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The Crop Reports **Important Factor in Commercial World**

By **CHARLES C. CLARK**,
Associate Statistician, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

IT IS universally conceded that farming—agriculture—is the basic industry upon which all other industries greatly depend. The measure of the country's prosperity, and the purchasing power of the people is increased or diminished as the crops are bountiful or meager. Therefore the commercial interests of the country are vitally affected by the quantity and quality of the crops; and it becomes a matter of vast importance to them to know "in advance" what the crop prospects are during the growing season and what the output is at harvest.

With such information carefully and scientifically gathered and compiled, and honestly disseminated, so that it can be depended upon as being as reliable as any forecast or estimate can possibly be, and relied upon as emanating from an impartial and disinterested source, the merchants and manufacturers of the country can certainly act with a degree of prudence and intelligence not possible were the information lacking.

If reports show, during the growing season, that the condition of wheat is such as to indicate a full crop on a large area, the merchants of the wheat-producing sections of the country know that they can give liberal orders for goods to be handled by them several weeks or months later; the manufacturers, located far from the wheat fields, know where there will be a large demand for such of their products as are used by all dependent upon the wheat industry; the railroad companies know they will have heavy freights to transport; and so the advance knowledge regarding the probable future outcome of the crop serves as a guide to every branch of commerce and trade connected with the wheat-growing areas of the country. The same is true as to the other crops—corn, cotton, oats, rye, tobacco, etc.

If, on the other hand, the condition of growing crops is unfavorable, reliable information to that effect is equally, in fact more, important to trade and commerce than when the promise is good.

It was to remedy the evils and to subserve and protect the interests of all, as above noted, that congress provided for issuing monthly crop reports, and the crop-reporting service of the department of agriculture aims to supply the public at large with impartial, unbiased information regarding crop areas, conditions, and yields which, it must be apparent, is highly essential and beneficial not only to farmers, but also, equally, to our commercial interests of every kind and class.

Writing from Real Life

By **JAMES B. CONNOLLY**,
Author of "Out of Gloucester."

And never a story worth while that did not come from life, which is, after all, as much in the spirit as in the body, as much in the aspirations as in the accomplishments; but this does not mean that we try to tell a story as we hear it—does any imaginative person ever?—but you hear a story and it suggests to you a treatment by which it may be made to serve a purpose. When you get through with it it may differ as much from the original tale as the plant does from the seed, but in that original tale was the germinal idea, and isn't that about all that anybody with a moderately varied experience in life needs? You are given the skeleton; it is for you to add flesh and blood and breathe the spirit into it; and will not the likeness to a real human being which that figure displays be about in proportion to our knowledge of human nature and whatever little gift we may have for inducing others to see things as do we ourselves?

As to the plot—need that matter much? And if it does, they lie all about us—life is full of plots—not always equal to the demands of melodrama, perhaps, but sufficient to the largest requirement. Take any group of people, of varying standards of conduct, and set them striving for some one thing, and do we not immediately get a struggle of some kind—and doesn't every struggle develop its own plot? For myself, I think a plot should be kept very much under, as it is in actual life, where there are very few villains and very few sublime heroes, and where a man's course is a hundred times more likely to be guided by impulse than by intellectually guided action.



Death Penalty Is State Murder

By **COUNT LEO TOLSTOI**.

The death penalty is one of those terribly inhuman acts against which I find myself unable to protest with sufficient strength, or with sufficiently far-reaching influence. I can quite understand that in a moment of irritation, of anger, of vengeance, or of forgetfulness of one's human character, one may kill another, either in defense of those dear to one or in one's own defense. A man may, under the influence of patriotic intoxication, even participate in the common murder of war. That men in the full possession of their human faculties, however, in cold blood, admit the necessity of murdering a fellow-creature or force other men to commit an act so contrary to human nature—that I have never understood, even in 1866, when, as a soldier, my life was the narrow one of the egotist.

The catechisms tell us that it is not a crime to kill a person, when the depriving of such a person of his life is an act of the state or an act of justice. In legal and scientific works all the arts of sophistry are resorted to, in order to prove that killing, in the interests of the state, is a necessary process in the advance of civilization. Haeckel, for example, declares that the death penalty is not only a just chastisement for criminals, but a benefit for the better part of the human race. . . . It is my opinion that the mechanism of the state, inconceivable without murder, is incompatible with Christianity.



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