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East Oregonian.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 1900.

DAILY, WEEKLY AND SEMI-WEEKLY

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—AT—

PENDLETON, OREGON.

DAILY SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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One copy per week, by carrier	15
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Neely, the postal thief, is still free and will probably escape punishment. He succeeded in stealing so much of the government's money under the nose of the McKinley administration that he can afford to pay trust prices for the services of trust lawyers, who will secure his trial before trust judges with the result that he will be acquitted, and with the government's money left him he can become a trustite and a strong supporter of the trust party.

The democrats of Kentucky nominated young Beckham for governor to succeed himself. He became governor by the assassination of Goebel and the action of the Kentucky legislature. He has no known qualifications for the high and responsible office of governor, but his official conduct since the compulsory retirement of Taylor has not exposed him to criticism. He has benefitted by the blunders of his opponent, and by contrast he appears fit to administer the trust. The republicans have nominated John W. Yerkes, who is said to be a clean strong man. The contest will be waged on the issue of the Goebel law, but the democrats have weakened the importance of the issue to the republicans by putting themselves on record as being in favor of its repeal.

In 1893 the world produced 165,472,621 ounces of silver and 7,618,811 ounces of gold, or twenty-one and seven-tenths times as many ounces of silver as gold. The tendency of such a production was, therefore, to make it more difficult to establish the parity in value of 16 ounces of silver to 1 of gold. The gold-standard advocates have claimed we could never establish bimetallism, because the relative production of silver was much greater than gold. In 1898 there was produced only 11.9 ounces of silver to each ounce of gold. In 1899, according to the preliminary estimate of the director of the mint, the world produced 165,295,000 ounces of silver and 15,239,477 ounces of gold, or nearly ten and eight-tenths times as much silver as gold. The tendency of such production, according to the principle of relative supply, is unquestionably to make it easier to establish the parity of these metals at 16 to 1, than when the production existed as in 1893. The law of supply and demand is now working in the direction of bimetallism.

W. L. Gorham, an American business man, just back from a trip to China, says he does not believe that it is possible for all the allied powers, no matter what might be the plan of attack, or how mighty the facilities, to conquer or subdue China. He says, first of all it is impossible to maintain even a small army anywhere in the Chinese empire. There is no water to drink, no food to eat, and the nearest source of supply is in Japan, three days journey—a source that would soon become exhausted. What water there is in China is impure and unfit to drink, requiring to be boiled and filtered. In China there is no such thing as sanitation, and at such times as this man and beast alike are left unburied. Supposing a coast attack should result in the killing of a few thousand Chinese, as it must to be in any measure successful. The dead Chinese would be left unburied upon the field and the army would be unable to advance because of the consequent impurification of all drinking water and the stench. And if advance were possible the continued killing necessary to progress would continue the conditions and advance to any extent would leave open chances for side attack. The interior is peopled to the density of swarming fleas, and every foot of advance would have to be made over decaying dead bodies, rendering necessary the impossible water supply from the rear. As to food, the enemy can exist comfortably upon a small bunch of rice for a week, and the soldiers of civilization would have to draw substantial supplies from the rear also. Again, in ordinary warfare the spreading of panic and the striking of terror is a powerful element with which to subdue. That is another impossibility in China. The Chinese are absolutely indifferent to the fate of their fellowmen and fearless as to their own. Admitting the possibility of food supply by oceanic transport service there is the difficulty of carrying the supplies to the interior. In China there are no beasts of burden except the coolie, who could not well be pressed into service. China's railroads and all the railroads leading into China are in bad repair, if not entirely broken up and useless. He thinks the only method of creating anything like submission in the Chinese would be to promptly seize and put to death all high Chinese officials and dignitaries. Such an act would break the faith of the Chinese in the infallibility of the exalted rulers and the unimpeachable Joss. In his opinion, all things being considered, without undue pessimism, it will be a great deal nearer to the judgment day before China is conquered.

AGRICULTURE IN CHINA.

Although the vast mobs which infest Pekin and the larger cities of China, worked up to a state of frenzy and fanaticism, have rendered impossible any satisfactory action by the available forces of the powers, the great Chinese population proper is agricultural and naturally extremely peaceful and peace-loving. Agriculture, however, is most primitive and the wonder is how such an immense population can be supported from the soil, until the great economy practiced in all things is understood. On the great Plain of China, every available foot of land is utilized for growing something and every particle of fertility returned to the soil. Waters are used for irrigation and in many cases laboriously distributed over the fields.

