

Nevada and Its Alamo Ranch

THE AGRICULTURAL RICHES OF A MINERAL STATE.

What is Nevada? A waste of sand, a stretch of alkali, a desert, inhabited only by coyotes, lizards, bones of starved beasts and unburied men, home of ruined enterprises and dead hopes! A bankrupt State, a mistake, a blotch on the map that the Union would be richer without! Is that your idea of Nevada? I own it was once mine. Verily, the book that would hold what we do not know would be of a size exceedingly great! Here is what I have seen in Nevada:

Railways do not follow the best parts of most countries. In Nevada especially is the railway giving you a wrong impression. Yet, all along eastern Nevada, all through the stretches of sage and greasewood I could see the grass, much grass, far better than some ranges that I know that are called good. True, water is scarce in many places, yet there is the snow of winter, and then the stretches of desert are alive with grazing animals. And today these animals are fat and happy, high up in the mountains, where the grass is green and the springs trickle out from beneath the great rocks.

I got off the train at Reno. Bear in mind, now, that I am as far away from "civilization" as one can get; another stage takes one across the divide into California. There he is supposedly in "civilization" again. I went to a neat hotel beside a rushing river. I ate trout for breakfast—trout and apricots and strawberries, served daintily. I sat to write in this same hotel, it is a neat room that I have had in any Eastern hotel in a long time. Setting out after breakfast I walked along the old highway that leads west, as it led first to Virginia City, "Washoe" of the old time. It is a broad highway bordered on either side with trees and neat cottages and, after I have passed the suburbs of Reno, with substantial farm-houses. The air is filled with the subtle perfumes of early morning, the sweet perfumes of tree and shrub and flower, so much sweeter in the desert than elsewhere. And in the door yards the roses are all in bloom and their fragrance intoxicates you. Here is another thing, an incredible thing—on either side are green pastures. Green pastures, I tell you, and of what? Of Kentucky blue-grass and white clover! They are white with bloom and rich and green as only Ohio can show in a wet June. And the grass has invaded the roadsides, too. Look but a little way and you are in Ohio, only a richer, more all-pervading greenery than Ohio has. Lift up your eyes, now, to the everlasting hills! See the great snowfields on the one side of you. Oh, no! You cannot walk to them this afternoon. Close though they look, those are the peaks of the mighty Sierras, so far away for stroke, but they are laying off their mantle of snowy white and lo, it is falling on the plain and robing it in a mantle of brightest green!

This, then, was the great surprise to me. I had thought to see the rank growth of alfalfa that I had been used to in all arid regions. Alfalfa does, indeed, thrive here, yet not as in hotter regions, but blue-grass and white clover crowd it out after a time and replace it making a sward so thick, so soft, so rich that it is like walking on velvet of unheard-of richness and softness to step upon it.

Where, now, are the miners, the prospectors, the "thugs"? They are here, many of them, straggled, keeping their little farms, wielding the irrigating shovel instead of the pick and drill, making homes for wives and children, putting white paint on neat school-houses every mile, taking out more ore through the yellow tunnels that the grass roots make than ever they took out in the "good old times."

"Virginia City!" What memories it recalls! I would not go to see it, though so close, because it is all so changed. I do not want to disturb my very vivid impressions of it in the early day. There is yet much of picturesque in the life here. The ten and twelve-horse teams with the huge freight wagons and trailers yet rumble along, laden with freight for Virginia. The little railway trains yet puff up the steep grades, their great, bulging smokestacks

emitting sparks, the tenders piled high with dry pine wood. But across the hills stretch away six great golden threads of copper wires, each bearing its burden of volts, or amperes, or whatever, all from a great water-power on the Truckee, all meaning to work the lower levels of the "Comstock" and let once more a little of her great wealth pour out upon the thirsty world! It is, indeed, a queer mingling of the new and the old.

Riding along with John Sparks, he pointed to a beautiful home, embowered among trees; back of it good barns and around it fields of luxuriant grass and grain. "See that place? Well, the man who owns it sold a bull team to a fellow in the early days and took this land as security. When he could not get pay for his bull team he had to take the land. He felt mighty bad over losing that bull team! How seldom do we know what is good for us!"

