

Sparks Tells of Home Building

Superintendent of Demonstration Farm Explains Use of Logged-Off Lands to Settlers

(This article is by H. W. Sparks, superintendent of the demonstration farm of the State College of Washington. Mr. Sparks is an expert in his line and his article will be found well worth while.—Editor.)

Any country within whose boundaries there is a bountiful supply of water for the soil and temperate climatic conditions obtain will see in the near future the greatest development in the home building ever seen on this earth. Perhaps there will be some who read this article who will question my judgment in this statement and I will plead that I am an optimist by nature but have been schooled by experience to believe that any one who has a well-founded theory can justify his confidence in the accuracy of that theory by substantial evidence.

Proceeding thus, we ask: What are the factors for home building? And we answer: First, the man; second, climatic conditions; third, the soil, and, fourth, natural diversified resources, which we will consider in reverse order here named. Strictly speaking, the first three factors are resources, and the chief resources, but as they are to some degree common with all inhabited countries, we want to call attention to those that are not common, and they are many and valuable.

I believe the time will justify us in the statement that the means of transportation, which will include the many transcontinental and local railroads, urban, interurban and electric lines; the splendid system of waterways; the natural grades; limitless supply of the best material for road building, together with the bound-to-build-and-build-right spirit of our people, is a resource of inestimable worth to commercial interests, as permanent commerce always travels along the lines of least resistance and easiest grades, and to the home builders on the banks and terraced benches of the inland sea, lake or river; or back on the plateaus or mountain-sides.

Then, the water power—endless, boundless and "going on forever." Manufacturing is always prosperous where there is cheap power and adequate transportation facilities, and when we remember that we have within reach mines of the precious metals, vast deposits of iron, coal, manufacturing coal, ornamental and building stone, forests of timber, is there any one who can correctly estimate the possibilities of any place where nature has been more lavish in bestowing her gifts?

If we were to judge the soils by the amount of mineral elements necessary for crop production they contain as shown by chemical analyses we would say that there are many places where there is much more uniformly good soil. We have on the Pacific Coast thousands of acres which can be correctly classed as good, and considerable that is poor when judged by the soil chemist's standard. Indeed, we think we can say that the soils are more varied here than are most of our agricultural soils. We have found as many as four distinct types of soil on one acre, justifying us in using the general term "spotted in places," but all these types have a special value when we know how to select and adapt crops and methods of production best suited to our soil. But there is a second factor that asserts itself here, upsets and completely routs some of our preconceived notions of soil fertility. I refer to climatic conditions, which have not always been fully appreciated. The most fertile soil in the world would be valueless without water to transfer the elements of the soil's fertility to the growing plant. Temperature of soil and air, together with sunshine in season to assist in elaborating and assimilating these elements. Any combination of soil and climatic conditions that has produced a vast forest of mammoth trees will produce bountifully of other and more valuable crops with our co-operation. It would be very difficult to compute the full value of the annual rainfall of this country, coming as it does in greatest quantities in the dormant season in gentle, falling rain, without severe winds and later sunshine and showers blended. There is untold millions in them. It is no wonder the Egyptians of old while working with their parched fields would shout and cry with joy when they saw it coming, "Water! Water! Great is water! Water is bread!" It is true that the steady downpour of rain is at times trying, but we believe that the agonies of webfoot and mossbacks are not so killing as the despair that comes from seeing our crops dry, wither and burn for want of water. I have often heard it said that many, if not all, of the farmers of the arid belt would gladly give three-fourths of the fertility of their soil for one-fourth of the water represented by the annual rainfall in western Washington and Oregon. It is also true that in places the excessive rains leach out and carry away much of the available fertility of the soil.

It is now that the fourth and great-

est factor comes into action for we believe that well directed soil and crop management will minimize, if not fully control, this difficulty. We are making wonderful progress in this direction, aided and supported by the efficient corps of workers from the United States Department of Agriculture, our state agricultural colleges, universities, sub-stations, and by the Burbanks and Edisons of every branch of production. These, together with the creed of a square deal, which is abroad in our land, the splendid public school system and the ever increasing army of the brightest and best, all conspire to solve the great problems of the home builder of today. All the nations have ever produced soldiers of fortune who have "beaten their swords into pruning hooks," and converted camp equipment into homes of humble necessity. Who shall say what they can not do today?

As an evidence of what man can do we will briefly call attention of the reader to the splendid results achieved at Hood River, Oregon, and Puyall-

up, Washington, two notable examples among many others we could name if space permitted, but these will suffice. Here we have a development that is very remarkable and believe we could challenge the world to produce records of equal development in the same length of time. Here the forest and jungle have been transformed into the most productive fruit and berry lands, orchards and gardens in a very few years. And there are thousands of acres of soil, where the climatic conditions are just as favorable as at either of these places, practically undeveloped, waiting for the man who can organize, co-operate, give leadership, and live the square deal. We have always had men. Yes, but there is a difference. We live in a progressive age. The little schoolhouse all over the land has done a splendid work. The consolidated high school will do, and is doing, better. The next generation will be better qualified for the world's work and here in this favored land the foundations will be laid deeper and broader, and the superstructure better adapted to all the needs of all the people.

