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MESQUITE GRASS.

We have frequently alluded, of late to what we could learn about the value of mesquite grass, which has been tried by a number of persons of our acquaintance, always with success so far as we have heard, and Mr. John Simpson, of Stiuselaw, who seems to have thoroughly experimented with it for two years past, has given the results of his experience in the FARMER. From all that can be learned we have reason to suppose that this grass, (which is a native grass of Texas) makes a close sod; kills out fern; thrives on hill land, as well as bottom land; will grow up green immediately after cutting and remains green at all seasons. While it does not make heavy hay it is eagerly relished by stock. Its great value is for pasturage. A late article in Wallace's Monthly, concerning sheep husbandry in Texas, speaks of various kinds of mesquite grass, but endorses the great value of it in connection with stock-raising. A late number of the Sacramento Record-Union contains in its agricultural department a very interesting notice of this grass, which thoroughly endorses its character and value, in unison with the opinions expressed by those who have experimented with it here in Oregon, and its great interest justifies us in reproducing it entire, as follows:

A considerable interest has been excited of late in some sections of the State in regard to the grass named at the head of this article. Farmers who occupy up or grain lands, and who cannot succeed with alfalfa on account of the squirrels and gophers eating the roots, are anxious to introduce some grass that will remain green through the dry season and will continue to grow late in the fall after the rainy season sets in. None of the native grasses answer their purposes, nor will timothy, red top, or any of the grasses most cultivated for pasture and meadow in the Atlantic States or Europe. There is also a good deal of interest manifested by those who own swamp lands, which can only be rendered available for cultivation by levees along the banks of running streams, to find a grass to sow on those levees to form a sod to fix and hold the soil in place. The towns and cities of California situate in the valleys and on banks of rivers are also interested in this last question of levee protection. With a view of assisting to solve these questions for all parties interested, we shall investigate the claims of some of the different varieties of grasses adapted to warm and dry climates like ours for cultivation for the above named purposes. Flint, in his excellent work on grasses and forage plants, describes mesquite grass as follows: "It grows from six to twelve inches high, leaves narrow, spikes one to five, glumes and lower fertile palea slightly hairy, triple awned. It is cultivated to a considerable extent in some parts of the South, as in Louisiana, and has become a favorite grass in many sections. Very satisfactory experiments have also been made with it in Virginia." A correspondent of the Rural Press in July, 1871, says of this grass as grown in California. "The Hon. J. M. Hudspeeth, of Green valley, Sonoma county, was the first to place the seed of this grass in the California market. To fully appreciate the value of this grass it will be necessary to see it growing on all conditions of soil. Many people think that no vegetation will grow in California without irrigation, or a strong root that goes down to living water. This is a mistake. We saw acres of mesquite grass growing on high arid land, and on gravelly hill sides and bottom land, hard and dry as brick. A patch of this grass is stranding, two or three feet high, in the bottom of a creek and on an old, hard trodden road near by. It adapts itself to circumstances, where all other grasses fail, and will produce a crop on poor soil three times the weight of natural grasses, and on richer, moist soils in relatively increased proportions. It is the opinion of many in this quarter that the mesquite will run out all other grasses, weeds and green sorrel, in a few years. After a crop is cut, a second growth springs up on the driest soils that makes fresh pasture for stock when no other can be obtained."

Mr. James A. Lewis, of Kanabha, West Virginia, writes to the Agricultural Department at Washington, published in the report of the department in 1886, as follows of this grass: "In the fall of 1885 I procured sufficient mesquite grass from Texas to sow an acre of hill land on my farm at Grotto Hill. On comparing it with the Kentucky blue grass, orchard grass, clover and timothy, as cultivated on the same farm, I am inclined to rank it as the most valuable of all for this section of country. It seems to stand the climate well, completely covering the ground and springing up soon after cutting, being less affected by drought than any other grasses. It also remains green during the fall and winter, when it is highly relished by stock. It makes a light hay, however, but is greatly devoured by cattle. I consider this grass as a most important acquisition." Other parties who have seen and examined the mesquite grass as grown by Mr. Hudspeeth say that it makes a deep, compact sod with roots, etc., interwoven; that it is difficult to separate a piece when taken up except by cutting with a knife, and that in their opinion it will prove one of the best protections to levees of any vegetable production that can be planted upon them.