Among cattlemen John Sparks needs no introduction. To some of our Western and foreign readers it may be well to say that he is a native Texan. His father was a great cattleman before him. After the war cattle were very low in the South. The eating of juicy steaks had quite gone out of fashion there! John Sparks began trying to get a little money out of their herds by shipping north. He tried one market and another in "64 and '67. Texas cattle were little known and not much prized. Finally he struck the Wyoming trail, found a market, liked the country, moved there. From there to Nevada was another step. Now all the cattle are in Nevada. He and his partner have here some 260,000 acres of land along Salmon River and Thousand Springs Creek. They have about 45,000 cattle. They have owned more. The terrible winter of '90 and '91 killed 30,000 for them. They were overstocked and without feed. Now they put up thousands of tons of hay each year and their winter losses are very light. John Sparks is generally described as being a very "lucky" man. I would not so class him. Is it luck that one man walks with his eyes fixed upon his toes while another lifts them to the trail yet farther along? That is the kind of man John Sparks is; he has the instinct that reads the future and provides for it while it is yet a long way off.

This ranch at Reno is a long way from the city, many a long day's ride to take the Gazette readers with me to the great ranch on Thousand Springs. Today we will tarry among the Herefords, cropping the sweet blue grass. We can put in our time well. What would these well-bred and petted white-faced darlings do when transplanted to the green pastures of Nevada? In my opinion they will, they do, develop as I never saw cattle elsewhere. It is the fattest lot of cattle to be on grass alone that I ever saw. Mr. Sparks, the superintendent, himself an Ohio man, remarked: "They do better and keep fatter on grass alone than in the West with grass and all the grain you can give them." It is not difficult to account for this fact. It is because of the richness, the succulence of these irrigated pastures. They are what the English farmer would call "water meadows." The white clover is itself a very rich forage. Then the air is cool generally and the flies are not there. There is nothing to do but eat of the sweet herbage, drink the pure mountain water, lie down and digest and grow fat.

The home place at the Alamo consists of 320 acres. On this are kept the 200 cattle with a very little outside aid. If it was all in pasture it would keep them all—and such keeping! It really worried me more to see the breeding cows so fat than any other thing that I saw. And when I saw the yearling heifers I thought them two-year-olds. They were better developed than average two-year-olds. Herefords rightly bred and rightly managed, are profitable. Within the past year the Alamo has sold more than \$50,000 worth of Hereford cattle! How is that for an income from the little blue grass ranch?

There are many things of interest at the Alamo. One of the most interesting to me is the Highland cows. These came from the Shible ranch at Golconda. There are said to be a lot of them on this ranch; one day you and I will

go see them. Mr. Sparks' Highlands are destined, perhaps, to mate with his buffaloes. He has a little herd of the Goodnight buffaloes, thriving remarkably here, but thus far the Highlands have spurned the advances of the buffaloes. Indeed, they refuse to remain in the same field with the buffalo! I am much pleased with these Highlands; it seems to me that they may prove very useful cattle for high bleak ranges. The calves are blocky, smooth beauties.

Persian sheep are odd creatures. Their fat falls store up nourishment against a time of possible drought. Their wool is dry and coarse but their lambs grow rapidly and are pretty. Unfortunately it is hard on these irrigated fields to keep their feet sound. They are used to treading on the deserts. I hardly ever saw so varied a collection of animal pets as there are at the Alamo. The children have their Shetlands, there are elk, living lives of contentment and ease, pigeons, squirrels, hares, vultures and fowl. And there is a herd of beautiful Jerseys, headed by a son of old Brown Bessie.

