

# AMONG THE HOP PICKERS



**H**OP picking has been in progress in the valleys of California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia for a month past, and the fields have presented scenes of bustling industry from early dawn till twilight. For several weeks yet the work

will continue in some places, and then the fields will be deserted until the rains and sun of another year again cover the poles with a luxuriant growth of vines and ripen the myriads of clinging blossoms.

Hops are picked in California chiefly by Chinamen. In Oregon Chinese labor is used in some places, but white people of all ages go into the fields and help gather the crop. Many of the pupils of the Indian training school at Chemawa also earn much money in this way every season. Chinese labor is not so desirable as that of white people or Indians in the hop fields, and growers only employ it as a matter of necessity to save their crops. Such a sudden demand for labor for so brief a period exhausts all ordinary supplies, and hundreds go into the hop fields to work who do not seek employment at other seasons of the year. In Washington and British Columbia Indian labor is relied upon, and the natives make the best and most profitable pickers. The hop fields of Yakima valley are filled with pickers from the adjacent reservation, where live some of the most industrious and progressive Indians to be found in the west, while those of the Puget sound valleys and the delta of Fraser river depend upon the natives that live about the shores of Puget sound and on the mainland and islands that skirt the coast from Washington to Alaska. It is a field of this class of pickers that is so truthfully represented in the sketch on the first page. In the luxuriant growth of the matted and tangled vines, in the masses of clinging hops, and in the unique appearance of the pickers, old

and young, male and female, with their long hair and brightly colored garments, the sketch is most true to life.

Puyallup valley is the most extensively cultivated to hops of any section of the Pacific coast. No less than 2,000 acres of vines, in fields varying in size from five to 300 acres, are being picked, and probably 3,000 hands, chiefly Indians, are engaged in the work. This far-famed valley possesses a deep, alluvial soil of great fertility, and the yield of hops is marvelous. In an ordinary season an average of 2,000 pounds to the acre is looked for, while 3,500 pounds have often been produced under favorable conditions. This has been a season of unprecedented dryness, and the yield has been below the average everywhere; yet from 1,500 to 2,000 pounds per acre is the report that comes from the most careful growers. A field of six and one-half acres in White river valley, near Puyallup valley, yielded 18,180 pounds, or almost 3,000 pounds to the acre. When such results can be obtained in a season like the present, it speaks well for the quality of soil and climate and the good cultivation and care of the grower. But it is not so much of the hops as the interesting and picturesque pickers, of which our engravings treat, that it is intended here to speak.

As the season draws near for the picking to begin, the Indians gradually assemble from far and near, and a most motley crew they are. Those from over the mountains come on horses, with their worldly effects on pack animals, the squaws with their papposes strapped to their backs, and the bucks with their rifles in their hands. With them they bring the simple constituents of their domestic life, consisting of a few blankets, some skins from which to construct a lodge, and a meagre supply of utensils for culinary purposes. Those that come from the shores of the sound or the more distant coast to the north make the journey in their large canoes, huge boats of their own handiwork carved from the trunks of the giant cedars of the north, with figures carved on the projecting prows that would put to shame the images of Betsy Ann and maids of the sea that adorn our merchant marine. Twenty people can find seats in one of these cedar craft, and whole tribes make this annual southern pilgrimage in a fleet of canoes, much in the same way as in earlier years war parties used to invade the sound country, camping along the beach wherever night overtakes them. The