

Correspondence.

Experiments With Potatoes.

PINE KANYON, Tooele Co.,
December 9, 1874.

Editor Deseret News:

As the cultivation of the potato is part of our agricultural pursuit, I thought it might be interesting and profitable to write a short article on the success we have had with the "Compton's Surprise" potato the past summer.

We have experimented with the "Compton's Surprise" and the Neshannoc. The latter potato is considered by a numerous portion of this community, the staple potato of the Territory. We selected the two kinds for experiment to test their qualities and prolificness, hence we planted both kinds side of each other on the same quality of soil, manuring and flowing both kinds alike exactly and the results are as follows—

The "Compton's Surprise" has no hollow in it. Its originator made the statement that it was solid to the centre. I have tried many and have not found a hollow one yet. The Neshannoc in this part of the Territory is very often exceedingly hollow. Therefore the Neshannoc in this particular is inferior to the "Compton's Surprise."

The second point of superiority of the "Compton's Surprise," in comparison with the Neshannoc, is, according to our honest and unbiased judgment and taste, and also many others, that the "Compton's Surprise" is a superior flavored potato, in connection with its snowy whiteness and floury appearance when properly prepared for the table, entitling it to be classified in the first estimation of potato consumers, who are partial to an excellent tuber appearing fanciful to the eye as well as good to taste.

The third superior property of the "Compton's Surprise" over the Neshannoc is the extraordinary yield of the former. We tested the two kinds in the following order—we cut one eye to a set of the "Compton's Surprise," and planted one set to a hill. We cut two eyes to a set of the Neshannoc and planted two sets to a hill. The yield of the "Compton's Surprise" was about thirty bushels more than that of the Neshannoc on the same amount of land. If both kinds had had the same amount of seed who can tell the difference?

The "Compton's Surprise" is a very fine shaped tuber. Its shape is oval oblong. It is a seedling of the Prince Albert, fertilized with the pollen of the long Pinkeye, and was originated in 1870 by Mr. J. Compton, of Hawley, Penn.

We had ninety pounds of seed of the "Compton's Surprise" when the Spring opened, from which amount we raised 130 bushels of very fine tubers. The cultivation was most ordinary, both with the Neshannoc and the "Compton's Surprise," the experiment having been desired to ascertain which of the two kinds was to be preferred. We prefer the "Compton's Surprise" because its yield is about twice the amount of the Neshannoc, and for other reasons above named.

The "Compton's Surprise" this year, as in years past, has fully sustained its reputation, and it reflects honor upon B. K. Bliss & Sons, of the State of New York, who sent them into twenty-eight States of the Union.

We are of opinion that the "Compton Surprise" is capable of yielding 800 bushels to the acre. In the year 1873 we raised at the rate of 1,195 bushels and thirty-five pounds to the acre.

The awarding committee, Dr. Hexamer, P. T. Quin and the editor of the New York Tribune, stated that Abednego Robinson, of N. Market, Buckingham County, New H., did raise at the rate of 80,650 pounds from one bushel, being 511 pounds from one pound. See New York Tribune, Nov. 12, 1873.

An article published in the DESERET NEWS a short time ago stated that over 1,500 pounds had been raised from seven pounds of "Breeze's Early." I raised at the rate of 2,400 pounds from seven pounds of the "Compton's Surprise." Abednego Robinson, as stated above, got the \$100 prize for 511 pounds from one.

The great trouble with us as agriculturists is, we do not experiment enough, but fall into the common practice too much of what is termed slipshod farming. We ought in

Utah, as well as in the various States of the Union, to have our agricultural college, to experiment and test all processes of cultivation, both in roots and grains, also in fruits. Almost all the States have agricultural colleges, why not Utah have one, that the Territory might be benefited by the results of its experiments?

No experimental root crops should be planted near the shade of large trees, because their roots will absorb the pabulum of the soil, and also deprive the roots of the sun's influence, which is very essential to a healthy growth of all root crops. All roots planted in the shade of trees will generally be dwarfish, and more or less ill-flavored; therefore the experimental planting should be done in an open space.

The "Compton's Surprise" ripens at the same time as the Neshannoc, both being planted at the same date, and it will keep about one month longer than the Neshannoc before sprouting.

