

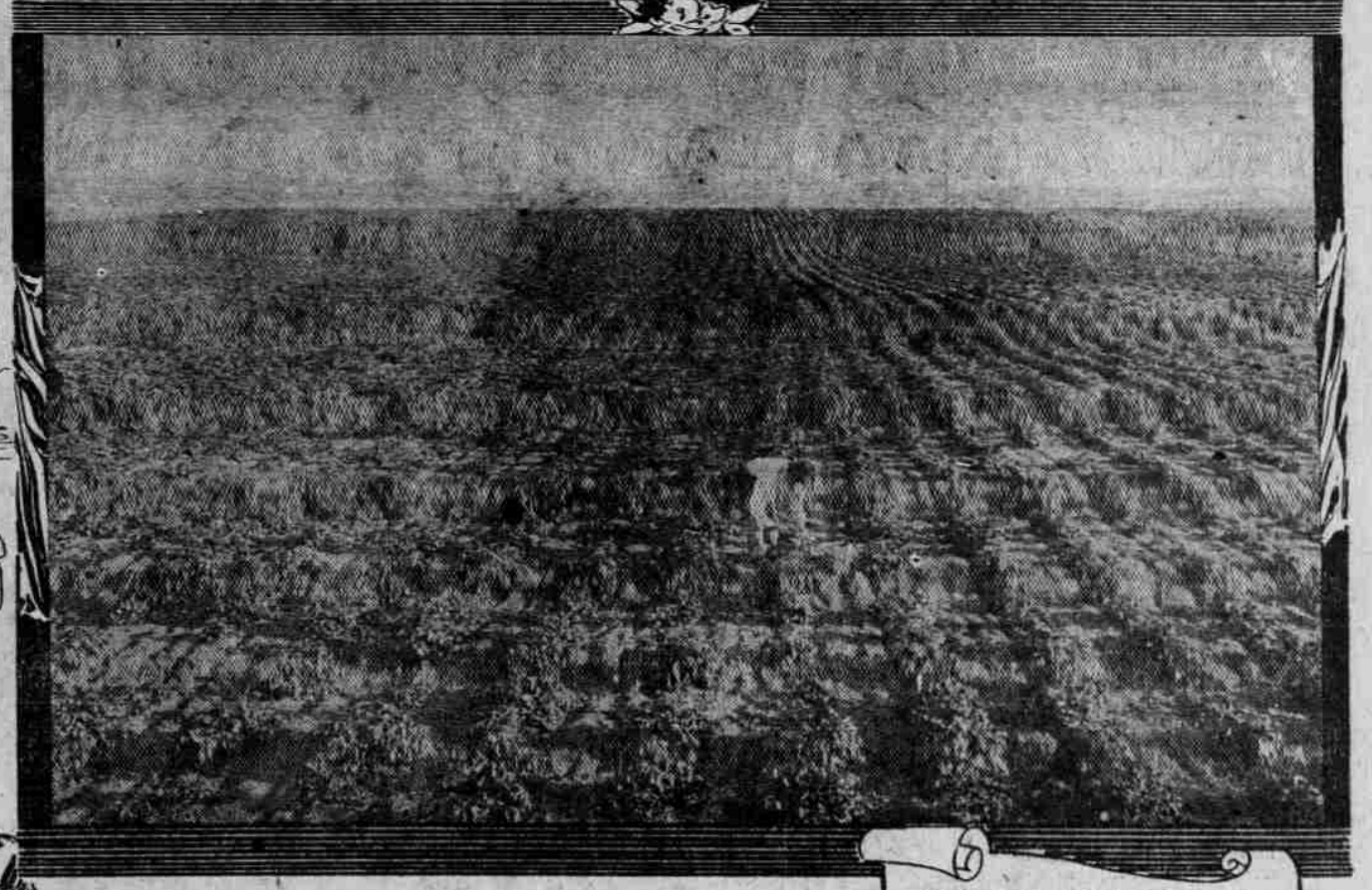
DRY FARMING CONDUCTED BY UNCLE SAM

Novel Work at the Experiment Station at Cheyenne in the Semi-Arid Region.

Great Crops Produced on What Was Regarded as an Unproductive Desert.



ENORMOUS SQUASH, WINDMILL IRRIGATED, ON CHEYENNE EXPERIMENT FARM.



