

MISCELLANEOUS.

California Condensed.

Its Appearance in February.

While the people of Iowa were shivering over their coal fires, trying often in vain to keep out the terrible cold of this, to be memorable winter, here in California the favored inhabitants were enjoying very different conditions.

And then the geraniums! What shall we say of them? Growing often six to seven feet in height, heliopsis ten feet high, running up the walls, and covered with hundreds of delightfully fragrant flowers.

The Climate.

California can not properly be said to have a climate, it has many. A good map of the State shows it to have next the ocean a narrow strip of land which is nearly level; then comes the hilly and mountainous strip made up of the Coast Range mountains; next the great interior basin, called at the north the Sacramento valley, and at the south the San Joaquin valley.

Rains fall from November to March, this period of time constituting the wet season, while from March to November scarcely a drop of rain troubles the farmer. This dry season is the most unpleasant part of the year, in fact it is the real winter, for during the latter part of it vegetation is as completely at rest as it is in the cold months in other climates.

Crops.

The crops are as varied as the climate. The great interior basin is the granary of the State, producing annually millions of bushels of wheat and barley, I should have said millions of cents, for that is the measure we use here.

Timber.

All along the Coast Range are found immense groves of redwood trees, which furnish an abundance of a fine red colored wood, which is in many particulars very nearly like white pine, being, however, much more durable when exposed to the weather.

tree which furnishes a dense, heavy, dark colored wood, much resembling mahogany.

Minerals.

We generally think of California as the land of gold, forgetting that it has rich supplies of nearly every other mineral of value.

The People.

Generally the people, from living much in the open air, and having windows and doors open for so great a part of the year, are stout and healthy in appearance.

Socially I see but little difference between people here and elsewhere. Possibly the American nervousness is a little more fully developed here, on account of the gold fever which rages now and then.

The Money.

How strange it seems to have gold and silver in my pocket. The first silver I received for a torn "greenback," I rolled over and over in my pocket, and then there I realized what a miser's sensation must be when he comes to his money.

Whooping Crane.

The whooping crane or sand-bill crane, so familiar on this coast, breeds from California northward to the Arctic regions, whence it removes southward early in autumn, and soon arrives in the regions of the United States, from North Carolina to Texas, and thence westward to the Rocky mountains, and remains throughout the winter.

The middle of October or beginning of November is the period of the arrival of this species in the United States, and the end of April or beginning of May of its departure for the North. They here frequent the edges of large ponds supplied with rank herbage, on fields or savannas, now in swampy woods, and again on extensive marshes.



THE "WHOOPIING" OR SAND-BILL CRANE.

them all in my hand again and rattled them. I could almost have hugged them (had there been enough of them) they looked so pretty. But they had to go. The landlord took them as unconcernedly as landlords in Des Moines take greenbacks, and with a chuck they were lost to my sight and purse.

Oakland, California, March 12, 1875. C. E. BRASSEY.

MODE OF ASCERTAINING THE VARIOUS KINDS OF MATERIALS IN MIXED FABRICS.—A GERMAN industrial journal gives, after M. Vupp, the following treatment for fabrics containing silk and wool, with vegetable fibers.

COMPOSITION OF WOOL GREASE.—According to Schulse and Ulrich, the bulk of the natural wool grease of sheep consists of compound esters. A part of alcohols and fatty acids are in a free condition.

The Newport mining company of Coos Bay is buying an ingot for its own use.

Alfalfa Outside of California.

[From Pacific Rural Press.]

With a prudence characteristic of farmers, our friends in other States are slow to embark in alfalfa growing. They evidently suppose that because its success has been notable in California, this country must possess some peculiar advantages in this connection; and though they are not disposed to give it up to us entirely, they seem to scarcely hope that it will do as well with them as it does with us.

The following letter, addressed to the RURAL PRESS, and written by a gentleman of Colorado Springs, Col., is one of many such as we are receiving from parties in various portions of the country:

"I am carrying on a large live stock and farming business here, and would like to try a crop of alfalfa this spring. It is not known in this country, and has never been sown here. Not knowing any seed dealers in California, I take the liberty of writing to you for information concerning it—cost of seed per pound, number of pounds to acre, best time for sowing, mode of cultivation, etc. I would like to try about ten acres of it if it is thought adapted to our soil climate."

In answer to the above, we would say that prime alfalfa seed is worth in San Francisco 20 cents per pound by the hundred pound. This does not include dayage and extra sacks.

The amount of seed required per acre varies, according to soil and climate; the latter having most influence. The farmers in California have learned by experience that it is decidedly a "pound foolish" practice to scrimp in the number of pounds of seed sown to the acre. The growing of alfalfa in California was commenced on a basis of 15 pounds to the acre; it was soon found, however, that the thinly-sown fields suffered most from the sun and drying winds in spring.

As to mode of cultivation in districts subject to spring frosts, defer sowing until there is no longer any danger from this quarter. Plow deep, harrow mellow and fine, brush the seed in and roll with medium weight roller. The seed should not be put in deep, and it is desirable that it be well covered—not by lumps, however, and that the fine soil be brought all about the seed; brushing and light rolling will do this.

