

WILLAMETTE FARMER.

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During these Hard Times the tendency to trench is very strong and very proper. Let the farmer ask himself, however, if he can afford to dispense with the only journal in the State that belongs to him and represents his interests? Thirteen years ago we purchased the WILLAMETTE FARMER and invested in it all our means and the best years of several lives. Consider, friends, whether it is not more reasonable at this time, (when you know how hard the times must pinch the publisher of your own journal) to go out and collect a small club of new subscribers at the low price offered rather than think of "economizing" by doing without the services of a friend of such long standing.

Correspondence.

UMATILLA AND WASCO COUNTY.

COLD SPRING RANCH,
Umatilla Co., Or., Dec. 21.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

Mr. Minto's communication to your excellent publication are read with universal interest by the farming community, as they are the practical observations of a practical man, and are in the main, very truthful descriptions of the great "plain country" of Eastern Oregon. Nevertheless, in his Notes and Observations in Wasco County, published in your issue December 12, I incline to the opinion that he dwells somewhat too elaborately upon the disadvantages of living and farming in the bunch grass country. I therefore beg to append a few remarks which may be deemed optimistic by some, but which are nevertheless matters of common observation by all who have a practical acquaintance with the every day life of the average bunch grass farmer.

In writing of Eastern Oregon it is necessary always to remember that it is essentially a new and undeveloped country, and that we are only just beginning to realize the important fact that our soil is good for other purposes than that of wheat growing. Ten, yes eight years ago, the best of these plain lands could have been had for the locating. A few daring experimenters had demonstrated that wheat could be successfully raised on these bunch grass hills, and the soil has ever since been exclusively devoted to the production of that cereal. Of late however, other experiments have been tried, with equally flattering results and we are now beginning to form correct opinions of the real value and versatility of our soil and although wheat farming will for many years to come be our staple industry, yet the resources of our soil are such as to guarantee that diversified farming will in time usurp the place of our great fields of stubble.

In point of fact wheat raising is the very feature which renders the great plains of the Columbia such an attractive country to the average immigrant, for it is the medium through which our farmers improve and stock their farms. As a simple proposition wheat raising pays heavy interest on the capital invested. An energetic poor man or a man with a small capital on a quarter or half section of government land can produce enough in three years to pay for his land and improvements over and over again. The expense of breaking land is only \$2 per acre by contract and enough can be raised on the sod to furnish feed and seed for the next years crop. With a little money for lumber, provisions and sundries, the new comer can live as comfortably and cheaply here as elsewhere; he has to live anyhow, and while his crop is growing he can be either breaking virgin soil for next years crop, or he can be hauling rails and posts for fencing. At all events he is improving his land in his spare time and is consequently increasing the value of his worldly possessions by each day's work, and with anything like decent farming, three crops will, as aforesaid, pay him enough to purchase his land and return what money he has invested. Mr. Minto says that "the dry season makes this soil not a sure dependence for crops." I make answer that if the summer-fallow process of cultivation is adhered to that the crop is rendered totally independent of the season. In other words more depends upon the

