

WEEDING OUT THE REAL ESTATE CROOKS

UNCLE SAM LAUNCHES GREATEST CRUSADE YET



Chief Inspector
R. S. Sharp.

BY WILLIAM J. ALDORFER.
In the good old summer time, when most people long for the life outdoors, is the time the land sharks get busy. For the past three months these nimble-witted gentlemen have been pushing the game for all it is worth.

Their operations have become so vast and the number of victims so great that at last Uncle Sam has been forced to take a hand in the game. An active crusade against land frauds and schemes of all kinds has been undertaken simultaneously by four separate departments of the Government. The Reclamation Service, the Agricultural Department, the Postoffice Department and the Attorney-General's office. All of these departments are going after fraudulent land promoters in one of the greatest crusades against crime ever undertaken.

The movement was inaugurated by Director Frederick H. Newell, of the Reclamation Service. A few days later the Agricultural Department announced its intention to take the trail. This was quickly followed by the postoffice officials, who decided to help out by refusing the use of the mails to all fraud promoters. And as a fitting climax to the concerted action of the other three departments, the Attorney-General signified his willingness to place behind the bars all those who may be convicted of trying to get something for nothing.

It is wonderful how many land schemes are now on the market to separate the unwary from their money. They cover nearly everything under the sun, from pecan groves, orchards of all kinds, irrigation schemes of assorted varieties, and some frauds sell even a hole in the ground by picturing the said hole in the ground as one of the most beautiful and attractive orchards in the world, on which "you may live the rest of your days in peace and comfort." Upon interviewing officials of the various departments, the writer was amazed to find how many unique and unusual schemes are promoted by these light-fingered gentry. It is possible to enumerate only a few of the schemes in vogue, but in order to place the unsuspicious citizen on his guard, all the officials with an accord used this phrase: "Investigate before and not after placing your money."

Dr. B. T. Galloway is the man who will have active charge of the campaign in the Department of Agriculture. He has been chief of the Bureau of Plant Industry for nearly 30 years and during that time his work has brought him in contact with thousands of the fraudulent land schemes promoted for the past 20 years. There are few men better qualified than he to push a campaign of this kind.

"Of course, we do not expect to make a detailed investigation of every individual case," said the doctor upon inquiry as to how he intended to conduct the campaign. "It will be necessary to handle it more or less in a general way. Our bureau through its corps of experts, will keep in close touch with agricultural conditions throughout the country and naturally we will be in a position at any time to get the facts regarding many of the schemes. Secretary Wilson plans to issue from time to time circulars of information which will benefit anyone contemplating investment in land propositions, or any schemes having to do with the production of crops. These circulars will be general in nature, but will touch upon the different schemes in such a way that anyone who reads them carefully may get good advice in the matter of investing their money."

Land Is Bonanza for Robbers.
For many years fake mining stocks, gold bricks and all such schemes were the principal reliance of a host of parasites that depended on a fool being born every minute for the conduct of a thriving business," continued Mr. Galloway. "In recent years the land is proving a bonanza for many get-rich-quick concerns. Many who no longer believe in the old bait of mining stocks are now regularly taken in by craftily worded literature for 'homes in the sunny South,' 'Go where the sun always shines.' Buy a five-acre pecan grove and live happy ever after, etc. Millions of dollars are being spent every year for the exploitation of land schemes of various kinds. Some of these are fairly legitimate, others are on the dividing line, while a great many are actually fraudulent."

"There have been launched in recent years many irrigation schemes. Some of these projects involved the spending of millions of dollars, and unquestionably the promoters believed them to be sound, but the question has arisen in the minds of careful men who have investigated the matter, just how and in what way the investor in such farm land will be able to make the proper payments and win out. In some cases at least, where there are possibilities for intensive work, such as fruit growing and where markets are favorable, individual hard work may result in the man who takes such land making at least a decent living. When the improvements are of such a nature, however, that the raw land will have to be sold at \$100 to \$500 per acre, with a fixed overhead charge for water of \$20 to \$25 per acre, and the crops grown are the ordinary farm crops, such as corn, wheat and possibly cotton, it is a grave question whether the farmer will be able to make a living and pay all necessary charges."

"Even in the best parts of the country, in the more humid sections, where land is selling from \$75 to \$100 per acre, and where there are no fixed overhead charges, the profits in the production of ordinary crops are very small, unless prices much above the average are secured. While such cases as these are not fraudulent, it shows the absolute necessity and importance of would-be investors looking into all phases of the subject before investing. The brilliantly-hued pamphlets that are sent out and the enticing literary statements made should not prevent making thorough investigation of all conditions before putting money into a proposition and before breaking up one's home and moving into new territory."

