WILLAMETTE FARMER

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Correspondence.

[Editorial Correspondence.]

UP THE COLUMBIA RIVER.

Last week we made a flying visit to friends at Walla Walla, stopping for a day at Blalock, near the John Day river, to see how that country had stood the late drouth and to learn what crops were made. It is a long day's ride from East Portland to Walla Walla. We started in the misty weather common to autumn, and some rain fell before we got to the Cascades. Leaving there we found things less damp, and at The Dalles and all places else we visited great piles of wheat lay on the open platforms beside the depots. Rain had not fallen to even wet the ground to enable wheat to make much growth. Around Walla Walla all farmers seemed prosperous. The transportation facilities seemed unequal to the work of moving the heavy crop of wheat that was produced this year of unexampled drouth. We heard some man from Iowa remark concerning the country, that such a season as we had last summer would have left them no harvest. He seemed astonished to hear of the immense yields made in all directions. Eureka Flat is out out in the dry plains toward Ainsworth, and this year a farmer there averaged 46 bushels for a whole field of winter wheat. The products of the past season afford the best encouragement for new comers to locate and commence work. General prosperity attends the Upper Country, though not nearly what might be expected in a fairly good season. If there had been a few showers in the last of May and through June, the wheat crop of the country east of the Cascades would have aggregated ten millions of bushels of wheat for export; as it is there will be about six and a half millions for foreign trade.

We found many new comers looking up locations. The extent of country to look over embarasses an immigrant. Lands are being claimed to-day that were not looked at a year ago. Early comers were fastidious. They recognized only the best and would take no other. This fact is illustrated freely at Blacock's, near the mouth of the John Day river, where we stopped a day on the return. A year ago a wide extent of gravelly prairie to the south remained vacant and unclaimed that the early comers believed would remain vacant for them to use as range. They were mistaken. Men from Western Oregon who had gravelly land there, found this alkali plain lying vacant and located their homesteads and pre-emptions upon it. They were stimulated by seeing the products obtained on this year of drouth by members of the Blalock Wheat Growing Company.

The land between the Columbia and John Day rivers lies in a wedge shape, as the streams draw gradually together. It is very fertile, and though quite elevated, is clear of alkali and bears a sod of bunch grass equal to any grwn in the Upper Country. This fact attracted Dr. Blalock's attention and induced the formation of a company to improve the lands and test their producing capacity. They and others organized a company. Each individual located the land allowed him as a citizen, homesteads, pre-emptions and timber culturers. They made their plans early known to Mr. Villard, and got his permission to occupy and farm the odd sections with the privilege to purchase at usual rates in case the company earned the land. His object was to ascertain the capacity of that land to produce crops. Hitherto stockmen had monopolized it and encouraged the belief that it was too dry to produce crops. The common estimate was that the land was worthless for farming purposes. The railroad company was willing to extend facillties to persons who would prove that northern Wasco county could produce good wheat crops. They offered inducements for the Blalock Company to commence work. They commenced, levying assessments to build a fence from the John Day to the Columbia river, etc., and met with severe losses. Time has shown that the bunchgrass sod must be subdued by years of work. Their first attempt failed; their second ditto; but they held on faithfully. Some sold out and withdrew, but the others held on. Then the grasshoppers came in 1882 and took everything as they did in Kansas. That was enough to make the bravest heart sick, but they held on, and this, the fourth year, though they have encountered the worst season of dryness ever known, cropped sixty thousand bushels of wheat, besides much else.

We stopped one night last week with the Mariners, who have worked faithfully and long against difficulties. Their crops aggregate 9,000 bushels of grain. Besides this they had an excellent garden, in which they grew watermelons and muskmelons famous for their size and flavor. On the rich soil of that upland they grow wheat, barley, oats, corn, potatoes, melons, pumpkins, squashes, and all sorts of vegetables and many varieties of grasses. They are conquerers, for they have conquered fate. The soil that refused them at first now yields abundantly, and they say they have no fears of the future. Having known them through several years of discouragement, it is pleasant to realize that they have been at last crowned with success. They express themselves now as more than satisfied. Their harvest for 1883 must be worth in the neighborhood of seven thousand dollars.

