

FLORENCE, OREGON, FRIDAY, Feb. 4, 1898.



## FOOD FOR THE FIEND THE AMERICAN NILE.

SUCH IS THE GREAT RIO GRANDE, WITH ITS VAGARIES.

It Is a River of Frenkish Habits and Must Be Seen More Than Once to Be Um derstood -- Flows Mainly Underground, but at Times There Is a Torrent on Top.

"It's a river 1,500 miles long, mean cred in its windings," said the from New Mexico, speaking of the Rio Grande. "For a few miles, at its month, light draft steamers run up from the fulf of Mexico. Above that it doesn't iloat a craft except at ferries. In the old days, when New Mexico was a province inlys, when new method was a province of Spain, the people along the river fidn't even have ferryboats, and the only way they had of getting across was by fording. For this parpose a special breed of large horses was reared to be kept at the fords. When the river was too high for these horses to wade across, travelers camped on the bank and waited for the waters to subside. Now there are bridges over the river at the largest Rio Grande towns, and in other rope ferries and rowboats are the

"In times of low water a strange seeing its current for the first time would be apt to think slightingly of the Rio Bravo del Norte, as the New Mexicaus love to call the great river. Mean cans love to call the great first. Activity dering in a small part of a very wide channel he would see only a little muddy stream, for ordinarily nine-tenths of the Rio Grande is underground, the water soaking along toward the gulf through the water to be channel. The value of the control is becauth its channel. the sands beneath its channel. The val-ldy, bounded everywhere to left and right by mountains or foothills, is sandy, and the water, percolating the sa down to hard pan, spreads out on each side so that it may always be found anywhere in the valley by digging down to the level of the river's surface. For to the level of the river's surface. For the greater part of the year the river above ground flows swift and muddy, narrowing as it swirls round a sand bar and widening over shallows. But the thing that strikes the stranger most queerly is its disappearance altogether for reaches, many miles in length, of its channel, which ercent it may be its channel, which, except, it may be, for a water hole here and there, is and dry as Sahara. The river is keeping right along about its business, however, and where a rock reef or clay bed blocks its subterranean current it emerges to the surface and takes a fresh start above ground, running as a big stream which, farther down, may lose itself in the

arther down, may loss riser in the sands again. "It is when the floods come down that the Rio Grande shows why it re-quires so big a channel for its all the year round uso and demonstrates that if the waterway were even wider its would be an advantage to residents along its banks. It is fed by a watershed cipitates the waters rapidly into the channel. In June, when the snow melts

deluging wide tracts of valley and some-times carving a new channel for itself, changing its course for miles. Where the valley is unusually wide and sandy, as below Taleta and in the Merilla valley, the old channels in which the river used to flow are plainly indicated in the "No one who has seen the great river in flood is likely to forget the positive ferocity it seems to display as its waters sweep all before them, and woe to the man or beast who is overtaken by the The flood arrives without warning. The sky may be clear above when the travel-er, leisurely jogging across the wide channel; hears his wagon wheels grate upon the sand with a peculiar sound. It means that the waters are stirring the sands beheath him, and then, if he knows the river, he lashes his horse, making at all speed for the nearest bank, and lucky he is if he reaches it

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safe. The chances are that before he gets there he hears the roaring of waters up the channel and sees them coming down toward him with a front like a wall, rolling forward and downward as if over a fall, with a rising flood behind. Many a man and whole wagon trains have been overwhelmed in this way. and, buried in sands or cast away on desert banks, no human eye has ever

"The great river has its pleasing and romantic aspect, so fascinating that it is a saying among people who live in its valley that 'whosoever drinks of its waters and departs will come again to seek them.' Like the Nile, the Rio Grande enriches the soil of its valley to the point of inexhaustible fertility. Along its banks in New Mexico are fields that for two centuries have been cultivated yearly, yielding great crops, and they are as productive today as when they first were tilled. Irrigating canals, called accquias madras (mother ditches), convey water from the river to be dis-tributed through little gates to the fields of the valley, which it both waters and enriches. A trip along the river reveals a succession of pictures of a primitive civilization of the old Spanish-American

type. Adobe villages, with small, fas roofed houses built about antique churches, and the spacious houses of the vicos, or great men; orchards, vineyards wheatfields and grazing cattle are all features of the scenery of the Rio Grande, the American Nile."-New

The fortifications of Sevastapol, which caused the allies so much trouble during the six months' defense of the fortree by the Russians, were at first by the Russians, were at now very weak, and military experts say the rown might have been taken by a vigorou bombordment and assault during the first few days of the siege. The inter-rance of the allied generals in regard to the strength of the works caused a cause which the Braziana intermediate media which the Russians in the defenses almost in