man who farms and his method of cultivation than upon the season. It is however a phenomenally dry summer when the rainfall is not sufficient to guarantee a fair crop, even with the most slovenly and careless methods of cultivation. The average plan here, as in all new countries, is to plow when you can and seed when you get ready and let nature do the rest. The result has built up Umatilla to the second county in the State, in spite of this unavoidable shiftlessness. And, although our climate may be deemed dry by a man from Webfoot, yet our rainfall is ample for all practical purposes, and experience demonstrates, that our soil possesses the properties of absorbing and retaining atmospheric moisture to a wonderful degree, so that, as aforesaid, with proper cultivation, there is no such word as fail in the farmers' vocabulary. The rainfall in the locality described by Mr. Minto is less than that of any other part of our State and much less than fall in this end of Umatilla county. This I attribute in part to its nearer vicinity to the Cascades and in part to the great southerly trend which the Blue Mountains take at that point. The timber line of which Mr. Minto states to be sixty miles distant from the Columbia river. In this end of Umatilla county, as in the adjoining counties of Washington Territory enclosed by the Columbia and Snake rivers, the timber line is not more than thirty miles distant from the most isolated districts. Hence it follows that the rainfall is less and the difficulty of procuring timber and fuel is greater in Wasco than in any other bunch grass county. As an item of information I will state that fencing can be contracted for from \$20 to \$30 per 100 rods, the difference being in the quality of wire used; some prefer the plain wire, others the double stranded barbed variety. Posts set two rods apart with two wires are sufficiently strong to turn stock. Posts can be got in the mountains already cut for \$2 per 100 and cordwood the same price per cord. The farmer who brings a little money with him will do better to buy these things in the neighborhood towns, where they buy posts for \$4 per 100, cordwood \$4.50 per cord and saves much time in hauling to and from the mountains. In this section we have no difficulty in obtaining a never failing supply of running water of the purest quality at an average depth of sixty feet, as at this depth the basaltic bedrock is seamed with subterranean streams which percolates through the honey-combed bedrock in quantities that no windmill pump serving 100 head of stock per day have ever been able to exhaust.

Mr. Minto thinks that the darkest phases of life in the bunch grass country is the comparative isolation of family life. This is true, but not to a greater extent than prevails in all new countries. The isolation is the lot of the pioneer in every degree of latitude and longitude, and I think our situation in this respect is infinitely superior to that endured by the pioneers of the Willamette valley under the old 640 acre donation law, for her our farms are not only smaller, but we are surrounded by towns and villages and railroads, all in an easy half a day's ride, while the country is cut up into school districts traversed by good county roads, which makes traveling good at all seasons. Nearly every school house in the county is, on the Sabbath, the rendezvous of all the families in the district, who assemble as much for the sake of companionship as to listen to that "sweet story of old" as it is expounded according to the peculiar doctrinal views of this or that itinerant missionary whose life is devoted to spreading the gospel among the heathen bunch grassers. In the winter time dances, social gatherings and literary societies form a rallying point for our families which are rarely neglected.

The locality described by Mr. Minto

is not regarded as an average specimen of the bunch grass country, if he ever extends his travels this far eastward I hope to have the pleasure of showing him a far more prosperous and comfortable neighborhood than any he has seen in Wasco. We, of course, have our disadvantages. We have not a sawmill on every farm and we have to sink 60 feet for water. These are our worst drawbacks. But on the other hand we have the best of clean soil, easily broken, a glorious climate, plenty of native pasture, network of flourishing towns surrounding us, and we are literally corralled by railroads, so that the most isolated farm is not more than fourteen miles from a railroad station. In the fulness of time the scarcity of fuel may be obviated—would have been long since but for the ignorance or hoggishness of the railroad companies, who prefer hauling empty cars from Portland in preference to supplying the people with the cheap coal and lumber of Puget Sound. The present carrying rates of these commodities is prohibitory, but it will doubtless be amended to a common sense basis when the New York directors are made acquainted with the practicalities of the case.

There are still some vacant government lands in this section which those seeking homes will do well to secure at once. I would not advise any one to come to this country with less than \$700 or \$1,000. With that amount of ready money there will be practically no difficulties to contend with. Those who desire further information about this country are respectfully referred to an article over my signature published in the WILLAMETTE FARMER, of January 1881. I will be willing to show intending settlers around these vacant lands for a small per diem, and if I am not at home W. W. Caviness will do so.

Yours truly, A. F. PARKER.

Letter from Lane County.

COTTAGE GROVE, JAN. 2, 1885.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

We have been having quite wintry weather, but not so wintry as some you speak of in your paper. We had a little whiff of snow on the 15 of December and on the 16 it sleeted all day and the timber began to break about noon and continued to break almost continually for over two days and night. The ice on a common straw was an inch in diameter and five or six miles farther up the creek it was two inches in diameter, but did not extend to the mountains—neither the snow nor the ice. Hence we had high water. The brush fell into the creek and washed onto the booms among the saw logs and thus breaking every boom above Cottage Grove.