So much interest is felt in the dry region along the Columbia, near the mountains, in Wasco county, that we will review its productions at the Mariner farm. They broke up land a year before and sowed in wheat last fall. Last spring they sowed some to barley and in the spring they planted corn, etc. The extraordinary drouth pulled down the wheat average to twenty bushels. The barley went twenty-five, the corn twenty-five; all good quality. Remember that it was nearly all sod land and that there was no rain after the 15th of May, not a drop. Where they had 9,000 bushels of grain, a good season would have made it 15,000. The corn was planted ten days before the last shower and had no rain after May 15. Some 8-rowed red corn that was planted after the rain and matured perfectly, without a drop of rain having fallen there from the day of its planting. All these crops were grown on sod land, plowed the previous spring or winter, and planted the first time. The water melons grew without rain almost entirely, and many weighed fifteen to twenty-five pounds. They have oceans of pumpkins—the old-fashioned yellow ones. They have black locust and box elder growing finely for timber culture. They have blackberries, raspberries, currants and gooseberries that all made vigorous growth this season on the dryest of upland. Their fruit trees all seem to be thriving.

Mr. Wm. McKiney lives east six miles. There we saw further evidence of that being a corn country. He broke up quit a piece of sod land last May, and after harrowing thoroughly planted it in cord. He had corn that would have yielded twenty-five bushels if it had made a good stand, but stock got in it. This shows that in that vicinity a man can market a corn crop of twenty-five to thirty-five bushels on new sod just broken. Mariner thinks his corn would have done much better if there had been June rains. McKiney has saved his corn and re-plowed and sown to wheat. Mariner intends to plant 300 acres to corn instead of trying to summer-fallow the land. He says he can make as good a crop as wheat and that corn planting is as good as summer-fallowing. Another fact concerning corn is that they claim it does not need to be cultivated or worked. All it needs, they say, is to be properly planted and left alone until ripe in the fall.

All that can be seen and known justifies the belief that along the Columbia is a region that has been greatly neglected, that will soon become a prodigious producer of cereals and vegetables. They say they can supply Portland with the best os fruits and vegetables and all farm products, if they can have living rates for freights, and they certainly should and must have such rates as soon as they become producers. The settlement of the lands between the Umatilla river and The Dalles is going on at a very rapid rate all along the line. We gathered information that was very interesting. There is a wonfully productive scope of country in western Umatilla that yet offers much room for new comers. Between Willow Creek and John Day there is much excellent country. The John Day Prairie, as the magnificent plain between that river and the Deschuttes is called, is fast settling up, and will soon begin to turn off heavy crops. That will prove to be as inviting as any section of the Upper Country. Wasco county will, before long, come into note as one of the richest farming districts of Oregon and be a subject of pride therefor.

WASHINGTON COUNTY GRANGE FAIR.

STAFFORD, OR., Nov. 2, 1883.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

A very interesting agricultural exhibit was made at the hall of Butte Grange, on Oct. 31st, in which the Butte and Farmington grange of Washington co., the Tualatin and Oswego granges of Clackamas county, also a few agricultural friends participated, at which the following articles were exhibited:

