

# California's Great Orange Crop

This Season's Yield Estimated at 6,500,000 Boxes Picking Now Under Way

WHILE in New England and the middle states furnace fires are still a necessity and snow squalls chill hopes of an early spring, while the wheat belt farmers are just thinking about doing their first plowing, in southern California the golden oranges are hanging thick on the trees, and pickers go forth in the warm sunshine to gather the great bunches of luscious fruit.

Just now the harvesting of the orange crop is in full swing. It began in Feb-

of the trees are "cut back" so as to make them grow low, and the fruit is therefore easily gathered. But there are thousands of acres of trees which are quite tall, and these must be picked from ladders laid against a tree.

The picker has tied to his waist after the manner of an apron a sack, into which the oranges are dropped. They are not pulled off the twigs, but are cut off with a pair of shears. Then they are placed in carrying boxes, which are hauled to the packing house.

The fruit must be picked from the color, only the ripest being selected from a tree which is heavily laden. An experienced eye tells the picker what kind of fruit will do for picking, he being guided almost entirely by the tinge which the fruit has taken on.

First of all the great wagon loads of boxes are carefully tallied to find whether any fruit from the pickers in the groves is missing. Then the boxes, with their golden spheres, are set aside for a three days' curing. Fresh from the tree an orange is still very much airtight, with the oil cells expanded and the mystery of growth not yet suspended. Cut off from the sap supply, a change takes place. The skin draws closer to the pulp and gives off moisture that would cause sweating if the fruit were packed at once.

After the wagon trip from the orchard it is necessary to give these dust-stained travelers a bath. By the bushel the newcomers are dumped into a long, narrow tank of water, at one end of which is a big wheel with a tire of soft bristles. The wheel revolves so that the lower edge works in connection with another set of brushes in a smaller tank below, and the oranges, after bobbing about in the big tank, pass between the wet brushes and come out bright and clean.

After their bath the oranges are spread out in the sun to dry on long, slanting racks. At the lower end they roll off into boxes, to be carried away to the warehouse for their rest. An orange needs a deal of grooming. The washing is not enough.

There must be a brushing, too, and after the days of curing the oranges are fed into a hopper, which drops them single file on to a belt that runs between revolving cylindrical brushes. This gives them their smooth, shiny

## WRITES HORSE STORIES.

How Sewell Ford Has Developed a New Field in Fiction.

This is the story of a man who writes stories of a small man with a big brain and the nerve and endurance and persistence that tell in every walk of life. About eight years ago Sewell Ford, a hardworking newspaper man, decided that he would write short stories worthy of the best magazines. His days were devoted to newspaper work, and the only time he had for fiction was at night after a hard day's grind at the desk. The outlook was not encouraging; but, wholly undaunted, he sat down at his typewriter night after night, lit his pipe and began turning



SEWELL FORD.

out short stories. They weren't very good at first, and after they had emulated the cat by coming back many times he either rewrote them or tore them up.

Now and then one was accepted, but he was alike unaffected by both check time and tearing up time and worked away with untiring patience and industry, striving to make each new story better than the preceding one.

He loved a horse from the ground up, and he felt that every horse he saw—the light harness horse, the heavy draft horse, the thoroughbred of the turf, the park police horse and the fire horse—had its romance. "My field of fiction shall be the pasture and every other haunt of the horse at work or play," he said, "and I will study the horse and understand him and tell his story." This announcement was not made from the housetops. The ambitious author merely whispered it to himself, and then he began taking a course in horse lore. Busy at a desk all day and part of the night, he studied horses on ferryboats between Jersey City and New York, robbed himself of noon hour lunches to visit sale stables, interviewed truckmen on the street and took a night off now and then and spent it in a fire-house with the grand horses that run with the machine.

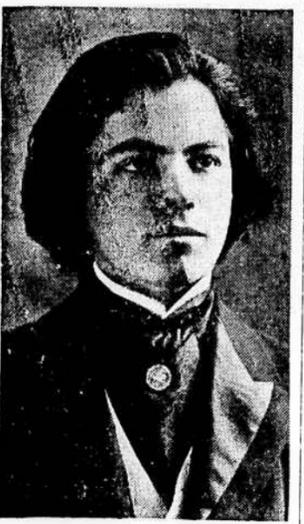
One after another nine splendid stories—"Skipper," "Chieftain," "Fasha," "Barnacles," "Black Eagle," "Calico," "Old Silver," "Bonfire" and "Blue Blazes"—were sired, so to speak, and they were all thoroughbreds. Most of them have appeared in the best magazines, and Charles Scribner's Sons have just issued the entire number in book form under the title "Horses Nine."

## JAN KUBELIK'S ROMANCE.

Famous Violinist, Who Is to Wed a Hungarian Countess.

Medical circles here and abroad are much interested in the recent announcement of the engagement of Herr Jan Kubelik, the Hungarian violinist, to the Countess Marianne Czaky Szell, a relative of the Hungarian prime minister.

Kubelik met his bride to be three years ago at a concert and was immediately fascinated by the beautiful



HERR JAN KUBELIK.

countess, who is only twenty-two and is the widow of Count Czaky. She is a typical Hungarian beauty, tall, of fine figure, with big black eyes and chestnut hair.

Kubelik is now a few months less than twenty-two, but looks five years younger. His physique is slight and rather feminine in its smallness of frame. The marriage will take place next year, and Kubelik, it is said, will build a palace in Vienna.

## MOVING SIDEWALKS.

NEW YORK'S LATEST SCHEME OF PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION.

