

THE TELL.

HOW THE FRENCH ARE COLONIZING THEIR AFRICAN EMPIRE.

PERREGAUX, March 16.—The French are colonizing Algeria and are rapidly increasing its value as a good farming country. It is already the granary and winter fruit garden of the republic, and is fast becoming the wine cellar as well. The government has a colonization department, which is now laying out new towns and farm sites. Some of the lands are given away and others sold at auction on long time. There are agricultural banks for the benefit of the farmers, and special inducements for settlers in low rates of mortgages and railroad transportation. Immigrants are brought here from Marseilles, a distance of about 600 miles, at a \$2.00 steamer rate and the fares for third and fourth class are not much higher.

EUROPEAN FARMERS IN AFRICA.—There are already 600,000 Europeans settled in Algeria. More than half of these are French; but there are also many Spaniards, Italians and people from Malta, Sicily, and other islands of the Mediterranean sea. Already about one-eighth of the whole population is of European origin and the best lands of the country are being rapidly bought of the Mohammedans by these invading Christians. The European population has doubled within the past 30 years.

The cities are growing. There are French towns all over the country and the Christian element is everywhere in control. Perregaux, where I am writing, for instance, contains 1,000 European inhabitants and it has all the surroundings of a rural city as France. Its streets are wide and well shaded and it has a large public garden in which the band plays several times a week. Its stores are like those of France and it has no end of cafes and restaurants. There are scores of other cities just like it throughout the Tell, and many such on the coast and in the interior, and others, which are more populous and more prosperous.

THE TELL.—Have you ever heard of the Tell? It has been noted for many generations as one of the granaries of the world. It fed Carthage from the time when it was founded by Queen Dido, along about 800 or 900 years before Christ. It was the bread basket of Rome in the days of her glory and the Arabs and Moors grew fat upon it for centuries before the French came. It comprises the rich valleys between the mountains and the coast and the high plateaus of the Atlas which fall away into the Sahara, and also of a rich coastal strip here and there. It runs clear across Algeria and Tunisia, and in round numbers is 700 or 800 miles long from west to east and from 30 to 100 miles wide. It contains altogether an area almost as large as New England and as large as the state of Illinois. It has somewhere between 35,000,000 and 50,000,000 acres of excellent land, but the best is in round numbers only as large as the state of Illinois. It has some of the best coffee plantations of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Much of the Tell is like California or Colorado and not a little of it is irrigated. There is an enormous dam near this town of Perregaux which holds back a lake, containing 14,000,000 cubic meters of water, and another not far away near St. Denis-du-Sig, which contains 6,000,000 more. Wherever the water can be stored it is conserved over the land, and a great deal of irrigation is also done by means of wells, the motive power



LOADED DOWN WITH WHEAT.

Photographed for the "News" by Frank G. Carpenter.

being a blindfolded donkey, mule or ox, and sometimes a camel.

A NATION OF FARMERS.

These Algerians are a nation of farmers. More than one-half of the natives are engaged in agriculture, and there are in addition an enormous number of native stock farmers. The Arabs own a great deal of land in the plains, and such of the mountains as are fertile are covered with little Kabyle farms some of which are not much bigger than the ordinary city back yard. The French are settled pretty generally in the valleys of the Tell. They have bought their lands from the Arabs and Kabyles and have also acquired the most of the state reservations for colonization.

FARMING IN ALGERIA.

I wish you could take a trip with me through some of these rich lands of the Tell, and see the queer ways of farming in this part of North Africa. We should have high mountains in sight all the way, and they would be rocky and barren. There would be no fences anywhere and very few houses. Here and there, at some distance from the white limestone road, we should see some of a French settler, a plain building covered with stucco, standing almost alone in the fields. There are no outbuildings and few barns; the cattle are pastured all the year round, and there is no need of stables. I have seen no haystacks since I came into the country, although I observed some alfalfa fields near Tlemcen.

HOW THEY SAVE STRAW.

The chief stock food, long food as our Virginia farmers would call it, is straw. This is most carefully saved. As soon as the thrashing is done it is stacked sometimes in bales, and sometimes loose. The stacks are then covered with a thatch as carefully put on as the roof of a house and in some localities where the soil forms a natural cement the whole outside of the stack is plastered. I have seen hundreds of stacks, larger than any haystacks in our country, so covered. This is done mostly in western Algeria, the thatch being more common in the east.

so many grapes that they are a drug in the market. Good wine can now be bought for about two cents a quart bottle, and it is so low that the vineyardists tell me it hardly pays to make it.

I have never seen such grapes anywhere. I measured some that were served for dessert at the hotel here last night. They were three and a half inches in circumference, or more than an inch in diameter. They tasted as sweet as maple syrup and their flavor was delicious. The best of the grapes now in the markets sell for about a cent a pound.

I have seen excellent vineyards everywhere I have gone. Algeria has almost a half million acres devoted to them, and they extend from one end of the country to the other. The vines are made runs between one hundred and two hundred million gallons, and it sells for from \$25,000,000 to \$30,000,000, the most of it going to France. The French are careful as to the introduction of fruit diseases into the colonies, and they have stringent laws against the importation of trees, plants and vines, as well as of flowers and fresh fruits. Indeed, the only vegetables now admitted are potatoes, well cleaned.