Mr. John Richardson, two varieties squash, two of cabbage, three of potatoes, two of apples, two of corn, field pumpkin, dried pumpkin and corn; M. Morman, potatoes; S. Richardson, onions cabbage, black turnip radish, yellow globe manglewort, two varieties of turnips, two of carrots; T Paulsom, four varieties of potatoes, among them the elephant and blush variety, three varieties of wheat, viz—Frilz, Clawson Shumaker, Wyson surprise, a general variety of fruits and vegetables, also butternuts and corn; P. Gault, a variety of potatoes among them the blue peerless, three varieties apples; Mr. Pollard, cauliflower, cabbage, carrot, rutabagas: Mr. Gormen, a potato weighing three and a half lbs; M. A. Tagert, several varieties of pears, four of grapes, hubbard squash, apples, canned peaches, four kinds of jelly; C. S. Gault, turnips, potatoes, two varieties of cabbage; Mrs. P. Mann, tomatoes, shell match box; C. Wood, four varieties of apples, two of pears, tomatoes, early and late rose potatoes, rutabagas; Mr. Gaskell, pears and apples; Mr. Marska, carrots; T. L. Turner, ten varieties of potatoes, wheat; H. C. Hayes, pumpkin, hubbard squash, two varieties apples, pears; P. Larsen, beans and peas; John Sweek, a triple-headed cabbage; potatoes, black walnuts; Olds & Tyson, White Australian wheat, pears, eight varieties apples, and three of potatoes; R. V. Short, white Norway oats fifty-two and a half pounds to the bushels, white Russian oats, wheat, two varieties corn, two of apples, pears, mammoth pearl potatoes; S. P. Ingram, a specimen of Zaradella three and a half feet in length, pumpkins, rutabagas, two varieties carrots, two of corn, two of apples, watermelons, onions; G. M. Bohler, German spelts, of which we are informed, he raised sixty-two bushels to the acre; Mr. Coley, a head of cabbage weighing thirty-two lbs; one rutabaga, twenty-two lbs, Hampton oats yielding forty-nine lbs to the bushel, a sheaf of oats six and a half feet in length, two varieties wheat, thirty-three heads having grown from one kernel, tobacco, two varieties of potatoes, carrots, quinces three varieties apples, three of pears; A. R. Shipley, twelve varieties grapes; Mr. Elmer, a pear weighing two and three fourth lbs; Mr. Bryant, imitation turtle shell of Conafir; Mrs. Norman, mock oranges, a branch of a vine containing two lbs of grapes; Mrs. I. Kruse, canned peaches, ripe cucumber pickles, bread, butter, cookies; Mrs. R. V. Short, dried apples; Miss Alvina Short, a toilet set of French art painting, two plaques, a painted imitation horse-shoe of hollywood, a panel picture, two painted candles, painted card, painted satin slipper case, fancy knitted pin cushion, rosette tidy; J. Poland, M. D., exhibited cases of dental and surgical instruments, anatomical charts, vaccine matter in a bottle containing a fluid supposed to be capable of preserving it twenty years, besides some other articles; Mrs. E. Coley, butter, cheese, canned peaches, quince jelly, card basket; Mrs. S. L. Hayes, egg plums preserved in alcohol, in 1876, prunes, tomato catsup, Mrs. Melia Milem, raspberry syrup, raspberry cordial, plum jelly, watch pocket, bead work; Miss Flora Hayes, apple jelly, cucumber (a curious freak of nature), lace toilet set Mrs. Mary Richardson, butter, pickled onions, grape jelly cake, pie, and a tidy; Mrs. A. M. Wood, butter, bread, raised biscuit; Mrs. T. M. Pattison, butter, flowers in pots, Winter bouquet; Mrs S. McFarland, combined pin cushion and toilet box, hanging basket of crystalized leaves and grass; Mr. McFarland, a basket of flowers made from turnips, beets and carrots, beautifully arranged with natural leaves; Mrs. Hattie Heath, two pictures of sea-moss from San Juan island, specimens of pink and white coral, an ivory fish hook from Sandwich Islands, a scorpian and centipede in alcohol, a Hanaka necklace of shells one of seeds and one of teeth; an oyster shell weighing seventeen and a half lbs from Sandwich Islands, views of Sandwich Island scenery and people, a Chinese junk and crew in marble, wooden bracelets in form of serpents from China, vegetable ivory ball, vegetable sponge, mushroom coral shells, flower pot from Takite, two robes the dress of the natives and a war club from Fiji Islands, Bohemia vases, card receiver, chickens manufactured from feathers, cucumber grown in a bottle, railroad badge used at the opening of the Norwich & Worcester railroad in 1835, picture "the little Granger," watch case and tidy in worsted needle work, tobacco pouch in bead work, crotched tidy, needle-work tidy, oilcloth splasher; Mrs. Jennie Whitmore, painted satin toilet cushion, toilet cushion and two tidies in worsted needle work; Mrs. E. A. Woodruff, toilet cushion in spatter work; Mrs. Fannie Shipley, wall pocket; Mrs. Elizabeth Gault, two knit counterpanes, stand cover and lampmat; Nancy Ellis, wall pocket in worsted needle work; Mary A. Tigert, patchwork quilt; Miss Lottie Short, fascinator; Mrs. Agnes Gault, tidy; Mrs. E. B. Heath, fruit picture; Miss Linnie Shipley, piano scarf, table scarf, toilet mats; Mrs. C. E. Shipley, quilt, comforter, afghan and sofa pillow of patchwork and ornamental needle work collections of cones and minerals, Norwegian spoon.

The time given the reporting committee was so limited, that we fear many mistakes were made, and some articles and names overlooked.

The crowd in attendance numbered over two hundred. The hall was handsomely decorated and the Pleasant Hill brass band discoursed fine music making altogether an occasion long to be remembered.

