



Home Plantation Manufacturing Company, Limited,

HOHEN SOLMS.

Ascension Parish, La., Mar 23 1893

Dear Mr. Fonger

Dear Sir,

Mayville N.Y.

I have spent over three months in the "Southland" having had unusual facilities for observing the condition of society here in La both in city and country. There has been a daily reading of the New Orleans "Picayune" and "Times Democrat" and enclosed a clipping from the latter. The brief remarks of Mr Stubbs in State Immigration Convention held in New Orleans a day or two since. The sighing for good old days is almost audible in print and simply reveals what is in the unspoken hearts of the chivalric sons of Louisiana. The modern Greece! This same ailment is indulged in by several families on this plantation where I have been entertained but the blackman has not yet taken it up. He simply explains that he is left so helpless by his friends in the North who promised him so much when he was helping us fight our battles "durin de war", "Our children" said one old man to me "are being made to believe that our old masters gave us our freedom voluntarily and are now providing us with the means of support consequently to make sure of



Home Plantation Manufacturing Company, Limited,

HOHEN SOLMS.

Ascension Parish, La.,

189

a living they are ready to vote the Democratic ticket. Something must be done said he or all our boys will be Democrats certain sure. They can get one dollar apiece as often as they step up and vote to sustain "organized labor" &c. &c.

I was impressed with what I saw written in chalk on one of the large endless tanks in the store room on this plantation when I came here in Dec. The manager, president, engineer and assistant manager were with me when I read orally as follows —

"The United League for anti work is now in full session. All worthy men are entitled to enter. For full particulars apply to the President." I inquired what this meant. No one volunteered an answer but some humming glances were exchanged and next time I visited the store room the inscription was erased. Some are bold enough to acknowledge the methods prevailing to carry their purposes here at election while others deny them or refuse to talk. The victims lie in the grave yard and tell no tales while a patent long suffering one inquires "How long O Lord how long!"

I return to my home in Deloit, Kansas next week full to the brim. Yours in the work Certificate No 485

of the Audubon Park Experimental Station. In the course of his speech, said:

Louisiana in agricultural wealth and resources, among her sister States, towers above them all like "Saul among the prophets." She is emphatically "primus inter pares." Her agricultural resources are simply inconceivable and unsurpassed by any territory of equal area on earth. It can be truly said that if the great Architect of the universe had given to the ablest agricultural scientist now known, this globe of ours, with the request that he carved therefrom in one area 45,000 square miles of the richest lands on earth, he could not more successfully accomplish his task than has been done by our political ancestors in prescribing the geographical limits of Louisiana. If doubt exist as to the truth of this assertion, a hasty examination of this State will convince the most skeptical. Entering the southern part of the State, we find the far-famed valley of the Mississippi river, with its numerous outlying bayous, so splendidly adapted to the cultivation of semi-tropical crops and fruits and early truck gardening. Passing to the westward, the immense prairies, once the peaceful abode of the Creole pony and cow, are now the happy homes of thousands of sturdy farmers of the Northwest congregated into villages, hamlets and colonies, which loom up with spectacular grandeur, like silhouettes upon the sky-skirting horizon. Going northward, we reach on the right the inexhaustible long leaf pine forest, now the coveted eyecore of Western lumbermen, dotted all over with steam saw-mills, whose products reach by rail the treeless plains of the Rocky Mountain region, and by water, the States of Mexico, Central and South America. On the left we reach the Red River valley, famous now in history and story, that annually sends its wealthy contributions all over the world from its largely and easily cultivated plantations. This valley alone, had we no other, would be sufficient to give agricultural prominence to our State, but when we supplement it with those magnificent valleys skirting the Oriskany, the Texas, the Macon, Atchafalaya, together with the great Mississippi and its contiguous bayous already mentioned, who can deny that there exists here, in this State, an intensity of fertility in maximum quantities? If, however, objection be made to our alluvial lands, visit the hill country of North Louisiana, where well tilled farms of red and gray lands, owned and controlled by a sturdy, intelligent and progressive yeomanry, will everywhere meet your gaze; where perennial fountains of purest water gush forth from every hillside, and where fruits of a most delicious savor are easily grown and stock of every description cheaply raised.

If a more temperate climate be sought—where the strawberry or the vine in full perfection is grown, and where the smaller agricultural industries are successfully operated, the Florida parishes will meet the requirements, and offer additional advantages of soil and climate not possessed elsewhere in the State.

Should the happy mean of rich alluvial soils upon high hills be most acceptable from both agricultural and hygienic standpoints, then our blue lands, whereon stands our capital city, will completely fill the bill.

These and more are the wonderful advantages possessed by our State, and yet, "mirabile dictu," not one-tenth of her lands are in cultivation. "Why not?" we are all ready to ejaculate. In my humble opinion, the great factor which serves to make our lands unattractive is the division of our State into farms, each isolated and removed from the other, thus destroying the social element of life, the pre-eminent characteristic of advanced civilization. In former times this State was famous for its princely estates, baronial mansions and lordly manors, with their retinue of slaves. Great opulence permitted our planters to entertain, at will, congenial guests by the score at their lovely manors, to hibernate at the hotels of this metropolis, or summer at the fashionable watering places. They employed excellent private tutors for their children, and sent them later in life to our best colleges. To them life in the country was a luxury, and not a necessity. The smaller farms were miniature plantations, created upon the same general plan. But with the close of the war came a change—a change so sad, so radical, so destructive—"Twas Greece, but living Greece no more." Those grand old days, poetic, chivalrous, immortalized now in song and story. Alas! they are no more. Memory throws around them the hallowed snell of romance. What a struggle since that time to maintain this ante-bellum civilization; a civilization purer, brighter than any recorded in the pages of history. How many since the war have gone down in the maelstrom of bankruptcy and despair, by the vain effort to maintain these pristine habits. Every attempt to profitably perpetuate this dynasty

must end, sooner or later, in discomfiture, and "Ishbosh" is written in legible characters upon the walls of every old plantation mansion.

"'Tis true 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true."

Change of Colonization parish was