the battle for free silver.

In the preparation of the chapters dealing with Populism I received invaluable assistance from my colleague, Professor Lester B. Shippee of the University of Minnesota; and I am indebted to my wife for aid at every stage of the work, especially in the revision of the manuscript.

SOLON J. BUCK.

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THE AGRARIAN CRUSADE

CHAPTER I

THE INCEPTION OF THE GRANGE

WHEN President Johnson authorized the Commissioner of Agriculture, in 1866, to send a clerk in his bureau on a trip through the Southern States to procure "statistical and other information from those States," he could scarcely have foreseen that this trip would lead to a movement among the farmers, which, in varying forms, would affect the political and economic life of the nation for half a century. The clerk selected for this mission, one Oliver Hudson Kelley, was something more than a mere collector of data and compiler of statistics: he was a keen observer and a thinker. Kelley was born in Boston of a good Yankee family that could boast kinship with Oliver Wendell Holmes and Judge Samuel Sewall. At the age of twenty-three