

Imperial Press

AND FARMER.

"Water is King—Here is its Kingdom."

VOL. II.

IMPERIAL, CAL., SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1903.

No. 48

A DATE ORCHARD AT IMPERIAL.

The Neglet-Noor Date Plants are Being Imported for This Orchard.

This is the Finest Date Grown—It is a Dessert Date That Retail at 50 Cents a Pound in this Country—Government Expert Endorses Enterprise.

Steps are now being taken to establish the largest date orchard in America near the town of Imperial, to consist of 160 acres, and the dates are to be of the Neglet Noor variety, the finest date known—a desert date that retails at fifty cents per pound—the highest price paid for a dried fruit in America.

Prof. Walter T. Swingle, the Government date expert, who has spent several years searching Africa for the best varieties of dates that can be had for importation into the United States, is endorsing this enterprise and advising his intimate friends to invest in the industry. Prof. Swingle is at present in Italy, and from a letter from him to A. H. Heber, president of the California Development Company, we are allowed to take the following extracts:

"For nearly a year I have been engaged in preparing a bulletin on the Date Palm, which at last I have sent to the Department of Agriculture, which will shortly issue it as a bulletin (90 pp., 40 plates). I have taken much trouble to go to the bottom of the matter, and have proved beyond all doubt, the truth of the facts I asserted last year, that the Neglet Noor date can mature in the Imperial Valley, and that this plant can withstand more alkali than any other profitable crop. These facts will shortly be demonstrated in a manner that will attract the attention of the public.

"It is now clear that the Neglet Noor date cannot be counted on to mature regularly, and may not ripen at all in the Salt River Valley, Arizona—the only considerable region now under irrigation that can rival with the Imperial Valley in date production. This choice variety—the most expensive dried fruit that reaches the American market—will become a monopoly of the Imperial Valley, and all danger from foreign competition is obviated because of the insufficiency of the Sahara crop to meet even the European demands, and furthermore by the fact that the Imperial Valley crop will be placed on the market long before the imported article, and before instead of after Christmas, besides being fresh and in better shape.

"At San Francisco, I was told by Goldberg, Bowen & Co., the leading grocers, that any quantity of Neglet Noor dates could be sold at 35 cents for a 10-ounce box (50 cents a pound), if only they could be had before the holidays. At the same time, selected Smyrna figs were selling for 30 cents

a pound in one-pound boxes.

"The yield of this variety is large—135 pounds on the average in the Sahara, where the soil is less fertile and the water much more alkaline than in the Salton Basin. No other fruit culture offers the same promise for the region, and the date palm, far from being a last resort for land useless for anything, will repay planting on the very best land as a staple crop.

"The composition of the alkali of the Imperial Valley is such that it is a valuable fertilizer to a plant like the date palm, which is a highly alkali resistant. It is therefore positively advantageous to the date palm to have a moderate amount of alkali in the soil, of a nature of that found in the Imperial Valley.

"The amount of labor required is less than for other fruit trees, and the fruit, when it ripens, does not demand immediate attention, but will keep for weeks, can be harvested by cutting off a whole bunch at a time, and does not require any curing process, as do less valuable dates.

"The Imperial Valley will have the monopoly of this—one of the most lucrative and facile fruit cultures known, and one which, instead of being harmed by the unusual conditions prevailing in the region, is, on the contrary, benefited thereby. I would not be surprised to see an export trade grow up in the first hand-picked dates which can be shipped for Thanksgiving, and which will reach London markets at least two weeks before the earliest Sahara shipments. The control of the American markets is assured.

"I do not hesitate to assert that the practical establishment of this culture in the Imperial Valley is of the very greatest importance, and will mark an epoch in American agricultural advance.

"My large shipment (of dates) for the Government reached Arizona July 17th, 1900, and eighty per cent. of the suckers grew which were shipped by my new method. In 1902—only two years after planting—eighteen of these palms flowered and bore fruit, and many more have already produced new offshoots.

"It is the intention of this company to import Neglet Noor suckers for sale, rendering it possible for settlers all through the basin to begin plant-

ing as soon as they desire, thereby rendering possible the rapid establishment of date culture, as soon as its demonstration culture gives an object lesson in methods of propagating, planting and caring for this unusual plant.