If the above principles and precepts are properly considered and practiced, and the field receives subsequent treatment as any good pasture or meadow ought to receive, it will not need reseeded for twenty years.

Starch.

The discovery of starch is not a modern achievement. Pliny places it anterior to the Christian era—in fact, there is good reason to suppose that it was not unknown to the ancient deluges, and that the flowing robe which graced the form of Venus was perhaps starched and frilled. Be this as it may, starch has always retained a strong hold upon the popular favor.

In 1858 the Messrs. Duryea, at Glen Cove, Long Island, began the manufacture and refining of starch from maize or Indian corn. Their business has increased to such a degree that their works at Glen Cove now cover twelve acres, and have a manufacturing capacity of thirty tons per day.

HOW TO USE A GRINDSTONE.—Common grindstone spindles, with a crank at one end, are open to the great objection that the stone will never keep round, because every person is inclined, more or less, to follow the motion of his foot with his hand, which causes the pressure to be always applied to the very same part of stone, and will soon make it uneven, so that it is impossible to grind a tool true.

GENERAL SPINNER, treasurer of the United States, has resigned.

Mohair.

[From Pacific Rural Press.]

EDMUND PARSONS—Enclosed you will find a specimen of work done by McCracken and Welch on San Jose, which we think worthy of your attention, and that of your many readers.

The dyers of America have tried in vain to find a mordant, that would set a jet black dye on any kind of a fur skin without injury to the skin or fiber, and we know of but one house in England that has made a perfect success of dressing and dyeing fur skins black—hence our furs and other pelts have mostly been sent to England to be dressed and dyed where a black was required. We pay a duty of \$4 on seal skins to get them to England and returned, therefore Angora pelts of a jet black have been very costly and rare.

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Following is a P. S. from Mr. Shinn in answer to inquires in regard to a sample of our lowest grade fleece:

P. S.—I am right among the manufacture of ingrain carpets, and am personally acquainted with most of them. The samples of 1/4 and 1/2 breeds is two-thirds of it too good for ingrain; about one-third the short fibers will make good filling. The balance would make a first class warp yarn, but though I think it is too good for that purpose. It will make excellent yarn for velvet carpets and rugs. I am personally acquainted with several of our largest wool dealers, and I think I will get you sale for all you have like the sample I have received.

I also enclose samples of ladies' dress goods, made by Hall & Turner, of Jamestown, New York, from California mohair, the first mohair goods made in their new alpaca and mohair factory. Mr. Hall pronounces the mixed goods a success, but says he will improve on the luster of the black in the next lot which he is now making. I have shown these goods to several merchants and they all agree that they compare favorably with English mohair dress goods. Mr. Shinn remarks in his communication: "The only trouble I have to dispose of my patent loom is, when I approach manufacturers they say I would like your looms but can't get the mohair," and at the same time the breeders say, "Where is our market?" Now, he says, "Let them send on their fleece and we will give them a market." The fleece is all we want to make a success with our loom, in furniture, plushes, velvets or seal skin imitation.

Watsonville, March 23, 1875.

Sheep in Trouble.

Having had much experience with sheep I advise no doctoring or attempting to cure diseases; but the instant any sickness seems to be coming on a sheep of any age, slaughter it right away, before the complaint has time to affect the meat. I have had several hundreds in charge of shepherds under my superintendence and it is very rarely any sheep ever does any good after killing; therefore my plan was for the shepherd to kill every sheep or lamb that had any kind of disease coming on, or if it stood alone without eating or waiting to join the rest of the flock. By this means I had one of the most healthy flocks in existence—not such a flock as is termed a flock now-a-days, but about seven hundred; and after the first two years there was not one in a hundred ever came to "grief." It is breeding from sheep prone to sickness which causes a flock to be having ailing sheep in it.

Of course there must be no nonsensical sheltering of sheep out of rain in the summer season, for it does them good to be out day and night, and in winter they ought to have a run out in the day or the confinement will cause trouble. Where the climate is mild, they should never be housed.

Mr. Randall copied the recipes for curing complaints and I assure every owner of sheep there never was a greater mass of rubbish than was published in the English sheep books; for none of the large flock masters ever dream of keeping or buying physic for sheep. The diseases are most of them imaginary, and the only three worth thinking of, are foot rot, scab and liver rot. The first two are easily cured and will never come again afterward unless diseased animals are put with them again. The third disease has no cure and is not known in this country.

A COOK'S BLUNDER.—A lady on the east shore of Maryland happened to make sausage meat and mince pies on the same day. Being called to the parlor to receive company, she returned to find to her sorrow that the cook had put the wine, spice, sugar and plums into the sausages, while the mince meat received its complement of sweet herbs, salt and pepper. The lady magnanimously bestowed the whole stock on the poor, since which she has never been troubled by the sick and demoralized paupers who were her victims.