

Says Hood River Is Affected With "Appleitis"

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worked for years for a transcontinental railroad at \$125 a month, and after four years of orcharding has repeatedly refused \$100,000 for his apple lands which net him easily \$25,000 a year.

"At the Minnesota State Fair I saw, arranged on tables in the Agricultural building, the best apples that the commonwealth could furnish, but I know now that they are only 'farm apples.' By and by I went to the Biennial Apple Fair at Hood River, a funny little new town perched on the high banks between which the stream for which it is named tumbles into the Columbia, some sixty miles east of Portland. The Oregon Railway and Navigation Company ran a special train to Hood River that day, and it carried four hundred or so of the best people in Portland, well groomed, well mannered, gracious, sane to all outward appearances, but all, if the truth were known, stark, staring, apple mad.

"The first thing you see when you get out of the train at Hood River is a shining little kiosk, ornate enough, perched on the steep bank at the top of the steps that lead up from the station. It has a big glass front and a sign, electric lighted at night, runs clear across the front of it, announcing to the passing world that 'all apples sold here are guaranteed by the Hood River Commercial Club.'

"Hood River history, which does not reach back so very far, tells that some penny-hunting little boys sold scrubby apples around the station and thereby blackened Hood River's apple fame, which is its greatest possession. So the official apple-stand was established and does a land-office business.

"The town was packed with people for the Apple Fair. Side shows, with manifold marvels and leather-

lunged barkers, jugglers, freaks, bearded ladies, and performing dogs were established in the steep hillside streets, but nobody gave much heed to them. It was apples they had come to see. At the corner of the main thoroughfare was seen a tent, a circus tent that would have held comfortably a two-ring show, and inside of it and about its doors, or somewhere in the vicinity, seemed to be gathered everybody in Hood River who wasn't engaged in running a railroad or some other indispensable institution. Inside there were apples, apples, apples, of every hue from the pale green of the Newtown, through all the shades of yellow, and starting with the pink blush of the Winter Banana, there were other apples that made a regular procession of rosy colors down to the indescribably deep crimson of the Arkansas Black. There were boxes of apples in the smiling tiers known as the 'Hood River pack'; there were pyramids and bowls and baskets and plates of apples of every shape and name known to the grower, and some 'sports' got by accidental cross-pollination, beautiful, fragrant, delectable, but nameless.

"Some people had sent a few grapes and pears just to show what the soil would do, but they were lost sight of. On a long platform at one end of the tent was a show of apple preserves, apple butter, apple jelly, apple this and apple that—everything that has ever been made from apples. At one side, in an enclosure, two of Hood River's best looking girls, one representing the Golden, the other the Delicious, drew Hood River cider from Hood River barrels and distributed it free, and the people as they drank it talked—apples.

"Over the boxes spread out along the aisles were blue and red and yellow premium ribbons, and it was told that the apple-wise judges had sat up till morning trying to find some difference between the first and second boxes, that they had even

'broken the pack,' taken out every apple, tape-measured them all for uniformity, tested them apple against apple, before yielding the momentous verdict. When the strenuous vigil ended and day came to Hood River, they had awarded three of the five capital prizes to one man, and the singular thing about it was that all the apples that brought him honors were grown on one small orchard of about three acres. This furnishes the keynote, the moral and the explanation of Oregon and Washington fruit, and is bound to center attention upon the possibilities of small acreage and the truth, which America is so slow to learn, that intensive cultivation is the secret of agricultural profit, and of vast increase in national wealth.

"When an outsider comes to town Hood River looks him over and wonders what kind of a neighbor he will make, for it is an old story, here and in almost everyone of these high class fruit districts, that the unbeliever from afar comes to scoff, and remains—to raise apples.

"A bad apple can no more get out of Hood River than the camel can pass through the needle's eye, for there is no road over the mountain by which a valley orchardman could, even if he wished, take his bogus fruit to another station for shipment. No man in the Hood River district even packs his own apples. When the picking is under way and some hundreds or thousands of boxes have been gathered in the growers' apple houses, the union sends out packers. Every packer has a number, every box—and there were nearly a quarter of a million of them last fall—has a number. When the apples at last go down to Hood River station for shipment, or to be held in the union's cold storage houses, each box is entered by number in the union's books to the grower's credit, together with record of its contents, the number of the packer, and the grade of the fruit, which is either 'fancy' or 'choice.' Where the box is bound for, ordinarily, the grower has no notion, neither does he care much. The union finds the market, conducts the sale, and pays him for his apples at the platform, and its stamp on any box is guarantee of perfection. When a Russian colonel in Vladivostok finds a blemish on a Hood River Jonathan the union deducts the price of the box from its bill against the consignee. It is the boast of these northwestern orchardmen that any apples they ship can be taken from the box and eaten in the dark. It is the standard of quality and the trustworthiness of the guarantee that makes the price. The apple crops of Hood River, Yakima, Wenatchee, and a lot of other places are bought on the trees, in advance of the harvest, by dealers in New York, London, Hong-kong, and numberless other cities, without the sending of any agent to inspect their quality. A name for reliability is indeed an asset of worth."

New York City's Fruit

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buys. They sit and gesticulate, grimy and uncombed, but people who know say that some of them make five or six thousand dollars a year. They never change their way of dress, they find it inconvenient to live uptown, but they stow their money away somewhere until there comes a propitious moment for going into business on a larger scale, or else they save it for a comfortable old age under their native skies. It is rather dazzling when a man without an overcoat, apparently unwashed these many days, ably pulls several hundred dollars out of his pocket or makes an agreement involving thousands, but it is a common occurrence in the fruit business.

All the conditions of the trade have changed within the last decade since the west entered the field. A dealer voiced the general sentiment when he said, "The east can show flavor, all you want, but when it comes to grading and packing the west has got 'em skinned to death." The "good-looking" fruit comes from the west and the trade in this branch is growing with great strides every year. Not long ago an apple was an apple and a peach a peach, but democracy had deserted the orchard. Fine fruit has a market now that it never had before. One of the dealers in this line can show apples from Oregon selling for 25 cents apiece. Questioned as to the price of peaches he observed that the finest sold for \$2 apiece. The glory of raising these aristocrats cannot be claimed by California, however, for they are imported from England and Belgium, but it shows that there is a market and, no doubt, the west will provide a sufficiently high grade article before long. Not more than a dozen or so of these \$2 peaches are sold in the course of a week by the retailer who showed them, but several other houses carry them, and the total must mount up to a respectable figure.

Editor's Note—This is the first of an installment of an article on the above subject which will be published in three parts. It tells where the finest fruit comes from, how much it sells for and gives Hood River the palm for the world's best apples.

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sor to Congressman Miles Poindexter in the Third District. Mr. Halteman made an excellent showing and has a splendid knowledge of the state's needs. Secretary L. P. Kronberger

of the state commission, who was also a prominent factor in making the Washington showing a pronounced success, will probably become a permanent resident of the west side.