Algeria produces all sorts of fresh garden stuff. We have green peas and beans, as well as asparagus, celery and lettuce. Radishes are raised in great quantities, egg-plants and tomatoes thrive, and onions and potatoes yield two crops a year. Vegetables by the shipload go to France throughout the year, and Paris, Lyons, Marseilles and other French cities rely upon this country for their winter supplies of fresh fruit and garden stuff.

ALGERIAN FRUITS.

The Tell is now producing almost everything that can be grown in the United States. It has apples, peaches and pears, as well as figs and olives, oranges and lemons. The olive thrives well up into the Atlas mountains and many of the trees are centuries old. They live so long that the people have a saying that he who plants an olive is laying up treasures for his children's children. The olive crop is now worth about \$5,000,000 a year, and 2,000 tons of olive oil are annually exported. There are, altogether, about 15,000,000 olive trees, of which 4,000,000 are grafted. The natives consume large quantities of olive oil. Even the Kabyles make it in a rude way and store it in their houses for the winter. It is used for cooking, and has largely the same place that butter has with us.

There is an enormous number of figs produced in Algeria, and something like 30,000,000 pounds are annually exported. The fruit is fine, although not equal to that raised in Smyrna. Some of the varieties are white and some are blue. The fig orchards are to be seen everywhere. They are as common as apples in America and quite as freely eaten. The natives dry them and store them away for winter use.

AMONG THE STOCK RAISERS.

Algeria does a great deal of stock raising. Not only in the Tell, but in the ranges of the Atlas mountains and on the high plateaus upheld by them, are large flocks of sheep and goats, and they are also to be found all along the coast of the Desert of Sahara. There are more than a million of cattle in the Tell, and in the whole country more than a quarter of a million donkeys and almost that number of horses. The camels are something like 200,000, and the mules quite as many. Of this stock more than nine-tenths belong to the natives.

The sheep here are fine, large, long-wooled animals. They weigh, I ven-

Once the Granary of Rome, Now the Granary of France—Queer Methods of Farming—Plowing With Forked Sticks and Plastering Straw Stacks—Algeria as the Winter Garden of Paris—A Land of Vineyards and Orchards—It Produces a Million Gallons of Wine and Two Millions of Olive Oil—The Berber Farm Hands Get 20 Cents a Day—Stock Raising—A Suggestion for Sucking Cows—Fine Roads and Automobile Possibilities.



TWO KABYLE FARM HANDS.

Photographed in Their Summer Home by Mr. Carpenter.

ture, more than either our Southwestern or Shropshire, and they seem free from disease. They are white and brown in color, many of the white sheep having brown faces. Their ears are long and silky and hang down somewhat like those of a spaniel. The ewes are worth from \$2 to \$3 each, while the rams will bring double as much.

FOUR MILLION BLACK GOATS.

Algeria has about 4,000,000 goats, and it furnishes many goatskins for soft American shoes. The goats are black and brown in color. They are of good size, but in their milking qualities they do not compare with those I saw in Morocco. In Tangier the goats furnish most of the milk of the city, and they are made to carry it in their bags from door to door, the milkman drawing his wares direct from the goat. Sometimes he allows the kids to run with their mothers, but in such cases he ties strings around the teats of the mamma goats so that the baby kids cannot suck on the sky. This might be used to cure cows of sucking themselves, as they sometimes do in our country.

The goats of Algeria, as I have already said, are always grazed with the sheep. I have yet to see one flock which did not contain both animals, and I have passed millions as I have traveled through Algeria. The flocks are always watched by shepherds—white-gowned, bare-footed men or boys, who live out in the fields with them. On the edges of the desert there are many nomadic shepherds who live in tents, driving their sheep, goats and other stock from place to place to find pasture.

ARABIAN HORSES.

The horses of Algeria are largely of Arabian stock. They are well made and

down into the Desert of Sahara, to the oasis of Biskra, but did not go as far as I feared that we might break down on the way and be left in the sands. These roads were begun by the French as a military necessity, and they are still kept up for the army. Everywhere the troops go new roads are being made, and they are now to be made in the more settled parts of the Atlas and down to the very edge of the Sahara, the greatest desert on earth.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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THEY WORK FOR 20 CENTS A DAY.

The most of the labor here is done by the Kabyles. The Arabs and Moors are lazy, but these white Africans, who are of our race, like the aboriginal dollar quite as well as their American cousins, and will work for it. I see them everywhere in the grain fields and vineyards and in the orchards and gardens.

They are employed by the French farmers and come down in gangs from their homes in the Atlas mountains to aid in the harvest. At such times they live in little straw shacks which are built for the purpose. They cook their own food on fires out of doors and sleep on the ground. Their pay is from 20 to 40 cents a day, without food, or from 35 to 50 cents a month. The European farm laborers are paid from 50 to 80 cents a day, or 10 a month and found. At the time of the grape harvest they get more.

WINE AT TWO CENTS A QUART.

The vineyards of the Tell are quite as important as the grain fields. This is one of the best wine-growing countries of the world; it is now producing