Of all the mountain States Nevada has the best stock of horses and cattle. The improvement is continually going on, too. Water is yet going to waste to some extent in Nevada. It is certain that some day she will stand in much higher estimation than she does now. True, she has her deserts, some of them terrible, some of them rich in mineral, yet she has her soils rich beyond the understanding of the eastern man. She has her 350 days of sunshine in the year, she has a climate so stimulating that, as a native told me, "a man has just got to do something. If he is doing nothing good he is doing some devilment." There is a magic in a soda chair about mines dug deep into the earth. But there is satisfying beauty in the water of the irrigating canals, running brimming with their crystal floods, beneath their bowers of willow and wild rose. In the end it will be found that the stamp, mill, thundering in the gulch, could not stamp out half the riches that the gentle herd of cows will stamp with their soft footfalls from the verdant carpets of green.—Joseph E. Wing in Breckers' Gazette.

SENATOR HALE'S VIEWS.

The great American, Senator Hale of Maine, who never masks nor disguises his real sentiments and never speaks with fated breath of liberty, or hesitates to place the British government in the plory for crimes against God and civilization and humanity, rose to the full stature of American statesman of the old school when he said:

"The world has been horrified—almost stupefied—at the suffering now being endured in India. That is the chief of England's colonies. The pestilence and famine are appalling to the imagination. Whole families are being wiped out of existence; the babe lies dead beside its mother. The situation is awful. Now, the senator comes here with the proposition that we should appropriate money for the relief of these people. I should like to ask the senator what England has done for the people of India? She has spent tens and hundreds of millions of dollars in striking down and crushing republics. It is the most brutal manifestation of strength against liberty and weakness that the world has ever seen and I am moved, therefore, to ask the senator what Great Britain has done to relieve the suffering of her Indian subjects? What has he in the way of information upon this point? What information has he as to England's action in this matter while she is spending hundreds of millions in destroying the Boer republics?"

"Millions to destroy republics and only a beggar's dole to starving India. And Great Britain calls herself a Christian nation, and her statesmen have the hypocrisy and effrontery to speak of making war upon the Transvaal 'to enlarge the kingdom of Jesus Christ and extend the field of human liberty!'"

Senator Hale has put in words the indictment of civilization: England has spent millions of dollars in striking down and crushing republics, while millions are starving in India. It is the most brutal manifestation of strength against weakness that the world has ever seen.

A heart-chilling spectacle at the close of the nineteenth century—a nation that has wasted enough human blood to float a navy equalling the navies of all the world, and that has subjected free peoples for just of gold and diamonds and greed of land and power, while countless thousands of God's children—England's victims and subjects—are dying like fleas in crowded India.—Successful Farmer.

AN EXPERIMENT.

The Automobile Found to be Deficient in a Cattle Roundup.

The automobile has been tried on the Texas ranch of John G. Kennedy, La Brea, in Nueces county, and its first employment was not altogether successful. The day after its arrival Mr. Kennedy and his foreman started out to make a run to the different parts of the ranch. Their course was through a large pasture in which about 1,500 head of cattle were grazing. These cattle had no fear of men on horseback, but when they caught sight of the horseless machine making toward them they stampeded and tore across the pasture in a solid body. When they reached the wire fence on the opposite side of the pasture they went right through it. Many of them were cut and injured by the barbed wire. Mr. Kennedy and the foreman returned as fast as the automobile could carry them, and the whole force of cowboys was ordered out to round up the excited cattle and return them to the pasture. The stampeded herd was broken several miles away, and after hard work was again placed in the pasture. This experience taught Mr. Kennedy that he must allow the cattle to become acquainted with the automobile by degrees.

Ever since the arrival of the automobile the cowboys have had a strong desire to try their hand at roping cattle from its seat. Mr. Kennedy was prevailed upon to give them a trial at this sport and a number of 3-year-old steers were turned into a large corral, where the roping contest was to occur. John Fisher and Harry Towles, two of the most expert ropers on the ranch, were to have the first trial.

