

## Why we grow

This article, originally printed in William Pepper's *Kansas Farmer*, explains the reasons behind the growth of the Populist movement. Consequently the article focuses on corruption within the government, which has led to legislation that discriminates in favor of the wealthy and privileged and at the expense of the working man. The *Farmer's Wife* was created by Ira and Emma Pack, who published it from Topeka, Shawnee County, from 1891 until 1894. The newspaper served as a forum to discuss reform movements (including populism and suffrage), to present human interest stories, and to offer practical advice to Kansas women.

Creator: The Farmer's Wife

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will show the work of the toilers there. In Texas, if a vote were taken to-day, the people's ticket would receive at least 60,000 votes, and democracy would be about 50,000 short of its old strength. So it is going in more than half the states. The heaven is working.

### WHY WE GROW.

From the Kansas Farmer.

The unrest among the people out of which the farmers' movement grew was the result of legislation in the interest of protected classes of citizens, legislation discriminating in favor of money and against other kinds of property. The end of the great war found the southern states destitute of money and needing large amounts. The demand there was fully equal to the surplus left among the people of the north occasioned by a cessation of war requirements; but instead of keeping the circulation at what it was when the war closed, 75 per cent of it was withdrawn and put into long-time bonds within four years after the armies were disbanded. Whereas we had \$1,500,000,000 of government paper currency out July 1, 1865, there was only about \$450,000,000 out on the 30th day of June, 1869. [See report of secretary of the treasury, 1869.] As had been foreseen and foretold by Senators Sherman, Morton and others, great depreciation of property followed the excessive contraction of the currency, and debts had been increased accordingly. Bondholders, bankers and stock-brokers amassed fortunes in a few years, while the producing classes became correspondingly poor. The same influences still operate. We have not more than one-third enough money to do the business of the people, and as a consequence the same debt is now about three times as large as it was eight years ago. Rates of interest—8 to 10 per cent in 1867—amount to 24 to 30 per cent now, because of the depreciation of property. A bushel of wheat then paid \$2 worth of interest; now it pays only about 75 cents' worth.

It is because of these facts—not because of short crops—that farmers do not cease to study the science of "economical government;" and it is because of these things that the alliance continues to grow. Until our financial methods are improved the growth will not be stopped. The causes which originally brought the alliance into existence are now more plainly visible and are better understood than they were then, and logically political action becomes necessary on our part. The leaders of the two great parties are wedded to the philosophy which has brought disaster to us. There is no room for hope in either of those directions. No source of relief is open to us except such as we ourselves shall open. Understanding this, farmers and wage-workers are combining everywhere for independent political action. The people's party is growing as fast as the alliance did in 1889 and '90. The elections in Kentucky, Ohio and Iowa this year will surprise everybody. The democratic majority in Kentucky will be greatly reduced, if not utterly wiped out, while republicans in Ohio and Iowa