WINTER IRRIGATED POTATOES ON THE GOVERNMENT EXPERIMENT FARM CHEYENNE.



PLOWING, SIXTEEN FEET WIDE AND SEVEN INCHES DEEP, IN VIRGIN PRAIRIE CHEYENNE.



HARVESTING POTATOES, WINTER IRRIGATED, ON GOVERNMENT FARM, CHEYENNE.

WHILE public attention has been directed to the mammoth irrigation enterprises being carried on by the United States Government in various parts of the West little is known of experiments now being carried on in the semi-arid region, which, if successful, will go a long way toward redeeming a vast empire which has hitherto been looked upon as an unproductive desert.

The Government has an experiment station at Cheyenne, Wyo., where work has been carried on for two years with most encouraging results. The station is admirably situated, Cheyenne being in what is known as the semi-arid region, extending several hundred miles eastward from the base of the Rocky Mountains. This vast sweep of plain, which extends from the Gulf to the Canadian line has, until the last few years, been looked upon as a desert waste, fit for nothing but grazing. It was a part of the country that was put down on the early school maps as the "great American desert," and such it has been regarded until recent

events proved it can be successfully farmed.

Successful Dry Farming.

All these lands, which a few years ago were comparatively worthless, have been jumped, anywhere from ten to 40 fold in value in the last few years. The so-called Campbell process of dry farming has done the most to bring about this revolution in prices. Ranch houses are dotting the once barren landscape, and wheat fields wave in the breeze where once only the sagebrush and dry buffalo grass bent the eye. Not alone is dry farming being practiced successfully, but it has been demonstrated that windmill irrigation can be carried on, as water has been struck with little digging, and, in some localities, fine artesian wells are flowing.

The Government has been awake to all these changes. It is the policy of the Agricultural Department to investigate

anything that looks as if it might increase the agricultural resources of the country, and this policy has held true in the case of dry farming. The experiment station was located at Cheyenne, because here conditions are typical of the average conditions on the semi-arid plains. The rainfall is something over 12 inches, and the snowfall is quite heavy. The winter climate is not severe, and the Summers are characteristic of the plains—bearly hot in the daytime, but very cool at night.

When soil was broken on the virgin prairie, there were many to prophesy that no crops would be raised at the experiment station. But several hundred acres were planted in variegated crops, and the general results have been surprising. Various kinds of farming have been practiced, including dry farming and windmill irrigation.

Conservation of the Moisture.

Dry farming proper is simply a conservation of the moisture in the soil. It is by no means a new discovery, though it is called the Campbell process, through a few new features which were added by H. W. Campbell, whose practical work yielded the first real result in the West. It is said the ancient Egyptians prac-

ticed dry farming, having discovered the secret that if the earth is kept constant, broken and pulverized there is little chance for the moisture to escape. If left to bake hard, the moisture of winter and early spring will soon evaporate from the earth, but if the soil is kept crumbled it will retain dampness until far into the summer, without need of irrigation. By following this simple rule, the Government has produced great crops at the Cheyenne experiment station with no other aid than the natural rainfall of the plains.

To the uninitiated, dry farming looks like a hopeless task at the start. All around is a barren, rolling prairie, covered with sagebrush and cactus and dry grass. These were the favorite ranging grounds of the buffaloes in early days, but no man at that time imagined that ranches would dot the vast prairie sea.

Not was any such thing imagined by the emigrants who came later and left the bones of their stock on the parched plains—only by the first who traveled over the stage routes to Denver.

But, when the virgin prairie sod has been turned over by the great steam plow and the top soil has been pulverized, and the crop sown, there is a different story to tell. Soon the first green of the crop begins to show. The scientific farmer keeps the soil well crumbled, not giving it a chance to bake in the hot sun. There is no rain, and each day the sky is cloudless. But the soil remains moist, and the crop continues to shoot from the ground. Then it yellows, and at harvest there is a crop that well repays the efforts of the farmer. If there have been a few showers, so much the better—but even without these aids it is possible to grow good crops, provided the rainfall

and snowfall of early spring have been normal.

Windmill Irrigation.

The Government has secured not less wonderful results from windmill irrigation on the experiment farm at Cheyenne. Irrigated crop do not need more than two irrigations in a season. One irrigation, at precisely the right time, will often save a crop. Consequently the farmer who has a well with a good flow of water is doubly safeguarded. It is possible for him to make a small reservoir into which he can pump water from his well. This water can be turned on his crops in July and August, and he will not need to keep his soil so thoroughly pulverized as if he were doing strictly dry farming.