Could some of the reporters of the city papers, who have been so sarcastic in their comments upon the inferior fruits and vegetables brought to market by the farmers, have been present on this occasion, they would have observed that the producer reserves the best of his productions for home consumption, and that the universal failure of which they complain, is the fault of the unusual dry season rather than that of the agriculturist.

S. L. HAYES.

Hop Growing as Carried on in the Puyallup Hop Felds.

SUMNER, W.T., Oct. 31, 1883.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

Having given some idea in previous articles of the general features of the greatest hop country on the Pacific coast, viz.: The valleys of Sumner and Puyallup, I now proceed to enter into the more minute particulars of hop growing as carried on here.

From the fields of Mr. Ezra Meeker, of Puyallup, were gathered last year the largest amount of hops ever grown in any single yard in the United States. This amount was 71 tons. Many style him the largest hop grower in the world, and if statistics do not lie, this must be the fact. Mr. L. F. Thompson, Mr. Meade and Mr. J. R. Dickinson of Sumner valley rank next. The last named gentleman owns a large farm near Turner, Oregon, and has set out a hop yard on that place ten acres in extent.

According to statements made by these men cuttings for new fields should be set out in March or April. A slight yield may be realized the first year, providing the soil be double plowed. The cuttings should be set seven feet apart in a square. Meeker prefers one pole to a hill. Other growers set two poles. From three to five roots are planted to each hill. These are placed with the eyes pointing to a common centre and upward, and are but lightly covered. A very little cultivation is necessary besides the spring plowing. Some growers never touch their fields from May to September. Others cultivate to some extent, deeming the weeds that are continually springing up, as deliterious to the vines. In the winter and early spring it is necessary to cut away the superfluous roots in the old yards, to prevent them from crowding one another. This is done with sharp hoes, plows, or with a two-horse harrow. A portion of the work which must be carefully attended to is setting the poles for the hops to run upon. These poles are generally 20 feet in height. If carelessly set any heavy wind will throw them down. It occurs often when ladened with hops, thus causing both inconvenience and loss. Consequently it is necessary that this portion of the work be thoroughly performed. The cost of cultivating, setting poles and training vines is estimated to be nearly $30 per acre. As we have already glanced at this we will give no farther particulars of the cultivation, but proceed to describe the hop kilns.

The drying of the hops constitute the most particular and the most important part of hop culture. Skill and experience are necessary. Two kinds of kilns are used, the draft kiln and the fan kiln. Messrs. Thompson, Meade and Dickenson and others use the former. They are erected at a cost of about $2,000 each. Mr. Meeker uses the fan dryer which is much higher priced; his kilns are the finest and perform the best work on the coast. The draft kilns are buildings of from 20 to 26 feet square. The walls are about 20 feet in height, surmounted by a high hip roof crowned with a ventilator. These kilns are weather-boarded and plastered inside as high as the ventilator. They are divided into two stories by a floor about 17 feet from the ground. This floor consists of slats laid an inch apart and covered with light burlap cloth or as we denominate it here, kiln cloth. Beneath is placed a large stove weighing about 1,000 pounds, and made of heavy cast iron plates with grate bottoms. The cost of such a stove is about $75. From it a large pipe ascends and is attached to a T so the pipe will run in opposite directions around the room at a distance of about two feet from the wall and meet on the opposite side of the stove. Cord wood is sometimes used but coal however is preferred as it is cheaper and gives a steady heat. Such are the kilns used by most growers and where practicable they are built on a side hill as the hops can then be disposed of to greater advantage and at less expense. Each kiln will cure a ton of hops in a day. The fan blast is considered by Mr. Meeker to be the best in use. The house is built on a similar plan to that of the draft kiln. It is not so high, however. A large fan is used to aid in the drying process. This is run by steam on the outside of the dryer. An air tight tube leads from the fan to the kiln, under the foundation, pours the cold air beneath and around the heaters and is forced through the hops.

Boxes five feet ten inches long by two feet ten inches wide at the top, and four feet four inches in length by two feet four inches in width at the bottom are used in this vicinity for gathering the hops. All growers use the same standard. Handles of cedar strips are fastened on for convenience in carrying.

