

HOW FARMERS CO-OPERATE AND DOUBLE PROFITS

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How Farmers Co-Operate and Double Profits by Clarence Poe

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CLARENCE POE

**HOW FARMERS
CO-OPERATE AND
DOUBLE PROFITS**



SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

His faithful and at last triumphantly successful work in getting Irish farmers organized for business co-operation should be an inspiration to all who are trying to effect similar results in our own country. (See Chapters XVIII, XIX, and XX.)

How Farmers Co-operate and Double Profits

First-Hand Reports on All the Leading Forms of Rural
Co-operation in the United States and Europe—
Stories That Show How Farmers Can
Co-operate by Showing How
They Have Done It and
Are Doing It



BY
CLARENCE POE

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National Conference on Marketing and Farm Credits; Chairman
Topics Committee National Farmers' Union; Author of
"Cotton," "A Southerner in Europe," "Where
Half the World is Waking Up," etc.

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1915

U. S. D. A.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF

My Father and Mother

PLAIN, HARD-WORKING FARMER-FOLK, WITH WHOM I SHARED THE
POVERTY AND HARDSHIPS OF THE DAYS BEFORE EDUCATION
HAD BROUGHT THE HOPE OF BETTER THINGS, OR CO-OPERA-
TION POINTED OUT THE WAY - THE DAYS WHEN NO EQUI-
TABLE SYSTEM OF RURAL CREDITS OFFERED ESCAPE
FROM THE ROBBERY OF "TIME PRICES"; WHEN OUT-
WORN MARKETING METHODS LEFT TO OTHERS
ALL THE HANDLING OF OUR PRODUCTS AND
ALL VOICE IN PRICING WHAT WE BOUGHT
OF OTHERS OR WHAT OTHERS BOUGHT
OF US; AND WHEN THE INEVITABLE
MORTGAGE FOLLOWED, MENAC-
ING LIKE A SWORD OF DAMO-
CLES, WHILE WE TOILED.

IN THE FAITH THAT THROUGH CO-OPERATION A
FAIRER DAY NOW DAWNS FOR ALL WHO GROW THE FRUITS
OF THE EARTH, THIS BOOK IS OFFERED BY

THE AUTHOR

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author has endeavored to make this volume a practical guide-book on the subject of rural co-operation—not a book setting forth what might be done, but a book of actual reports of what has been done and is doing; stories based on first-hand investigations.

I went to Ireland, France and Denmark and have visited State after State in our own Union expressly for the purpose of seeing on the spot just what is being accomplished in every important line of agricultural co-operation and then giving this information directly to my readers. There is, I believe, just one conspicuous success in agricultural co-operation that I have wholly missed—the co-operation of citrus fruit growers in Florida and California. I have visited both these States, but I have not personally investigated their citrus fruit organizations. Nor have I been able to visit the Arkansas Cotton Marketing Association described in Chapter XVI.

In keeping with the spirit of this volume, I have thought it best to have both these activities described, as other activities are, from the standpoint of personal knowledge and investigation. I am, therefore, indebted to my friend, Prof. W. R. Camp, formerly of California, for preparing Chapter XV almost as it stands, and to my friend Prof. D. N. Barrow, for preparing the interesting report of the Scott Cotton Growers' Association in Chapter XVI.

C. P.

INTRODUCTION: AN APPEAL FOR LEADERSHIP

THIS book, as I have already suggested, is intended as a guide-book to business co-operation among farmers. And yet in the very outset I would say this one emphatic word to the reader: We may have any number of guide-books on co-operation, we may have free and unlimited lectures, pamphlets, bulletins, etc., describing the advantages of co-operation, and yet if one thing is lacking we can do nothing. That one thing is *Leadership*.

Knowledge, Faith, Leadership—this is the trinity of essentials in rural co-operation, and the greatest of these is Leadership. Give us Leadership and all the other things will be added to us.

Let me, therefore, in the very beginning put this question to the reader: *Why not make yourself a leader of progress in your neighborhood—a leader in bringing about the co-operative spirit and co-operative effort?*

Co-operation is, indeed, the master word of the new century, and in your neighborhood and all other neighborhoods all the farmers must learn to work together.

You can't farm profitably any longer unless you do. You must work with your neighbors in buying fertilizers and supplies. You must work with them in buying and using modern labor-saving machinery. You must work with them in getting more and better live stock. You must work with them in packing, shipping and selling your crops after you grow them. You must work with them to develop some system of rural credits whereby men may help one another out of the Slough of Debt and on to the Highroad of Independence. And having done all this, it will yet remain true that you cannot have a satisfying life, no matter how much money you make, unless your neighbors

are educated, a reading people, well-informed, neighborly and anxious to join with you for better schools, better roads, prettier homes, a richer social and intellectual life, and for a happy, "pull-together" neighborhood.

Get the vision, then, reader friend, young or old, man or woman: You can't be as happy as you ought to be unless your neighborhood is as happy as it ought to be. You can't prosper as you ought to unless your neighbors prosper as they ought to. Get the vision and keep the faith. Make yourself a leader in revolutionizing your neighborhood.

Hard work? We know it. Slow work? There is no doubt about it. But go to it with the foreknowledge that the work will be hard and slow. Go to it even with the knowledge that—hardest of all to bear—there will come bitter days when the very men you yearn to help will judge you wrongly and misinterpret your motives, and you will weary of the struggle as Jonah did under his gourdvine, or Elijah under the juniper tree, or as Moses grew sick at heart when the Canaan-bound Hebrews mutinied because he had not let them alone in their bondage.

Go to the work, we say, with the knowledge that it will not be wholly easy, and yet with the knowledge that it will be glorious in the end; glorious even if you do not see the end, but die having only inspired someone else to carry on the task you could not finish. Be glad the task is hard; be glad it is a man-sized job. There would be no heroism in doing it if it were not. You gain no strength in wrestling with the weak, but only in wrestling with the strong. And so you win soul-strength, strength of character, only by doing hard things. "Oh, do not pray for easier tasks," as someone has well said, "but pray God to make us stronger men." And Dr. S. C. Armstrong said a thing we should never forget when he declared: "Doing what can't be done is the glory of living."

Despite all the difficulties, therefore, be content that your own life will be incomparably richer, happier and more meaningful if you will but throw your whole soul into the