With the use of denatured alcohol in

this country, in place of gasoline, it is anticipated that small pumps will take the place of windmills in many instances on the plains. Thus the farmer will have at the caprice of winds, but will have a constant flow of water for irrigating purposes.

The first report of the Government experiment station on the plains has yet to be made. It is announced that one will be issued this spring. But there is no doubt as to the practical success of the experiments in these new kinds of farming. The crops that have been raised on the Cheyenne experiment farm need little supplementary explanation. They prove that there is no longer any "great American desert," and that the plains which were once dreaded by emigrants will soon become thickly populated with a prosperous farming community.

Denver, Colo., January 15.

MISS LILIAN TINGLE'S FIRST CHINESE DINNER

WHETHER "professional instinct" has anything to do with it or not I must confess that a dinner party, especially a "little dinner" is my favorite form of entertainment. Give me a nice little dinner, with congenial guests, a competent cook, and a happy hostess, and you may keep your balls and banquets, receptions and card parties, and all the rest.

Well, then, you may judge that I looked forward with pleasure to my first real Chinese dinner party, especially as the informal English note, accompanying the formal invitation, explained that our host, a wealthy government official of high rank considered his present "poor dwelling" unsuitable for a large banquet, and thought, besides, that I should be most interested in an intimate family affair. A dinner party would follow the dinner.

I promptly dispatched an acceptance and hinted up my encyclopedia of a "big brother." "How shall we go? What shall I wear? What shall we eat with? What shall I talk about? How shall I act?"

My big brother was busy. He replied concisely: "In chairs. Your ordinary dinner dress. Chop sticks. Answer questions. Get amiably and follow my lead at dinner, and at present

kindly close the door from the outside."

So I closed the door, but at our next meal I called for chop sticks and took a lesson in the use of them, while the big brother explained that allowances would be made for ignorance of etiquette on my part, because all Chinese understand that foreigners are like the rhinoceros in the "Just so stories" who "never had any manners when, since, or henceforward." At the same time the big brother hoped that I should not utterly disgrace my family, and warned me not to look surprised at any variation from Western customs, and to eat all that was given to me by my hostess. He also repeated his instructions as to following his lead.

But how can you follow a person's lead when your chair legs take a short cut, and set you down all by yourself in your host's dark court yard?

I knew no Chinese, but I made it plain to the bearers and the porter and the servants with lanterns that I proposed to stay in my box-like chair until the B. B. arrived, and fortunately I had not long to wait.

We were ushered into a reception room, with stiffly arranged handsome Chinese furniture. Our host—an imposing figure in pale blue brocade—shook hands, English fashion, and then, Chinese fashion, made

us take "the most honorable seats" on a sort of raised couch with a table and footstool all built in one. The B. B. reclined easily and gracefully; I dangled my miserable toes which wouldn't quite reach the footstool, and wondered if I might take off my cloak without being invited to do so. Servants brought tea, fruit and sweetmeats. The B. B. retained his overcoat and left his tea untouched. So I did the same although uncomfortably warm and thirsty.

"Tap, tap, on the stones outside. 'My Mother comes,'" said our host and we all rose, as a handsome vivacious old lady supported by two maids, came tottering in on tiny three-inch feet. We are all very much alike after all, we women folk. While I was looking with interest at her beautiful black brocade coat and trousers and her embroidered shoes, she was considering my queer foreign costume; and I believe she had mastered the main details long before the bows and greetings and ceremonious re-seating of the guests was accomplished, all of which performances had to be repeated when our host announced "My wife comes."

Our hostess lifted her handless teacup by the brass saucer, inviting us to drink; and then began a shower of polite questions about my journey, the probable length of my visit, etc. Then more friendly personal questions: was I betrothed; how old was I, (you can't fib about your age when a B. B. translates your answer); had all American ladies felt as large as mine; why didn't I wear ear-rings; was my hair all my own. There

was plenty of matter for conversation but I was not altogether sorry when dinner was announced and we passed into the dining room. By the light of a yellow shaded standard lamp I saw a polished table with small dishes in the middle. At each place a "pretty silver saucer, three inches across and divided into two heart-shaped compartments; silver chop-sticks; a long-handled silver spoon with lotus decorations, rather like an extra special ice cream soda spoon, and a tiny silver cup in a filigree holder. No sign of table-cloth or napkin, no plate, no glass, no bread. And what queer-looking things in the center dishes! This dinner is something of an ordeal, after all.