Four Departments Will Operate Against Frauds Who Sell "Orchards" on Top of Rocky Hills—Expose of Unique and Unusual Schemes Worked Upon Public—Plans of Crusade Outlined by Experts.



River Bank - Under Water - Sold As Fine Land For Pecan Groves



Story Mountain Top Sold As Fine Orchard Land in A Beautiful Fertile Valley



Frederick H. Newell,
Director Reclamation
Service

country. It is his business to know all the schemes that are being used by criminals throughout the world, to separate people from their cash. Chief among these, he declares, is the land scheme who in the end probably win more victims than any other fraud on the market. Mr. Sharp gave the writer an interesting resume of the many schemes now being manipulated through the mails, which he proposes to bring to an abrupt termination. The manner in which he spoke of the many illegitimate schemes and of the men who promote them would impress any one that he is an extremely conscientious worker in the cause of right, and that he is thoroughly in earnest to book these violators of the laws, not only because they violate the law, but because of his intense belief in right and wrong, and his sincere desire to protect the millions of unsuspecting citizens of our country.

"Land frauds are divided into two separate classes," said Mr. Sharp, in talking of the matter, "the legitimate sale of land direct, and the sale of stock in land companies. In both instances where the mails are used to exploit the scheme the most extravagant statements are made in the literature regarding not only the location of the property, its productiveness and general value for agricultural purposes, but also as to its environment and climatic conditions, labor resources as well as shipping facilities."

"The major portion of land schemes consists in the ability of the victim to purchase easily stock on the installment plan, thus bringing it within the grasp of those with moderate means looking for an opportunity to save for the inevitable rainy day. It follows, therefore, that the class of people who fall for the operation of these swindlers are those who can least afford to lose their earnings, and who are the most trustful of the so-called corporations operating the scheme."

"Investigation by the inspectors of this department reveals that in many instances the property or land is under water and would not be productive under any circumstances. In other cases it has been shown to be upon the sides and tops of mountains remote from civilization and practically valueless."

Selling Worthless Lots.
"Another favorite fraud is the neighborhood of large sea coast cities where swampy, sandy, undeveloped and non-productive lands are divided into lots far from the center of civilization and in addition the prospector has no title thereto other than the smooth bogus claim in which the general allegation is made that it was purchased from the heirs of some remote ancestor."

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BOY TIRED HOW CLEVER AH WONG MADE HIS ETERNAL FORTUNE

BY JAMES D. ELLSWORTH.
THE Pacific steamer Peking, which sailed for Hongkong last month, carried 247 passengers of various nationalities. In that whole number there was one, a Chinaman, who left no friends behind, and yet he will be missed, from Maine to California.

Ah Wong, the exceptional man among several hundred ocean voyagers, would be exceptional in any community on the face of the globe. He carried with him, in letters of credit, a fortune that will keep him in luxury for the rest of his days, earned without work in a unique profession which he invented himself. He belongs to a race that has long been credited with a peculiar aptitude for ways that are dark and tricky that are vain, but Ah Wong's ways have been so much darker than those of his fellow-countrymen that he is the most cordially hated man that has ever been smuggled over the Canadian border.

viding him with a regular education had to be indefinitely postponed. Then his father, in his leisure time, undertook to teach him by rote the text of the ancient Celestial tragedies, and would harrangue at the top of his voice for hours together. It was all breath wasted, for after the first few words Ah Wong's hearing would become blunted, and he would sit in passive somnolence, with a curtain of silence between himself and the noise of talk.

Ah Wong's stomach seemed to be the only part of his anatomy that remained in good working order, and in this the family rejoiced, believing that if his appetite remained good, the time would come when he would outgrow his physical defects.

Many years passed, the actor-father was gathered to his fathers, and Ah Wong, instead of being prep for the support of his widowed mother, was a troublesome burden. He was now believed to have been born lazy. He was more unpopular than when he made devil faces at her as a baby, so his mother, exercising her right as head of the house, called a family council to sit upon his case. The wise old lady strongly hinted that it might be well to put him out of his misery permanently. Possibly she might have found someone to hold a sword, if he would consent to fall upon it, but the uncles and cousins had another plan. They took up a collection among themselves and with this money Ah Wong was sent across the ocean to America. Doubtless he would be well cared for there, and in any event he would be unable to return.