The Russian River Pilot of August, 1872 has the following item in regard to this grass: "Some two years since the mesquite grass was introduced into this county direct from Texas. L. Hasbaine, of Sebastopol, states that in bottom lands it is a complete success, and does well also on uplands of certain kinds of soil. He has nine acres of this grass on his land, and intends to sow more. Some of it is six feet high, and the old average four and a half feet high." We shall give our personal observations of this grass at another time.

As to the growth of the mesquite grass

within which its road may be constructed. Mr. Mitchell, of Oregon, however, has introduced in the Senate a bill which under the pretense of extending the time for its completion, virtually alienates a valuable part of its land grant for the benefit of the Central and Union Companies. Mr. Mitchell's relations with them do not admit of misinterpretation, and the device employed to conceal his object is too flimsy to bear explanation. He seeks to injure what he professes to aid; the Portland, Salt Lake, and Southern Pacific Railroad being a mere pretext for enriching the Central monopoly at the expense of the Northern line.

When the Times asserts that "Mr. Mitchell's relations with them (the Central and Union Pacific) do not admit of misinterpretation," it implies, beyond question, that Mr. Mitchell works in the interest of the two great monopolies that constitute the Central line from San Francisco to Omaha, and we confess that we attach far more importance to the assertion of the Times, a journal that has never given unkind criticism to Senator Mitchell before, than to the assertions of those here in Oregon who are known to be the Senator's personal enemies.

To show the popular estimation in which Senator Mitchell's efforts are held in journalistic quarters, we will also state that the N. Y. Sun has treated the matter in the same way as the N. Y. Times, while the Washington correspondent of the S. F. Chronicle, of late date, speaking of the bill introduced for extending time to the North Pacific railroad, says:

"There will be but little opposition to their bill this winter except what comes from Senator Mitchell of Oregon in the senate and his old law partner Thompson of Pennsylvania in the house. Mitchell is playing a very deep game, the ultimate object of which is his reelection to the senate and the agrandizement of Jay Gould. The Mitchell bill proposes to take in an enormous slice of the Northern Pacific grant and confer it upon the Portland, South East and Salt Lake Railroad Company—a bogus concern of no responsibility whatever, consisting solely of a single impetuous gentleman named Chapman. It is not intended to build even a mile of the road, but simply to give Jay Gould control of the route, and, by crippling the Northern Pacific, prevent the completion of a competing line. That this is the object of the man may be inferred from the fact that before Mitchell's bill was referred in the Senate, he got Thompson to introduce a resolution in the House looking to the forfeiture of the entire unearned portion of the grant by legal proceedings, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior."

That the State of Oregon and city of Portland have no reason to entertain suspicion of, or feel any jealousy towards the Northern Pacific R. R. Co., is shown by late action of the Executive Committee of the company, at a late meeting held in New York, declaring the willingness of the company to construct its road on the south side of the Columbia river, to Portland, and declaring that the provision of Mitchell's bill cannot be accepted by the company. These resolutions are published in full by the Board of Trade, of Portland, to which they are addressed, and seem to be explicit and satisfactory. Whatever have been our views in the past we confess that we recognize the need of legislation to secure the Northern road in preference to any schemes that involve the possibility of securing two roads by one act. We cannot afford to take any risks in the vague hope of "killing two birds with one stone," especially when the cloven foot of Central Pacific railroad monopoly is visible in the transaction.

If it is understood in influential and journalistic circles East, that the Oregon Senator is allied with the Central Pacific railroad monopolies and working in their behalf, the people of Oregon may well study his course with interest and should hold him to the strictest accountability.

We should be represented in Congress by men devoted to the interests of Oregon and committed to the enterprises that are essential to our prosperity. It has seemed to us from the moment the suggestion was first made, that the land grant on the branch line of the Northern road from Walla Walla to Puget Sound, should be vacated, and the same amount of land in lieu thereof bestowed upon the Dalles and Salt Lake road, and so insure the completion of both; it has seemed that such action might advantage the Salt Lake road, while it will merely divert from the Northern grant a portion it would probably never utilize.

We consider the Northern Pacific road the most important enterprise possible for most important enterprise possible for the advantage of the Pacific North West, and while we desire the construction of the other road, if possible to be attained, it is entirely essential that no obstacle or hindrance be placed in the way of the construction of the Northern road. That is an important necessity; a road that will give us character and individuality; open up a country of our own and insure a business and traffic which the other roads cannot make subservive of the selfish ends of California capitalists and business men.

RAILROADS AND CONGRESS.