Afterwards I wrote down as much as I could remember of the menu and the order of service. If any one wants to give a Chinese luncheon here is a model. It was only about half as long as a regular banquet, and for that I was truly thankful.

Melon Seeds. Peanuts. Fruit Paste. Smoked Fish. Chicken. Walnuts. Raw Crab in Wine. Stewed Shrimp. Whole Shrimps. Limited Eggs. Sliced Goose.

These were on the table when we sat down. I began cheerfully on peanuts. I knew them at home. Horrors! What must I do with the shells? No plate, my saucer full of soy, and the B. B.'s eagle eye fixed reprovingly on the "little growing pile on the table beside me. Evidently that was wrong; how did my hostess do? She was daintily dropping nut shells

and fragments of goose-bone on the carpet; so with a carefully arranged sweep of my sleeve I sent mine in the same direction. Such refuse is certainly unsightly on plate or table and what are servants for anyway?

But my troubles were only just beginning. My hostess was offering me, with her own chop-sticks, a particularly choice little chunk of cold goose. At least I guessed goose, but I have never met so creature whose bones and flesh seemed so intimately connected. The pieces appeared to have been carved with an ax, and were just too large for a convenient mouthful. The taste of it was delicious, but oh, the difficulty of eating it with chop-sticks, and the great goose that ever was roasted does not combine well with the tap of a delicate colored silk gown.

"Try the Hmeed eggs," said our host. I tasted in faith and found them boiled. I got goose. They were not in silica like hard boiled eggs, but the yolk was sage green and the white was a stiff brown semi-transparent jelly. How were they prepared? They had been buried in quick-lime for about two years. I took a second helping all the same. Then came:

Stewed Seaweed. Boiled St. Mary of Sea, Stink (A great delicacy, stewed with crab, ham, mushrooms and bamboo shoots). Pigeon Eggs in Batter. Jelly Fish. Fried Fish, with a Sweet-Sour Sauce (Very good and worth repeating). Stewed Duck.

Ham Balls with Brown Sauce and Bean Paste. Stewed Cuttle Fish. Rice. Curry. Lettuce Soup.

Our hostess helped me, and I tasted everything, and found most things good. Every one else put out his or her spoon and chop-sticks and helped himself directly from the dish. From time to time we were invited to sip the "wine." This looked like water, and tasted like gin and rose leaves, I never had any gin, but I offered that description to some one who knows, and was told that it fitted very well.

The rice was served in individual bowls, towards the end of the meal, and was eaten with savory morsels from the other dishes. Had I ever tasted Chinese curry? I flatter myself I know something of Indian curries, but this looked quite different. "Yes, please," and I was helped generously, on top of my rice, and took a mouthful with pleasant anticipation. Hot?—"!" In the midst of the agony that followed I reflected that in my careless youth, when I read "Family Fair," I had laughed at Becky Sharp's experience with curry. Laughed, I tell you. Now I understood the real tragedy of the situation. But she at least had a glass of water; for me there was nothing but a thimbleful of fiery spirit.

There was nothing to do but to "choke" in silence. Happily, release was

at hand, and there were grapes, pears, apples, pomegranates and tea waiting for us in the reception-room after we had wiped our hands on the hot towels that do duty for finger bowls in China.

There was also a message from the manager of the theater begging that there might be no performance that evening, as it was raining and so few people would be present. How would that suit Portland? I didn't mind. I had had enough excitement for one evening. But on the long journey home through the dark, silent streets, I realized that I had thoroughly enjoyed myself, in spite of "bad breaks," and that I hoped this would be as it was the first of many pleasant Chinese dinners. LILIAN E. TINGLE.

The Money Talked.
Boston Herald.

A few years ago Waltham's hand-tub, the Watch City, captured the championship and a big purse at the playoff in Hartford, Conn.

When the victorious crew arrived home late that night a large crowd was in waiting at the station. A parade was formed and amid great enthusiasm, red fire, etc., the line proceeded to the engine-house. Someone called on the foreman, Barney Harris, for a speech.

Barney mounted the old tub, but the sea of faces gave him stage-fright. "Boys," he finally blurted out, "I can't make a speech, but I have the money in me flat."