He Was Found All Doubled Up With Some Strange Disability

In the world. When told that he must go to work he was too lazy to refuse, but somehow he never did the work. When he was kicked out of one store he quietly settled himself in another, and when his distant relatives said disagreeable things, his hearing became dulled so that he was not disturbed. His needs were few and the burden of his food and tobacco was not a heavy one, but his perpetual idleness was a constant annoyance to his cousins who at last lost patience and began to talk of sending him back to China.

Then the deafness left Ah Wong. He did not want to hear that talk, but in spite of his infirmities he could not help it. With China came thoughts of falling on swords and all that sort of thing, so he promptly told his cousins that he would soon be able to do something for himself, but he did nothing until Sam Chin got caught pounding a neighbor with a flat-iron and was sure to get six months in the house of correction. Sam Chin could not afford to waste so much time, as it would mean the loss of all his laundry customers. While he was out on bail, awaiting trial, he said that he would rather pay a lazy Chinaman \$500 to go to jail than go himself. With laughs and jeers Ah Wong was advised to apply for the place, and when he gravely nodded his head his cousins laughed till they doubled up like jack-knives. Nevertheless, it was all arranged, though the price was only half of what Sam Chin had jokingly offered.

When the day of the trial came, Ah Wong was in the clothes of the other, the painted face of Ah Wong was like the face of Sam Chin and the deception was not discovered. Ah Wong was pleased with his bargain when the money was paid and securely hidden, for six months is not long in a man's life and he was told that in the house of correction a good bed and plenty of food are provided. He had not been

told that Sam Chin's sentence demanded hard labor, and for the first time in his life, to his disgust, Ah Wong had to work. From this work came thought, angry thought at first, but calm and satisfying afterward, because before the six months were up he had invented a new profession.

When released, he asked his cousins to write to New York, San Francisco, Denver and other cities, to say to the leading Chinamen that Ah Wong would go to jail in the place of other men for not less than \$1000 and expensed his cousins laughed again and said that Ah Wong had learned to work, but he said nothing about his secret invention.

In two months he went to Providence, where Yee Get was arrested with smuggled opium in his jacket. The sentence was a year at hard labor, but when it was interpreted to Ah Wong he only smiled broadly. He did not smile in the jail, but when the time came for him to go to work, he was found all doubled up with some strange disability, and both wrists and one shoulder were out of joint. The doctor reduced the dislocations and sent the prisoner to the hospital to recuperate. The food was better in the hospital, the bed was better, and Ah Wong recovered—as slowly as he could. When at last he was sent back to work the strange sickness attacked him again and the joints of his arms were again dislocated. He never left the hospital after that, and, as he had become a burden upon the authorities, he was released in nine months, earning his \$1000 more easily than he had expected. This time when he returned to his cousins he found that he was wanted in Philadelphia and San Francisco at the same time, and he kept both men waiting until the price was bid up to \$2000.

At the beginning of his professional career he was so thin that he could only take the place of laundrymen and laborers in the penitentiaries, but with arms out of joint he lived on the fattest of possible hospital fare, and as he gained

weight he took the sentences of rich merchants who were able to pay more. He heavy ball, was a comparatively easy crime, only drawing the line at murder cases, because, as he said, he was now a rich man and could not afford to leave his station.

Last Fall he decided that he was rich enough to retire. He had served in 20 jails and as he could not do his contention specialty in any one prison had become restricted to cities where there were but a few, and those generally law-abiding, Chinamen. Therefore he decided to return to the land of his fathers to enjoy the fruits of his laziness, and was planning to reach there in time for the celebration of the Chinese New Year. At the last moment, however, he was summoned to New York by a letter from a man who was about to be deported for being illegally in the country and whose rich friends were willing to pay liberally for a substitute to be sent back to China in his place. The new arrival, then out under a heavy ball, was a comparatively thin man, but Ah Wong agreed to take his place for \$3000 and reduce his weight till he fitted the other's clothes. So Ah Wong enjoyed the New Year's festival in a station diet of rice and water. When, with his snug fortune, he embarked on the Peking, his passage paid by the Government of the United States, he was awaited by a patient little almond-eyed bride, secured through the good offices of his repentant family.

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Harpoons in Whaling.
The harpoon used in whaling is a deadly weapon of marvelous intricacy. It is shot from a cannon, which can be focused with great rapidity at any angle from its pedestal on the specially constructed ship. On penetrating the body of the whale, the point of the harpoon explodes, and its four hooks spread out in the flesh, securely holding the shaft of the harpoon, which ends in a ring carrying a strong cable. Held by this cable, the struggling whale tugs the boat after it at a terrific speed until forced by its wounds to succumb.—Indianapolis News.