What shall I say more of this wonderful potato? Wonderful for its snowy whiteness, its solidity, its prolificness, long keeping qualities, its fine flavor, surpassing all the tubers yet introduced into this Territory. If any farmer has a better tuber, will he please let us know through the NEWS, and I will send to him for some.

JAMES J. STEEL.

BY TELEGRAPH.

AMERICAN.

WASHINGTON, D. C., 14.—Sargent's bill fixing the minimum price upon certain restored lands in California, relates to the lands originally withdrawn for the benefit of the Central Pacific Railroad, and afterwards reserved for the Southern Pacific R. R., but since restored to the public domain. The bill provides that the even numbered sections shall be subject to homestead and pre-emption entry at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, the same as the odd numbered sections which have been restored and thrown open at that minimum price by the decision of the Interior Department; settlers on the even numbered sections are compelled to pay twice as much. Sargent also introduced a general bill, extending the above remedial provision to all the restored lands throughout the country.

Col. Thomas A. Scott made an argument to-day, before the Senate Pacific railway committee in support of the Texas Pacific Railroad.

The cotton product of 1874 is estimated by cotton growers, in the returns to the department of Agriculture, somewhat in excess of three and a half million bales.

The President telegraphed Gen. Sherman, inviting him to come here and assist in the entertainment to King Kalakaua; he will be here on Wednesday morning.

Don A. Pardee, nominated for district judge in Louisiana, was originally from Ohio, but is now a resident of Louisiana.

Boston, 14.—A fire broke out about eleven o'clock to-night, in a large five-story brick block in Wareham street; a strong wind was prevailing, and it spread rapidly, and crossed the street and burned through to Pembroke street. At this hour, 12.10, it is thought to be under control. Ten buildings have been thus far destroyed. The loss is very heavy, but cannot yet be ascertained.

New York, 14.—The Republic newspaper suspended publication to-day. Mr. Norville, the responsible editor, has been ill at his house for two weeks past.

Doctor Underwood, the well known pool seller, died at Saratoga yesterday, of hemorrhage of the lungs.

New Orleans, 14.—An effort was made this morning to introduce five or six colored girls as pupils into the girls' upper high school, which resulted in the withdrawal of over fifty of the graduating class; this is the first attempt to place negroes in this school.

John D. Davis, supervisor of the registry, and six commissioners of election of St. Helena parish, have made an affidavit that the election returns in that parish, in the hands of the returning board, have been tampered with, and that changes and alterations have been made in them since delivered to the secretary of the board.

Mr. Arrows offered a resolution that, as the returns filed by

him had, according to sworn statements, been tampered with, the board should, before action on the returns, examine the charges; adopted. The investigation will commence to-morrow.

Governor Wells proposed that the democratic counsel examine all the evidence and the affidavit regarding the contested parishes, and then submit the whole to the board. The conservatives objected, because certain papers had been placed among the records without their knowledge, and they requested that the papers of each parish be laid before them, that they may see none of the papers have been abstracted. This was acquiesced in.

Gov. Wells rose and stated that he had just been officially informed that armed white leagues were stationed adjacent to the building, ready to disturb the proceedings, and he moved an adjournment.

Chester, colored, suggested that an adjournment would only precipitate the excitement.

Seconaher suggested the calling of U. S. troops, which he was informed would be furnished if desired.

Governor Wells did not wish to canvass the returns under the protection of troops, and did not intend to be intimidated, and insisted on an adjournment till 11, which was agreed to.

WASHINGTON, 15.—The sub-judiciary committee, Butler, Poland and White, reported to the full committee, to-day, in favor of amending the civil rights bill, so as to omit the mixed schools provision, and to require, merely, that equally good educational facilities shall be provided for both races; and that the penalty of \$500 fine be omitted, leaving the pecuniary punishment for the violation of any provision of the bill to consist in liabilities in five hundred dollars damages, at the suit of any individual denied equality of accommodations, &c. There was general discussion of the subject, but no definite action, there being a wide difference of views.

The President has nominated S. B. Axtell to be Governor of Utah Territory, and George A. Black to be Secretary of Utah Territory.