I believe there are few, if any, places in all our land that offer as many inducements to the home builder as parts of western Washington and Oregon, possessing, as it does, a combination of climate and soil that produces wonderful results. We have seen measured and weighed twenty-seven and eight-tenths tons of the best quality of forage crops for the dairy cow per acre. We have seen three crops from the same land in one season—two of vetches and grain, followed by corn that matured sufficiently for excellent feed. We have seen strawberries literally cover the ground with their luscious fruit which yielded the owner at the rate of \$1,700 per acre. We have seen a cherry tree produce \$50 worth of fruit per year, and pears growing equally well, with many other varieties of tree, vine and cane fruits yielding abundantly. We have seen the dairy herd feeding on the green meadows, practically every day of the year, and the advantages for poultry raising are not to be questioned—all of this, and more, on the logged-off lands. And the best part of the story of these record producers is that they all believe they can do better yet. When we have learned to employ those methods and crops best adapted to our local conditions and not farm as we did in other places or as our fathers did, as this has been the cause of many failures. It is true that some of the figures given are of the

The Author of this Article at Work



all the soil robbers "here are homes in plenty for the workers. Drones need not apply." Because of these seeming barriers, and also the fact of the unsurpassed climatic conditions, the demands of the ever increasing population of consumers, we shall see the small farm rule; the constantly improving intensive methods prevail, and the practical communities making for better social and industrial conditions.

Homes here will be well worth the price. By experience, we are learning to clear the land with much less expense and labor. We are learning that there are seasons when parts of the work is accomplished to much better advantage than at others, thus a given amount of powder will do

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To whom concerned:

In the course of our White Diarrhoea investigation during the past season, we have used a large number of eggs from the flock of S. C. White Leghorns, owned by Mr. A. M. Pollard. We were unable to discover, either by bacteriological examination or practical test, any evidence of bacillary white diarrhoea infection.

LEO F. RETTOER, Bacteriologist, Sheffield Scientific School, Yale University.

F. H. STONEBURN, Professor of Poultry Husbandry, Connecticut Agriculture College.

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A. M. Pollard, Manager, Mansfield Centre, Conn. Member National S. C. White Leghorn Club.

When Niagara Falls Ran Dry

Many Years Ago Ice Dam Shut Off Water and Cataract Became Silent for a Brief Time

Only once in history has the roar of the mighty falls of Niagara been silenced. This startling phenomenon occurred on March 31, 1848. Early on that morning people living near the falls were surprised by a strange hush as startling in effect as would be an unexpected and tremendous explosion in an ordinarily quiet community. Many persons thought they had been afflicted with deafness, and all were oppressed by a sensation of dread.

With the coming of light the amazed people comprehended the reason for the disquieting silence. Where they were used to see the great falls was a bare precipice down the face of which a few small and constantly diminishing streams trickled. Above the falls, instead of a rushing river,

much greater execution when the ground is full of water. This is especially true in the light or open soil, such as the light ash or loam soils, the sandy or gravelly loams. Again, when there is some old, water-soaked logs, shoot them early in the season thus giving them all the time possible to burn so that they can be dried out. And the slashing should also be done as early as possible after the foliage is out and some care taken in falling the brush and timber in places where the material is not thick. A little extra effort to fall portions together in windrows or heaps is conducive of better burns. We have seen some wonderful results from a good burn, practically everything cleaned up from the first fire.

There has been considerable progress in the power methods of clearing land. Electricity, steam, and horsepower are utilized now as never before, and the application of fire to the roots of the big stump, called the charpit method, is steadily growing in favor. This is especially adapted to the needs of the home builder as no expensive equipment is needed; but, like all new methods, it has its adaptations and limitations. We have observed in traveling over our territory that there is a constantly increasing number making use of this method. When attending any gathering of farmers now it rarely happens that there are not some there who have been successful, and quite frequently we hear the expression: "Our only regret is that we did not learn of this years ago." We are learning. We are making real progress. We shall take away a large part of the hard labor by planning our work so as to take advantage of season, methods and artificial aid that comes from the well directed use of power as represented in powder, steam and with horses. We shall learn much from each other and we are all thinking and putting our thoughts into action.

was only a naked channel, with insignificant brooks splashing among the rocks. All day long this astounding condition continued, and persons walked, dry shod, from the Canadian side, along the very edge of the precipice, as far as Goat island, on the American side.

Early in the morning of April 1st the familiar thunder of the great cataract was again heard, and has never since been silent, though similar conditions, with like results, might prevail any spring. The

winter of 1847-48 was one of extreme severity, and ice of unprecedented thickness formed on Lake Erie. When the break-up came, toward the end of March, a strong southeast wind was blowing, and the ice was piled into banks as large as icebergs. Toward the night of March 30th the wind suddenly changed to the opposite direction, increased to a terrific gale and drove the ice into the entrance of Niagara river with such force that a huge dam was formed, of such thickness and solidity as to be practically impenetrable and strong enough to hold back the great mass of water pressing against it. At last, in the early morning of April 1st, the ice dam gave way under the tremendous pressure of restrained water, and the falls were once again one of the scenic wonders of the world.

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Looking It Over

New York Masons raised \$1,500 to redeem a gold Knights Templar invitation to President McKinley. The invitation plate was found in the stock of a pawnbroker, who refused to sell it for less than \$1,500. The invitation was sent to President McKinley from California.

John Allen, a farmer living near Enid, Oklahoma, is \$3,500 better off through a kick by a mule. His skull was fractured and he was taken to a hospital, where he submitted to an operation. After the surgeon was done with him, Allen remembered where he had hidden the \$3,500. During the panic of 1907 Allen became timid about leaving his money in a bank in Enid and withdrew it. He buried the money. A few days afterward he was injured in a runaway and lost all memory of his cache. After his second injury and the resulting operation, Allen went out and recovered his fortune.

Oregon game laws and the United States parcels post are in conflict, it is said. Under the government mail regulations birds, fish and animals, weighing less than 11 pounds, may be shipped through the mail as easily as a dozen eggs. A game warden may investigate all suspicious freight and express shipments, and, if he finds contraband, he may arrest the senders, but the United States post is closed to him. He may not investigate and no postal clerk is allowed to answer questions concerning other people's mail.

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