The Great Plain itself is one of the most wonderful sections of the globe. It is about 700 miles in length and varies from 200 to 400 miles in width, occupying the northeastern part of the empire, and containing over 200,000 square miles of wonderfully fertile soil. The most interesting feature of this plain is its enormous population as it supports, according to the census of 1812 not less than 177 million human beings, making it the most densely settled of any part of the world of the same size, its inhabitants amounting to nearly two thirds of the entire population of Europe.

* * *

The most wonderful feature in the physical geography of China is the existence of a vast region of loess in this portion of the empire. Loess is a very solid but friable earth, brownish yellow in color and is found in many places from 500 to 1000 feet deep. The loess hills rise in terraces from 20 to several hundred feet in height. Every atom of loess is perforated by small tubes after the manner of root fibers, only the direction of these little channels is always from above downward so that cleavage in the loess mass is invariably vertical. The loess region of China is perhaps the most broken country in the world, with its sheer cliffs, and upright walls, terraces and deep cut ravines. Owing to the ease with which it can be worked, caves made at the bases of straight cliffs, afford homes to millions of people in the densely populated northern provinces where the Boxers have thus far been most active. Whole villages cluster together in carved out chambers, some of which extend back more than 200 feet. The capabilities of defense in a country such as this, where an invading army must necessarily become lost and absolutely bewildered in the tangle of interlacing ways and where the defenders may always remain concealed or have innumerable means of escape is peculiarly significant at this time when consideration is being given to a conquest of China.

It may not be generally known that the Chinese were the discoverers of coal as fuel. The Venetian traveler Marco Polo says, "It is a fact that all over the country of Cathay (China) there is a kind of black stone existing in the beds of mountains which they dig out and burn like firewood. This stone burns better and costs less."

* * *

The rivers of China are her glory and there are few countries in the world so well watered and none with such splendid natural water transportation facilities. The three great rivers of the empire are the Yang-tse-Kiang (Child of the Ocean), the Hoang Ho (Yellow river) and the Chu Kiang (Pearl River or Canton River). Of these the Yang-tse-Kiang is much the largest, flowing through extensive and fertile plains and finally emptying into the Eastern Sea, after traversing a distance of over 2,000 miles. Its discharge is estimated at one million cubic feet per second. The banks of the Yang-tse are crowded with towns and villages, the most famous of which are Nankin and the new treaty port of Hankow. The Hoang Ho or Yellow River is noted especially for its frequent and violent floods. Its current is very rapid and its course sinuous, nearly approaching in length the Yang-tse. The Pearl or Canton River while not nearly so large as the others is a stream of great importance and innumerable vessels trade upon its waters. At some points it spreads into large lakes; in others it passes between narrow gorges which if dammed would afford large storage capacity for irrigation. The Chinese, however, have not practically worked out irrigation in its different phases as completely as would be expected of such an agricultural people.

* * *

Irrigation, nevertheless, is practiced to a considerable extent through the use of the waters of the Grand canal and by wells. The Grand or Imperial canal is a work of great magnitude. It was constructed in the 7th century and enlarged in the 13th century. It traverses the Great Plain and flows with but slight current for a distance of 700 miles. While built for purposes of communication its waters are used largely for irrigation and thousands of drains and creeks have been made to connect with it along its route.

The modes of irrigation are ancient and crude. One of the most picturesque is by means of the water-wheel which is used where the land to be watered is well above the channel of the river. The wheel is turned by the force of the current and is perhaps thirty feet high. Its buckets being sections of bamboo which as they are raised by the stately motion of the wheel, empty their contents into troughs or ditches. Hollow bamboo pipes or tubes are sometimes used for distributing water over the fields. They rest upon wooden supports and branch in every direction from the source of supply. The chain pump is also a common means of lifting water, the chain running up from the water on a slant and being provided with little buckets at intervals, which as they reach the highest point and begin to descend, discharge their contents. These machines are worked by buffaloes or sometimes by human labor, a man working a crank with his feet something after the manner of riding a bicycle. The most primitive and laborious method is the ancient well sweep, such as is seen today on many an old New England homestead.

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