Under the head of "The Senate and the Railroads," the New York Times of late date says:

Long ago the House disposed of the Pacific Railroad indebtedness in a manner that met the substantial requirements of justice. Months were not wasted in childish disputes about rights and conditions, or vain attempts to coax the debtors into a settlement which they never will make except upon compulsion. The House satisfied itself that in 1861 Congress regarded and asserted an absolute right to amend or repeal the law as a condition upon which the requests of the companies were complied with. And being in lawful possession of the power to compel the companies to make provision for the payment of their debts, it exercised the power with a vigor and promptitude which, we fear, the Senate is unable to imitate. This is certain: The matter has been more than a year in the hands of the Senate, and up to this moment it is apparently as far off decisive treatment as ever. Whether it be the chronic dilatoriness of that body, the intangible but sinister influence of some of its members, or actual inability to decide when and where procrastination should end and real business begin, we are not presumptions enough to determine. The fact which stands out to illustrate the tardiness of the Senate and to condemn its senility is, that a bill reported from the Judiciary Committee has been made subject to perpetual postponement, and that a question which in essential particulars is not open to reasonable controversy is kept open to suit the convenience of the companies, whose lawyers and agents set as though they were complete masters of the situation. The demands of equity are unheeded. The demands of the companies are treated with a deference that is wholly unexampled.

After showing the impudence with which these Central line railroad companies defy the law, the Times refers to the bitter hostility they entertain towards the Northern Pacific enterprise as follows:

"The Central and Union Companies have built up huge monopoly, and by intrigues or more open opposition attempt to break down any enterprise that promises interference with its profits. Their hostility to the Northern Pacific is more bitter and treacherous than that evinced toward the Texas line. The latter is an applicant for Government aid on a scale which challenges opposition, and we cannot wonder that the existing monopoly uses the opportunity as best it can. But the Northern Pacific is not an applicant for any form of subsidy. It seeks only an extension of the time

within which its road may be constructed. Mr. Mitchell, of Oregon, however, has introduced in the Senate a bill which under the pretense of extending the time for its completion, virtually alienates a valuable part of its land grant for the benefit of the Central and Union Companies. Mr. Mitchell's relations with them do not admit of misinterpretation, and the device employed to conceal his object is too flimsy to bear explanation. He seeks to injure what he professes to aid; the Portland, Salt Lake, and Southern Pacific Railroad being a mere pretext for enriching the Central monopoly at the expense of the Northern line.

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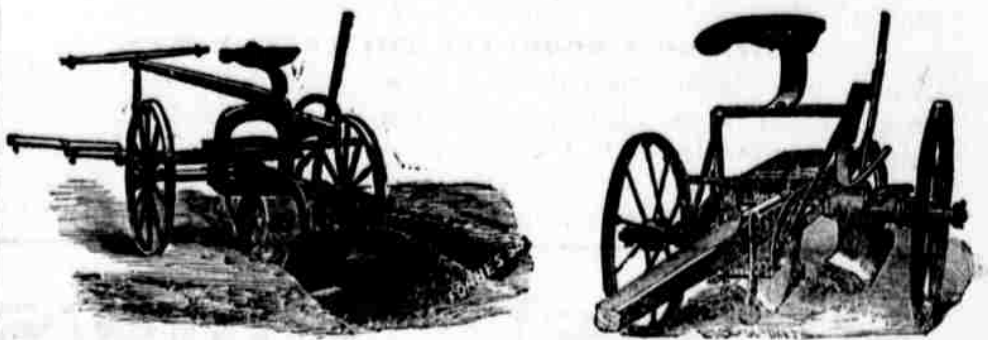
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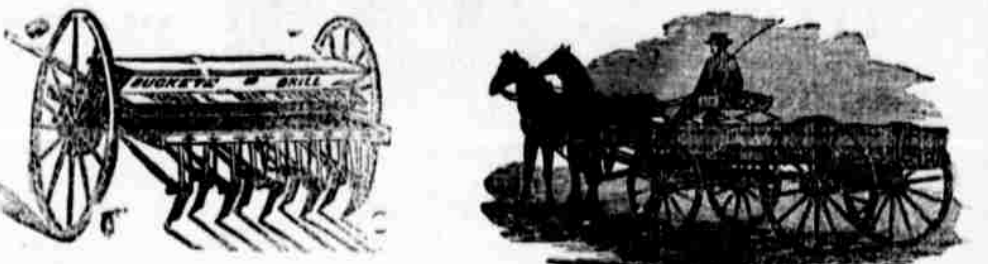


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