

WEALTH IN A BOG.

An Easterner Taught California Land Owners a Lesson.

BOUGHT UP PEATLAND

This He Turned Into a Celery Farm and Started a Great Industry.

First Crop of Celery Raised on Land Which Was Bought for a Song—Production and Marketing of the Crop Is Full of Interest—Many of the Eastern States Are Supplied and Some Heavy Profits Are Made.

There is many a fortune lost by not being able to recognize a good thing when one sees it. Some one, a great many years ago, said that opportunity calls but once upon the same person. He is supposed to rap at the door and if he gets no answer he passes on never to return that way. This sounded so nice and fanciful that it became a proverb, but like many other accepted sayings, has not a grain of truth in it. As a matter of fact, opportunity is hanging about each man's door fairly aching for an invitation to come in, but most men are so obtuse they do not recognize him.

When the old man, Hervey found, a few years ago, that a goodly portion of his lands at Smeltzer, Orange coun-

ty, in Southern California, lay in the big tule swamp, he was sorry he had not been able to recognize a good thing when one sees it. Some one, a great many years ago, said that opportunity calls but once upon the same person. He is supposed to rap at the door and if he gets no answer he passes on never to return that way. This sounded so nice and fanciful that it became a proverb, but like many other accepted sayings, has not a grain of truth in it. As a matter of fact, opportunity is hanging about each man's door fairly aching for an invitation to come in, but most men are so obtuse they do not recognize him.



BOG SHOES WORN BY HORSES.

and the danger of bogging the horses was not slight. The stranger from the East was again equal to the emergency. He had, in the course of his travels, had experience in navigating upon snowshoes, and he proceeded to rig shoes for the horses on a modified snowshoe plan. Now the horses plow the land, bank the celery, pull the cutting machines over the fields and carry away the crop in safety.

Cheap Labor Employed.

Nearly all the labor employed is Chinese and Japanese. This is not so much because that kind of labor is cheaper than other kinds—though that feature of the case is not objected to—as it is that the white men can not



AT WORK IN THE FIELD—CUTTING.

stand the work. The planting begins in June and continues through July and August. The rank odors of the swamp, laden with fever and malaria, are more than the average white man can endure. The Orientals, however, keep healthy, as a rule, and do not seem to much mind the heat.

In a week or so after the plants have been set, the laborers go through the patch and press the dirt around the plants in such a manner as to cause the stalks to grow uprightly and close together. This process is repeated two or three times and then the "bankers," as the two-share plows are called, are put into the field and the soil is thrown up against the plants, burying all but the tops. As the stalks push upward the banking is repeated and the stalks are thus kept bleached and

Stranger's Level Head.

Public opinion was divided regarding the stranger. He must be either idiotic or insane, the people thought, and the vote was about a tie as to which was the case. Nevertheless the owners of the swamp lands made haste to profit by his supposed mental infirmity, and they eagerly unloaded most of the bog upon him. Some of them, Hervey among the number, retained a part of the bog land just to see if the stranger really had a rational motive in acquiring the well-nigh worthless real estate. They are now congratulating themselves that they did so.

Some of this swamp land brought the owners as much as \$10 an acre. The most of it, however, went for less than half that sum. To-day the land is worth \$400 an acre, and off the 3,000 acres which are being utilized the owners will obtain this year a revenue of \$300,000.

Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Pittsburg, Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and a hundred other cities in the East are eating celery raised in the great tule swamp of Orange county. More than 20 cars a day are shipped from the fields and the most of it goes east of the Mississippi river. It has taken some work and expense to put the swamp in condition to bring this income, but nothing compared with the return it yields.

The first work was to drain the swamp sufficiently to permit of the land being worked. In order to do this a huge drainage canal, 14 feet wide

tender till it is time for the cutting. This is also done with horse power. A four-wheeled vehicle fitted with sharp knives which pass under the rows of celery is drawn through the fields, clipping the stalks from the roots and leaving them still standing in the rows. So rapidly do these machines do the work but five teams and machines are required to harvest the crop from the entire 3,000 acres.

Following the cutters come a small army of Celestials who take the severed stalks by the tops and lift them from the earth, and with rapid and skillful motions shake the dirt there-

from, trim the roots and tops with knives made for the purpose, and lay the stalks to one side of the row where the packers find them and tie them into bundles and put them in crates ready for shipment. The harvest begins in October and lasts till well toward the spring. As the rainy season begins about November 1, it will be seen that the most of this work takes place at the most disagreeable season of the year. Day after day the yellow men drag their mud-laden feet up and down the long rows, and amid the pelting, chilly rains work steadily and uncomplainingly on, receiving at the end of the week a pittance the white man would scorn; and yet, most of these laborers have a comfortable bank account.