"Nursery stock cannot be propagated rapidly as with fruit trees that can be grafted or budded, so the establishment of such an import trade in 'Saharan suckers' will greatly facilitate the utilization of the date palm in the Salton Basin."

The Coachella Submarine boasts that it is at a lower point below sea level than any other paper in the world. That is probably true, but just wait till a paper is established at the new town of Brawley—12 miles north of Imperial—and then that claim will not be good, for Brawley is located about 150 feet below sea level—Coachella only 76 feet below.

While the rain-belt farmer watches the clouds in vain, and his crops are being parched by the sun, the irrigation farmer opens the water gates and supplies his crops with the required amount of water at the proper time.

Praise for Mr. Howe.

General John Wasson, in his paper, the Pomona Times, speaks words of great praise of E. F. Howe, the new owner of the Press, who will assume editorial charge of the paper in a few days. It is natural that one who has not been at Imperial during the last few months should not realize how real news of development work is crowding forward. General Wasson says:

"E. F. Howe, the talented editor of the Ontario Record, has bought the Imperial Press, at Imperial, San Diego county, and will take possession by March 1. To many fairly good editors the field would be a barren one; for Mr. Howe it will be one of inspiration and full of local as well as general topics of much interest. He has ability to make a paper interesting whether local conditions are lively and changing or not. Out on what most people call a desert because they can't appreciate the fruitful possibilities of the country, Mr. Howe sees the work of God in most interesting phases. He can easily see (in the future) a country teeming with grasses, grains, fruits, vegetables, fowls and domestic animals, and the air redolent with the perfume of the most brilliant and attractive flowers, with homes of health, abundance and luxury. He will see in the storms, in the risings and settings of the sun, in the moon and stars; in the lives and habits of the native reptiles, animals, fowls, insects and Indians, ever increasing interest. Any or all these, at any time when space will permit, or local subjects are a little threadbare by use, will inspire Mr. Howe to evolve thoughts and dissertations that will not fail to interest young and old students, and even allure the

tourist to Imperial. Mr. Howe is equal to any situation in newspaperdom—whether nature has done much or little to invite man. The Imperial Press will be more than ever a welcome X."

Railway Link with Mexico.

An element of importance in the development of Southern California is disclosed in the railway project outlined in Wednesday's Herald. The proposition is to open the Pacific Coast districts of Northern Mexico by the extension into them of the Southern Pacific railway system. President Harriman is said to be engaged in planning the enterprise and the intimation is given that it will take practical shape in the near future.

The project thus noted involves the extension of the Southern Pacific branch from Imperial, to which point it has just been finished, southwestward to the Mexican border, a distance of twenty-eight miles. From that point is it proposed to extend the line into Lower California as soon as the Mexican government makes provision therefor in the way of official permission and the assurance of such land grants as may be desired. At the same time, as reported, the Southern Pacific will extend a branch into the mainland of Mexico, penetrating the State of Sinaloa and forming a connection with the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railway.

All the districts thus to be opened in Northern Mexico will be commercial tributaries of Los Angeles by reason of the direct railway connection.—Los Angeles Herald.

Good railroad authority expresses the opinion that the Imperial branch is to be extended in a southwesterly direction through Lower California to Ensenada, with one line reaching tidewater at San Diego. President Harriman's brother recently spent several months examining all that section of country.

Imperial Booming.

Track laying was completed to Imperial, the metropolis of the desert, last week, and the day after its completion forty settlers from Iowa arrived at the settlement preparatory to taking up land and building homes. Workmen are now busy leveling and putting in the sidings at the station, and regular schedule passenger trains will soon be running. The tiresome stage ride from Old Beach across the desert is now a thing of the past. The citizens are making preparations for the increased business that is expected attendant upon the advent of the railroad. Progress and improvement will now be more extensive and of a better character.—Phoenix Arizona Democrat.

Vast Marble Deposit.

Twenty-eight location notices covering a vast deposit of marble were filed in the recorder's office in San Diego on January 22nd. The deposit, which is situated about twenty-five miles west of Imperial, on the surveyed line of the San Diego-Eastern Railway, is eight miles in length and several hundred feet in width. It was discovered last December and is said to be larger than the famous deposits at Carrara, Italy, and in Vermont. The stone is white, veined with gray and black.—Santa Ana Leader.

The man who shouts "anything to win" is usually the man who has nothing to lose.