

To speak of slaves will sound odd to the unthinking, yet a little reflection will easily prove that the worst form of slavery is with us today—aye, even in this twentieth century.

One of the most deeply rooted ideas amongst us today is the strange notion that the farmer is the foremost man in modern production, and as such is entitled to special favors; that but for him all the world would perish, etc., etc., and, as nearly all the farm-slave organizations are built upon this notion, it behooves us to see just how much truth there is in this claim.

There was a time many years ago when farming was the foremost occupation, and it is because of this habit common to humanity of "thinking," if we may put it that way, in the past and living in the present, that old ideas linger on amongst us.

The cultivation of the soil is, after hunting and herding, perhaps the oldest of human pursuits. With its coming slavery was born, for, look you, hunting is a very precarious job at the best, and the hunter, were he dependent upon his gun alone, would oftentimes go hungry; game will become scarce and no skill upon the hunter's part can make it otherwise. In these primitive times it must have been very unstable indeed, and starvation was no doubt often the lot of a people dependent upon the spoils of the chase, varied with roots and nuts.

Hence only sufficient food for the tribe was obtainable, and that by the exertions of "all hands." And, again, a captive of war would hardly be the man to send out hunting, for obvious reasons. The village herdsmen would also of necessity be of the tribe, and trustworthy. But when some wiseacre scratched the soil and found that certain grasses flourished exceedingly thereon, it was not long before prisoners of war were discovered to have a use value, and so they were set to work instead of being killed as heretofore; for it was possible,