Fisher was to run the vehicle while Towles was to do the roping. Fisher received careful instructions as to the propelling lever and brake. When Towles landed the rope over the steer's horns, Fisher was to bring the automobile to a quick stop. The horse and the rope was to be thrown around the front axle. The vehicle entered the corral at a ten-mile clip, and when the steer saw it coming toward them they struck for the far side of the enclosure at full speed. The vehicle followed close in the wake, and when the animals saw they were about to be cornered they turned tail and made a break to get by the terrorized object. Here was Towles' opportunity. He gave his word to be ready, and they threw the rope at one of the steers. The coil settled down over the animal's horns and the horse and was quickly wound around the front axle. The vehicle, however, was not brought to a standstill, but continued right on toward the high fence that bounded the corral. Fisher was tugging desperately at the throttle but something was wrong with the machinery and he could not stop the vehicle. Towles grabbed hold of the steering lever and managed to turn the thing just in time to escape colliding with the fence. The wild automobile then started toward the other side of the corral, dragging the roped steer in its wake. An exit was made from the corral by careful steering and the wild automobile started on a trip across the big pasture. As soon as the other cowboys, who were watching the roping proceedings, understood what the trouble was about, they overtook the runaway and cut the rope attached. The two cowboys stuck manfully to their post, and after the machine had run about fifteen miles they managed to get the propelling lever working again and it was brought to a standstill. No further attempt will be made to use the automobile for roping cattle until the cowboys understand it better.—Exchange.

A NOVEL FIRE ESCAPE.

I saw an exhibition of this given from the roof of the Fall River line building, says a contributor in Rural New-Yorker. It is a tube large enough for a man to slide through, made of heavy canvas, with a line of air holes on the upper side. One end is fastened to the building by ropes, and men on the ground take hold of the ropes at the lower end. Whoever wishes to escape gets into the tube, and down he comes like a shot. Those at the bottom hold the end of the tube slanting enough to break the force of the fall, and, after a little practice, can gauge it so that the man will slide out just right. While this could not be used on the side of a building already in flames, it looks like a feasible plan for dangerous places quicker than could be done with ladders. If necessary, people could be shot through this concern at the rate of 20 a minute. To lessen damage to garments and avoid the possibility of being struck in the tube a heavy cord could be quickly wound around the climbing.

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INSISTS ON ITS USE.

All others are COLD ROLLED and SHEARED, as an examination of their edges near the point will show, and are liable to SPLIT or SLIVER in driving, to injure and perhaps kill the horse.

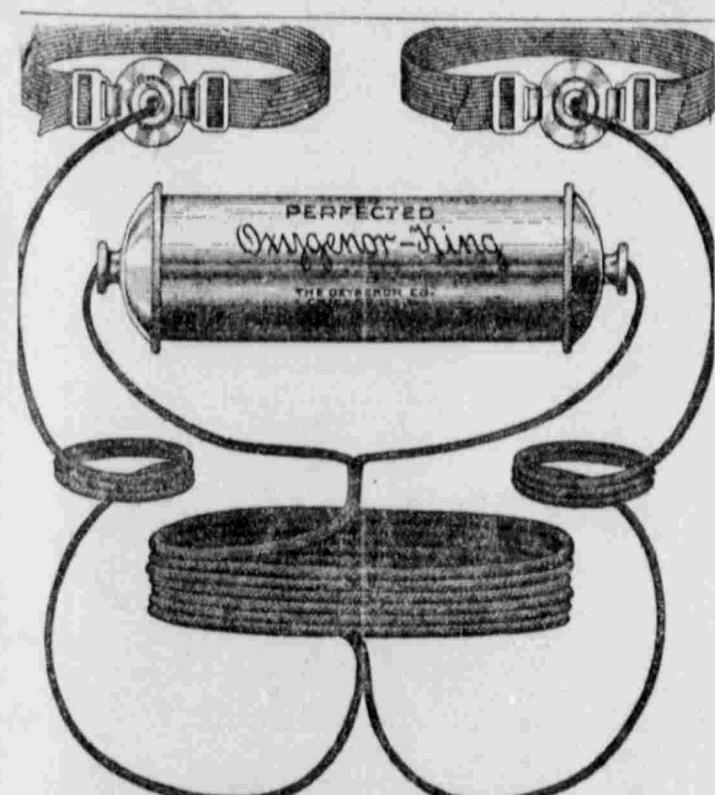
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Until recently President of the Salt Lake Business College.

Salt Lake City, Utah, March 30, 1900.

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