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North Carolina Farmers' State Alliance,

Old Sparta, N. C., 18

Rest, Rotation and Diversification.

When asked recently to name the most prominent defect in our system of ~~Agriculture~~ ~~Farm~~ Farming we did not hesitate to say Our lands are too closely cropped. We are endeavoring to do, upon a comparatively poor soil, what no other people have ever dared attempt - viz. cultivate lands year after year, in hard crops, without the use of barn-yard manure. After a farmer has decided what crops can most profitably be grown on his farm, which depends upon the character of the market, as well as upon the quality of the soil, he should adopt and faithfully follow a system of rotation of these crops. The same crop grown upon the same land for a number of years will

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deteriorate. Some crops much more than others. Notably at the extremes of this are Cotton and Sweet potatoes crops. The former we have seen apparently quite as productive at the expiration of twenty years successive cropping, applying annually, the usual amount and quality of Compost, while the latter under similar cultivation would cease to produce a tuber after four or five years. Crop-rotation became a subject of scientific investigation and discussion more than a century ago, and since then much has been written upon it; and while the theories differ widely as to the cause or causes of the demonstrated good to be derived from a judicious rotation, all admit the fact. Rotation of crops baffles, in a large measure the root enemies, both insect and

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Fungus that prey upon them. Each plant having its own peculiar enemies, changing of plants removes them to fields unoccupied by such enemies. This is true of the above-ground growth of plants to an important degree. Rotation and diversification distribute labor over the year, keeps them employed and contented, aiding in some extent the solution of the labor problem and look but not least the farmer realizes from his products from June to December thereby aiding him to a cash basis of operations the great desideratum of the day.

While the grasses, including clover, and roots enter so largely into the systems of rotations in England and the northern States they are out of the

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question in this immediate section, but in their stead we have the Sweet potatoe and the pea. The latter a perfect substitute for clover on our light soils. Very great stress is laid upon keeping down the weeds, in more northern latitudes, hence their objection to letting the land lie fallow at all, but with us we look upon the weed as a blessing rather than otherwise, never giving trouble in good crops. Our personal experience being that there is an increase of 25% in the cotton crop ~~above~~ after ^{a fallow} ~~crop~~ of weeds over and over a crop grown on land cultivated two years in succession. This makes or more the profit in the crop.

Our object is not to give details of cultivation or to prescribe a method of rotation but let that be brought out by the discussion of the subject.