WHITEHALL, N. Y., 15.—The nail factory, rolling mill, machine shops and all the buildings on the south side of the Ausable river, at Ausable forks, belonging to the J. & J. J. Rogers' iron company, was burned this morning; loss about \$125,000, partially insured.

SAN FRANCISCO, 15.—On November 18th the ship Mary Bangs, from this port for New York, struck on a sand beach on the Mexican coast, and became a total wreck; all the crew were saved, but none of the cargo. The crew were taken to Mazatlan.

Ex-Coroner Rice has been indicted for embezzlement.

Boston, 15.—The fire last night did not prove so serious as reported; the losses aggregate \$60,000; insurance about \$40,000.

A large fire is now burning here in the wooden district, and the firemen are endeavoring to prevent the spread of the flames to the section lying between Warham and Malden Streets. The fire alarms last night and this morning have caused apprehensions of another general conflagration.

Later. This morning the second and third alarms were sounded, and before the entire department was called out, the flames were fanned by a strong wind, and soon made fearful havoc among a mass of wooden buildings between Plympton and Warham St.; they crossed Warham Street after destroying the large planing mill of Morton & Chesley, and burning J. J. McNutt's extensive wood manufactory. Emerson's piano factory, adjoining, escaped, being brick, but the buildings on all sides, being chiefly wood, are in ruins. The wind carried the burning brands across Albany street into some large lumber yards, and now all that tract of land lying between Albany street and the water is a mass of flames. The firemen have abandoned this section of the fire to its fate, and are laboring to prevent the flames spreading into the section lying between Warham and Malden streets, pouring water on the burning piles of lumber on Albany street.

12.30 p. m.—The flames in the burning district are now thought to be under control. It is estimated that nearly five hundred men are, by the fire, thrown out of employment. The total loss by the

Plympton street fire foots up to half a million. While the above fire was in full blast the Charlestown alarm was sounded, and a few engines were sent to extinguish the flames, which had broken out in a wooden building on Water street, at Hudson. This conflagration extended to Cunningham's extensive boiler factory, which was burned, together with a train of cars on the track of the Fitchburg railroad. A large salt factory and other buildings in the neighborhood took fire, but were saved. The ship Reporter took fire in the rigging, which was damaged considerably. Other vessels in the vicinity were cut adrift, and went crashing into Charlestown bridge, carrying away a large portion and doing much damage to themselves. When the flames were thought to be extinguished on the wharf, they broke out on the water side, and spread so rapidly that the firemen were obliged to remove their apparatus. This wharf (Hettinger's) was destroyed, also Warren & Frieman's salt manufactory. The loss by the Charlestown fire was between \$100,000 and \$150,000. The fires are all thought to be of incendiary origin. The weather is very cold, the thermometer at four o'clock marking six degrees below zero. The firemen suffered severely, many having their fingers and feet frozen.

New York, 15.—A Washington dispatch says that Professor Simon Newcomb has been requested, by the trustees of the Lick fund, to make the investigations necessary to determine where and for what price a great equatorial telescope may be constructed, which is to be the pride of the new California observatory. He will sail for Europe in a few days on duty for the naval observatory, and will visit Lord Ross's observatory in Ireland, and the Paris, Berlin, and other noted observatories in Europe.

In connection with the Pacific Mail investigation now pending before the ways and means committee, a remarkable scene occurred in the House yesterday. Representative R. C. Parsons, of Ohio, after considerable trouble, got the floor for a personal explanation, and briefly denied the statement of the New York Tribune that he had, in any way, corruptly influenced any member of congress in securing the passage of the subsidy bill, adding that he was not a member of the house at the time it was passed. While he read this, a great crowd of members gathered in the open space in front of the desks, and as he turned to resume his seat, Randall, of Pennsylvania, who was in the midst of a crowd, called out, "I would like to ask the gentleman a question—Was he paid any of that money?" "I was," replied Parsons, in a loud and ringing voice, and he then disappeared in the crowd amid the most profound sensation. At the time the subsidy bill passed, Parsons was marshal of the Supreme Court, and it was well understood was counsel, so-called, of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.

Thomas G. Shearman and ex-Judge Morris, yesterday agreed to argue the appeal from Judge McCue's order next Saturday. The argument will be made by William M. Everts for Beecher, and by William A. Beach for Tilton.

