

**PROGRESS OF SOUTHERN ROADS.**

Many good judges are of the opinion that the next great development of railroad prosperity, if not of railroad consolidation, will be seen in the South. That region possesses vast possibilities as yet but little cultivated by modern promoters. The field is rich and the rewards of enterprise are close at hand. In some of the states better laws for the protection of creditors are needed as a part of the foundation for industrial success. These doubtless will come in time. As for natural products, the South has an iron region that rivals in richness and surpasses in cheapness of production that of Pennsylvania, bituminous coal of superior quality in inexhaustible amounts, timber of world-wide fame, a favorable climate for live stock and miscellaneous agricultural products of infinite variety, culminating in cotton, still the king of the South, as corn and wheat are the king and the queen of the west.

As elsewhere, of course, the industries of the South, to whatever extent established, require facilities for transportation, and speaking broadly, these already are provided abundantly. One has only to travel below the Potomac and the Ohio to become impressed with the great amount of railway mileage, considering the sparseness of population, and with the general excellence of the transportation service. The average speed of passenger trains is by no means low. Indeed, in the mountainous regions of the Appalachian system, in which sharp and frequent curves are inevitable, it is quite high enough for comfort. The freight service in like manner, particularly in the handling of perishable fruits and vegetables, is fairly up-to-date, although the rules of rate making in the southern territory are sui generis, and are open to attack. One hardly could ask for a better system than that, for example, of the Central of Georgia, in which merchandise sent by steamer to Savannah is laid down regularly, as if by clockwork, in Birmingham, Ala., in five days from New York, or for more expeditious traveling than that of the Southern's fast mail at two hours and a half for the 106 miles between Alexandria and Charlottesville.

**Tendency to Consolidate.**

The tendency to consolidation has been less marked below the Potomac and the Ohio than north of these natural boundaries, although it has gone on to no small extent. Numerous cross-country and local lines still exist at a poor dying rate, the only logical end of which will be annexation to their more powerful neighbors. Amalgamation is prevented to some extent by hostile legislation, but more by differences of opinion with regard to value. Railway lines "built to sell" are not unknown. At the present time the greater part of the southern mileage east of the Mis-

issippi is embraced in ten systems, viz: Chesapeake & Ohio, Norfolk & Western, Southern, Seaboard, Atlantic Coast, Plant, Central of Georgia, Louisville & Nashville, Mobile & Ohio and Illinois Central. Of these, of course, the Illinois Central is more a northern than a southern company, while the Louisville & Nashville, Mobile & Ohio and Norfolk & Western also have important interests north of the Ohio. The Southern and the Seaboard alone are showing marked tendencies to continued expansion.

What further consolidations, if any, among the ten systems, mentioned are likely to come about, it would be difficult to say. In the case of the Chesapeake & Ohio and the Norfolk & Western, the joint operation of which would be natural enough, geographically and topographically speaking, a formal union would add little to the security of investors, in view of the large interest and the powerful influence of the Pennsylvania railroad in both properties. The Central of Georgia already is affiliated in interest with the Southern. The Mobile & Ohio is a thorn in the flesh of the Southern, the Louisville & Nashville and the Illinois Central, but it is easily self-sustaining, and to be acquired will have to be paid for. The Southern has picked up a number of feeders within a few months, and the Seaboard probably will follow suit after the completion of the consolidation of the present system, but, so far as is known, no great "deals" like those of late in Lake Erie & Western, Chesapeake & Ohio, etc., are in sight.

**Revenues Increasing.**

Most of the southern companies for two years past have had steadily increasing revenues, and money for improvements has not been given out with a niggardly hand. The conditions of traffic in the South generally do not lend themselves to such a maximum of economy in transportation as is possible in the grain belt of the Northwest or among the coal and ore carriers of the

trunk lines. More depends there upon management, less upon natural conditions. The important subject of train mileage has been grappled with great intelligence by some of the leading managers, and particularly those of the Southern Railway with gratifying results in net income. Much good western blood is now employed with distinguished success in the railroad work of the South. In the markets for stocks and bonds, the securities of the leading lines in that part of the country have gained in credit materially since 1898. The disappearance of the distrust that used to be felt concerning them is no more than the natural consequence of the manifest improvement that, according to all present indications, will go on to gain strength for some time to come. —Railway Age.

**AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY IN ARCHÆOLOGY.**

An inscription, which is regarded as a verification of biblical history, was recently discovered on the gateway of an old palace at Ephesus. This important discovery was first announced to the archaeological congress at Rome by Professor Bohermann of the Vienna University. The professor of the British museum has investigated the inscription and has pronounced it genuine. He regards it of great importance as it establishes, he says, the authenticity of the correspondence alleged to have taken place between Jesus Christ and King Agrippa. These letters were written A. D. 97, and were found about 84 miles from Iconium. The letter of King Agrippa to Christ reads as follows:

"I have heard of thee, and the cures wrought by thee without herbs or medicines. For it is reported that thou restoreth sight to the blind and make the lame to walk; cleanseth the leper; raiseth the dead; casteth out devils and unclean spirits and healeth those that are tormented of disease of a long continuance. Hearing all this of thee I was fully persuaded that thou art the

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