The value of the hop lies in a substance near the stem called lupaline. It is the bitter principle in hops and consists of globules of a bright yellow color. It is liable to injure if exposed to a high temperature, and it is very necessary that the drying be watched carefully, as from 120 to 160 degrees Fahr. is the heat required to dry hops properly. Some growers heat their kilns to 180 degrees, but this spoils the hops by destroying the lupaline. The hops are spread on the floor at a depth of fifteen inches to three feet and many growers to accelerate the drying process, burn sulphur underneath the floors. Two pounds are burned to one hundred pounds of hops. No definite time can be set for drying hops. When soft and flexible to the touch, with the globules of lupaline bright and unchanged, they may be considered dried and of a first class quality. The dried hops are taken from the kiln to the warehouse, thrown into large bins and after hop picking are made into bales weighing from 180 to 200 pounds.

The cost of producing an acre of hops yielding 1,600 pounds is estimated at $200 an acre. It costs seven cents a pound to produce hops. All above that sum is clear gain. A yard ready for cultivation may be bought for $300 an acre in this valley. The grand total outlay then is $500 an acre. But still by commencing on an economical plan, building log kilns, etc., the expense may be materially lessened. Such is a slight sketch of hop growing on Puget Sound. I will give a sketch of the Indian hop pickers in my next. "SAPPHIRE."

Linn County Business Council Endorses the Mortgage Tax Law.

ALBANY, OR., Nov. 4, 1883.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

At a regular meeting of the Linn County Business Council, P. of H., held at Santiam Grange hall on November 3d, the following preamble and resolution was passed by a unanimous vote of that body, with instructions that the Secretary furnish the WILLAMETTE FARMER and other papers with a copy of the same for publication:

WHEREAS, Since the Legislature of Oregon at its session of 1882 passed an act which is known as the Mortgage Tax Law, there has been much discussion pro and con as to the public utility of said law. And,

WHEREAS, The Patrons of Linn County Business Council is composed of farmers and tax-payers who are entitled to a hearing and a voice in matters pertaining to the general welfare of the State. Therefore,

Resolved, That this Council is in favor of all property that has or claims protection under the laws of the State, paying its fair proportion of the necessary expenses to maintain such protection.

Resolved, That we believe the Mortgage Tax Law has brought out a large amount of property which has heretofore escaped taxation. We are therefore in favor of giving said law a fair trial, until some better method can be found by which justice can be done to all.

Resolved, That we are unutterably opposed to taxing only such property as is in sight of the assessor and exempting money, notes and accounts simply because the owners thereof can by false testimony conceal them.

Resolved, That moneyed men and money loaners should not find fault with the practice of assessing real estate at less than its estimated value, while they themselves will not take mortgages on land for more than about one-third of its estimated value to secure the payment of money loaned.

Resolved, That we hail with pleasure the coming of capital into our State, and are not opposed to the combination of the same for any legitimate purpose if not so managed as to oppress other industries. NIMROD PAYNE, Sec'y.

Weather Report for October, 1883.

EOLA, November 1, 1883.

During October, 1883, there were 11 days during which rain fell, and an aggregate of 3.11 inches of water; there were 6 clear and 14 cloudy days, other than those on which rain fell.

The mean temperature for the month was 49.69 deg.

Highest daily mean temperature for the month, 57 deg. on the 3d.

Lowest daily mean temperature for the month, 41 deg. on the 21st.

Mean temperature for the month at 2 o'clock P. M., 54.68 deg.

Highest temperature for the month, 61 deg. at 2 P. M. on the 9th, 11th and 15th.

Lowest temperature for the month, 38 deg. at 9 A. M. on the 21st.

Frosts occurred on the 15th, 30th and 31st.

The prevailing winds for the month were from the north during 12 days, southwest 13 days, south 13 days, south 5 days, northwest 1 day.

During October, 1882, there were 16 rainy days and 7.61 inches of water, 4 clear, and 11 cloudy days.

Mean temperature for the month, 48.61 deg.

Highest daily mean temperature for the month, 53 deg., on the 4th, 6th, 7th and 9th.

Lowest daily mean temperature for the month, 40 deg. on the 3d.

T. PEARCE.

The Paris Bourse estimates the total stock of gold in the world in use as coin or as banking reserves in one shape or other at about £580,000,000, of which total England has £126,000,000, France £136,000,000, Germany £80,000,000, and the United States £92,000,000. Other nations come in for shares varying from £80,000 in the case of Holland, to £30,400,000 in Spain's.