The Excise Board report that \$68,000 have been received by them, of applications for licenses since Schwab's conviction for selling liquor without license; the whole amount has been deposited to the credit of the charitable institutions of the city.

A writ of habeas corpus, returnable on the 17th inst., has been granted in the case of Wm. M. Tweed.

LONDON, 15.—The bark Antipodes, from San Francisco, which put into Falmouth, Dec. 5, damaged, has arrived at Plymouth; her bulwarks are gone, and she has lost her sails.

A fastidious lady recently secured three entire staterooms for herself and maid on one of the English steamers from Liverpool to New York. She used to sleep (or try to, for she was very ill) by turns in all of them, the maid preferring the floor of one in her agony. The maid arose only once to crawl to the captain and ask him to stop the ship long enough for her to make the bed for her mistress, and to go to her trunk for clean linen. The captain denied her request.

A Dangerous Weed in California.

Improved agriculture is of so recent date in California, that but few of the pests in the way of insects and weeds that trouble the cultivator in the older States, have come to plague his California brother. Alfalfa or lucerne is one of the staples of California agriculture, and a weed that threatens the destruction of this crop is a matter of the first importance. Notices of a particularly troublesome dodder have appeared in the California papers, and we are indebted to the kind attention of our friends of the Pacific Rural Press, of San Francisco, and Sonoma Democrat, for specimens, which have enabled us to examine the plant, and to make an engraving of it. Almost every one knows our common dodders, which hang their yellow or copper-colored, wiry stems over the bushes in the swamps of the Atlantic States. There are ten native species east of the Mississippi, several more west of that river, and about seventy species thus far known throughout the world, all of which, with their varieties, are admirably described in Dr. G. Engelmann's elaborate account of the genus. The dodders are all parasites; the seed germinates in the ground, and the stem attaches itself to some other plant; by means of disks or suckers it draws upon the other plant for nutriment, and soon cuts itself loose from the root, and feeds wholly upon its unfortunate host. Some dodders live upon exogenous plants indiscriminately, while others prefer particular plants, or those of certain families; one confines itself to flax, which, besides the one in question, is the most generally injurious. One of our native species has been known to be troublesome upon young trees in nurseries. The dodder upon alfalfa, so far as we can determine from description, having no authentic specimens for comparison, is *Cuscuta racemosa*, variety *Chiliana*. The species is a very variable one, and between it and related species there is some confusion. The seeds of this were no doubt introduced into California with alfalfa seeds from Chili, the same as it was into Europe many years ago, where it was very destructive to lucerne, often destroying whole fields. The engraving shows the habit of the weed. When once fixed it spreads and entangles the several branches of a plant, or those of neighboring plants; under this heavy draught made upon its life-blood, as we may regard the sap, the lucerne ceases to grow, and at length turns yellow, and dies from exhaustion. The Sonoma Democrat publishes an opinion that the dodder now so troublesome upon the alfalfa is a native species, but an examination of the specimens makes us quite sure that it is not. One not acquainted with the minute characters, by which the species are distinguished, might, from their outward resemblance, regard them as the same. The alfalfa seed is like a minute, rather flattened, kidney bean; that of the dodder is irregularly orbicular, and only about one third as long the other. An ordinary magnifier will readily detect the presence of this or other foul seeds in the alfalfa seed. With this, as with other weeds, one important point is to avoid introducing it, and care in selecting the seed will do this. Where it makes its appearance the most prompt measures should be taken to prevent its spread. Cut the infested plants, and burn them, and do this before the parasite has matured its seeds. If the dodder has too full possession to allow this to be done, then the plan followed in France, (where a dodder, and probably the same species, is destructive,) may be adopted. Straw is laid in abundance among the plants in a dry time, and is then set on fire, the sudden flame destroys the parasite, but does not materially injure the alfalfa, which starts from the roots, and the stems, that escape injury by the fire.—American Agriculturist.

A Washington paper says that it is a lamentable fact that the number of men and women now out of employment in the city is greater than at any former period.

In Paris there are 671 women who serve as models for painters and sculptors. The age of the largest number is from sixteen to twenty years.