It takes strong soil to raise good celery year after year, and this is just what the soil of the peat swamp is. For hundreds, thousands and perhaps millions of years the rains of winter have carried down to the tule swamp the vegetation of the mountains mixed with the soil borne along with the rushing torrents the rains send down their steep sides. In this natural sink the vegetation has decayed and sank beneath the next layer brought down from the "everlasting hills." Thus nature has formed one of the best soils that could be found for the purpose for which it is now being used. After the last of the crop has been taken from the fields, the ground is plowed and sown to barley. Just before planting time, the barley, which has by this time attained a rank growth, is plowed under and its luxuriance goes to enrich the soil and minister to the demands of the new celery crop.

Last season's output of celery from this erstwhile bog was fully 1,200 cars. As each car holds 150 crates and each crate contains six dozen stalks, it will be seen that the product of the swamp reached nearly 13,000,000 stalks. This brought in the markets more than \$300,000, fully one-half of which found its way into the pockets of the growers. Truly a handsome sum to pull from the cozy mud of a peat bog.

Carried a Menagerie.

The thin man looked just as if everybody in the world imposed on him. Even his mustache grew crooked. He came into the car of the suburban train sidewise, deposited his basket gingerly, and slid into the seat beside it. As soon as the train cleared the tunnel the basket meowed. The thin man smiled back at the man across the aisle, and gave the basket a shake. Another meow. A little girl in the seat in front stood up on the cushion and peered at the basket.

"Like cats?" the thin man asked. "Yes," the child answered. "Lemme see." "No; it might get away," the thin man said with another smile.

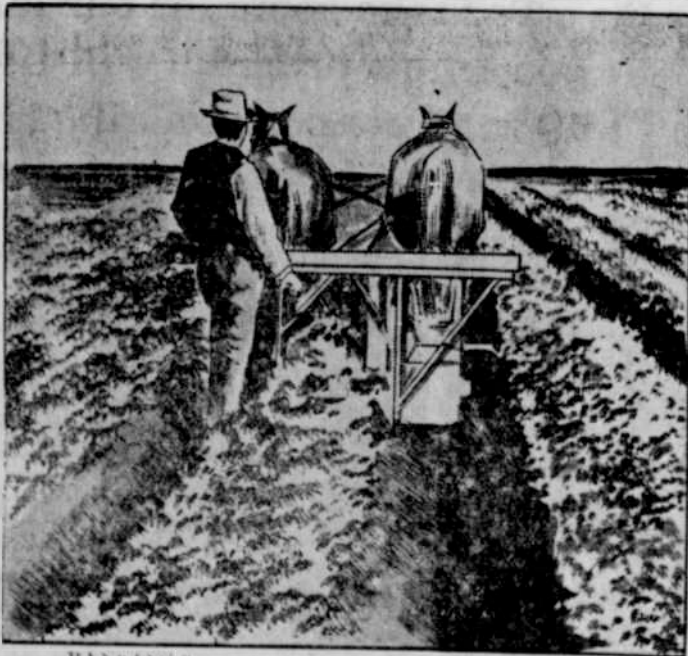
The basket preserved silence for several minutes, then it began to cluck. The child's eyes opened wide.

"Like chickens?" the thin man asked. Before the child could reply the basket emitted a shrill whistle, and the man across the aisle, whose face was as puzzled as the child's, asked: "What have you there, anyhow?"

"Mockingbird," the thin man answered.—New York Evening Post.

Painful Means of Suicide.

"Have you ever noticed how many suicides use carbolic acid?" asked a druggist the other day. "Without having any actual data on the subject, I



BANKING THE CELERY—SEEKING DOUBLE FLOW.

should say that fully one-third, perhaps a half, use that means of exit. It is something I could never understand, because there are so many more comfortable ways of doing it. There could not possibly be a more agonizing death than carbolic acid poisoning produces. The corrosive fluid burns the mouth, tongue and throat, then passes into the stomach, and must feel like so much hot lead."

There is nothing in the wide, wide world that so speedily pounds sense into a foolish girl as marriage to an improvident man.

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