The wild geese and ducks flocked in here from the north more than has ever been done all winter. The north and south winds seems to have met here. The south wind being within hearing overhead sending down moisture while the north wind wedges in underneath and freezing so that we have ice over everything now.

Yours, etc. J. P. TAYLOR.

There is a sunken forest of white cedar in New Jersey which has been mined for timber over seventy years. The industry of digging the sunken logs is carried on by the people of Dennisville, a village which was brought into existence through the buried worth of lumber in its vicinity. Over the sunken forest, trees of large size are growing, and in many instances these are cut away to reach the more valuable timber three or four feet below the surface. The sunken trees are of enormous size; their age is a matter of curious conjecture. It is probably they were buried many centuries ago by the action of an earthquake.

At O'Donovan Rossa's rooms, New York, Capt. Phelan of Kansas City, was stabbed by our Barry, supposed to be because suspected of betraying Irish secrets. He may possibly recover. He shot the man who stabbed him in the thigh.

EQUALIZING TAXATION.—THE LAW OF VERMONT.

In 1880 Vermont passed an act for equalizing taxes that is said to work excellently. Mr. Pettingill recently alluded to it in a communication to the Oregonian and on looking it up we find it contains provisions that we have urged as important for years past. For the advantage of all interested we publish it entire. Its provisions are:

SECTION 1. All taxable property shall be set in the lists at one per cent. of its value in money, on the first day of April in the year which the list is made. The lists shall appraise each item of such property at such sums as they would appraise the same in payment of a just debt due from a solvent debtor, having regard to the current value of such property, and sales thereof, other than auction sales, in the locality where it is situated.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of State shall annually, on or before the first day of March, furnish at the expense of the State, to the several town and city clerks, blank inventories sufficient in number to meet the requirements of this act, and in the most convenient form, with suitable interrogatories, to contain when filled a complete statement of all taxable property, real and personal, of each taxpayer in said town and city. Said blanks shall be so formulated by the Secretary of State as to require, under oath, from each person and corporation such full information as to each class and item of his taxable property, real and personal, as will enable the lists, after a personal examination of all visible property, to appraise all such property at its true value in money. Said blank shall also contain an interrogatory for a statement of the amount of stocks, bonds, or other securities claimed to be exempt from taxation under the laws of this State or the United States, owned by or held for its or their benefit.

SEC. 3. Said blank inventories shall also contain when filled a statement of debts actually due from said taxpayers on the first day of April, to the amount of deductions claimed; and no deduction shall be made in the list by reason of debts owing by him, unless such statement includes the name and place and residence of each person or firm to whom he is so indebted and the amount owing by him to each person or firm, or on account of his being an indorser or security for another; nor shall any deductions be allowed any taxpayer on account of a joint indebtedness except to the amount he would be obliged to pay if all the persons jointly bound were to pay equal parts of the debt. And from any deduction allowed a taxpayer on account of a joint indebtedness except to the amount he would be obliged to pay if all the persons jointly bound were to pay equal parts of the debt. And from all deduction allowed by lists an account of debts there shall be deducted the amount of United States government bonds and other non-taxable securities owned by the taxpayer claiming such deduction, and all debts due him from solvent debtors.

SEC. 4. Said inventories shall also contain the following oath: I, — of —, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that the above is a true, full and correct list and description of all my taxable property, both real and personal, and all property which should be set in the list to me, and that I have set down only such debts as I am unconstitutionally bound to pay, to the amount of the deduction claimed, that my answers to these interrogatories are correct and that I have not conveyed or disposed of any property or estates in any manner, or created any fictitious debt for the purpose of evading the provisions of law, or affecting the value and amount of my taxable estate; So help me God.

SEC. 5. Provides for distributing the blanks for tax payers to all property owners.

SEC. 6. Relates to sending such blanks to non-resident persons or corporations.

SEC. 7. Refers to filling out of blanks by the proper officers of corporations or the trustee of any property, or person liable to pay the taxes.

SEC. 8. That all such lists shall be filled by tax payers on April 1st of each year.

SEC. 9. That lists shall proceed on April 1, to take up such inventories and complete the appraisal of all property.

SEC. 10. When person or corporation wilfully omits to make, swear to and deliver said inventory, or any part of it, or makes false answer, or if lister believes the list to be incorrect, he shall ascertain as best he can the property, shall ap-

praise same and double the sum so obtained, and shall be so assessed.

SEC. 11. Concerning right of appeal to county authorities.

SEC. 12. False swearing made perjury and punished accordingly.

SEC. 13. Prescribes a very strict oath to be taken by the lister or assessor.

SEC. 14. Punishment of assessor for any transgression provided for.

SEC. 15. Lists shall be alphabetically arranged and returned to proper custodian before the 25th of April, of each year.

SEC. 16 and 17. Relates to the assessment for year succeeding passage of act.

SEC. 18. Secretary of State shall provide blanks for use in every county.

SEC. 19. Repeals former laws that conflict.

SEC. 20. Exempts institutions, savings banks and trust companions otherwise taxed.

The State Insurance Company is emphatically a Farmer's Company—a company organized and controlled in the interest of the farmer, and one which affords the cheapest and best security against loss or damage by fire. The money paid to this company is not used to pay losses on hazardous risks in towns and cities, as is the case with other companies, but while it receives its money from the farming community, it is constantly paying it back to them, thus making it emphatically a home institution devoted to the interest of the farmers and owners of private dwellings of the Northwest alone. All policies of the State Insurance Co., provide for arbitration. Do not fail to secure a policy of this reliable home company at once. Remember that nearly \$200,000 worth of farm property and dwellings have been destroyed by fire in Oregon and Washington during the last year (about one dwelling a day.) Your home may be the next to burn! Can you afford the loss? You say that "times are hard;" if so, your need of the protection of an insurance policy upon your home is the greater. The best indorsement a Company can have is the patronage of the people of the State in which it is located. The State leads in Oregon, where a faithful corps of agents, assisted by prompt and liberal adjustments has placed her in advance of all competitors.

Gilt-Edge Butter.

Gilt-edge butter is the name given to that high colored, waxy and extra quality of butter which comes from our famous dairies, and which commands such a paying price, the demand always being ahead of the supply. In the production of the so-called gilt-edge butter, the first thing in order are good butter cows, and those which partake largely of the blood of the noted Jerseys and Guernseys are the best. The cows alone will not, however, insure an extra quality of butter; they supply the dairyman with the materials, and unless he handles them properly, the product will be anything but high-priced butter. Much depends upon the dairyman, and he must not merely understand how to handle the milk and cream and make the butter, but he must put his knowledge into constant practice, the omission of a single item frequently damaging the quality of that week's lot of butter. It costs much more to produce butter of that high quality than it does common and low priced butter, yet it pays, and it pays well, to exercise this care and thoroughness. There is no reason why our farmers should not secure far better prices for their butter than they do, as it can be gotten by the exercise of more care and cleanliness than is now generally accorded to their dairy products.

Farmers save your money by trading at Port & Son's drug store.

There is a contest going on among European powers for possession of African territory. Germany has taken up a claim there that causes trouble. Germany is also claiming islands of the oceans that causes a flutter among others who have grabbed heretofore more than their share.

Plymouth church seats for 1885 were sold recently; the highest brought \$800. The total sold for, including rentals, \$27,250, against \$34,480 in 1884. In '79 they brought \$68,997. Beecher was very jocosely. His friends say there is only one Beecher and there will be many presidential elections.

Chinese children can attend the public schools of California.