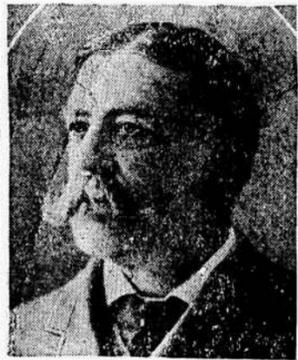
How Thousands Will Be Carried to and Fro on Continuous Moving Underground Platforms—Details of a Novel Plan.

Among the many methods of transportation in course of construction or now employed to move the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to and from their daily toil the most unique and novel is the proposed moving underground sidewalk, on which it is asserted 75,000 passengers per hour can be comfortably carried.

While the new scheme is popularly known as a "moving sidewalk," it is really a system of moving platforms or continuous trains. A corporation, to be known as the Continuous Transit company, is in process of organization, and the details of the plan have been presented to the city officials for action. The company will have for its president Cornelius Vanderbilt; Stuyvesant Fish, president of the Illinois Central railroad, vice president, and E. P. Ripley, president of the Atchafalaya railway, is one of the moving spirits and heavy stockholders in the corporation. It is estimated that the cost of digging the tunnel and the cost of the moving platforms will be about \$5,000,000.

The plan as outlined is to dig a subway about thirty feet wide and only deep enough to clear the street above. There will be stations every two blocks. The main line will consist of one sidewalk moving in each direction. Each will be seven feet wide and will run in a depression, with sixteen feet of space between. This middle space will be at a level with the surface of the platform. On the main platform there will be two rows of seats facing the center, thus making a sort of fence at the sides. Those who sit down will travel at the rate of ten miles an hour, but the space between the seats will enable those who prefer to walk to do so, thus accelerating their speed that much toward their destination.

There will be no more congestion than on the sidewalk of an ordinary street, for the reason that there will be no waiting for trains. The main line in the projected road will consist of third rail roadless trolley flat cars, each fifteen feet long. Each will carry an electric light lamp post. There will be guards for each four cars to assist timid ones to alight, call out stations



E. P. RIPLEY.

and give warning at curves. Each of these cars will be so joined as to appear as one long car.

The ordinary method of operating these platforms is well known. There are usually two so called "stepping platforms" running along the main platform. The passengers step aboard the first, which is moving slowly, thence to the second, which is moving at twice the speed of the first, and from thence to the main line. The operation is simple and attended with no danger.

In the system proposed for New York a somewhat different scheme has been adopted. The sixteen feet of space between the tracks allows for the stations, which are between the tracks. A passenger on descending from the street finds himself on a solid, oblong platform in the exact center of the station. Round and round this center moving sidewalk, the speed of which increases inward.

The one next to the fixed platform moves at the rate of two and a half miles an hour. From that he steps to the next moving platform at five miles an hour. Thence the passenger steps to one moving seven and a half miles an hour, when he is next to the main line, which runs ten miles an hour. He then stands still until he is on the proper side of the station and steps aboard the sidewalk moving in the direction he wants to travel. On alighting this operation is reversed.

It will be seen that no dexterity is required to walk freely from one to another, as there will only be a difference in speed of two and a half miles an hour between each. The tunnel will be lighted and will also be heated moderately in winter. The plan is to charge 1 cent in rush hours and 2 cents at other hours for transit.

E. P. Ripley, who is one of the principal backers of the scheme, has been president of the Atchafalaya and Santa Fe Railway company since 1886. He is a native of Boston and entered the railway service as clerk in the Boston office of the Pennsylvania railroad. He was advanced until he became general eastern agent, which position he held from 1878 to 1886, when he became general manager of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad. From 1890 to 1895 he was third vice president of the Milwaukee and St. Paul railway. He was married in 1871 to Miss Frances E. Harding of Boston. Mr. Ripley is in his fifty-eighth year

# Faro Deal Tragedy

How the Career of Johnny Keefer Was Suddenly Cut Short.

Perils of Crooked Gambling in the Early Days of the West. Story of a Mexican Girl's Revenge.

Brace dealing at faro, of which so much has been heard recently, originated in the pioneer days of the west, and connected with the crooked play of those days is the memory of the killing of Johnny Keefer, probably one of the most sudden and unexpected tragedies even for that time of sudden deaths.

"Johnny Keefer had both the nerve and the skill, and in addition he was a strong example of the truth that you can't tell a bad man by his outward appearance. Johnny was plump, short, had a good natured face and one of the



JOHNNIE SLIPPED TO THE FLOOR.

blindest expressions ever given a man. A stranger would never have suspected Johnny of anything tougher than playing marbles and could have readily believed that he would have been shocked at the idea of playing even that game for keeps. Yet in the whole southwest there probably wasn't a man who could deal brace better, had faced death oftener or had a more utter disregard for human life when in a corner.

"Where Johnny came from no one knew or cared, it not being etiquette in those days to inquire into a man's past," said an old western miner now in New York a few days ago. "He drifted into our camp in the boom times and began dealing for Len Townsend. I don't know whether Len knew he was crooked, but it wasn't long before Johnny was drawing the highest wages of any dealer in camp. After a little he started up a bank of his own. It was a success from the first, and Johnny was making big money when the entanglement with the Mexican girl that led to his death came.

"The girl was one of the sort common in camps of that day. Occasionally she used to take a turn at dealing bank in one of the halls for the purpose of drawing trade, as she had all kinds of good looks. Finally she tried dealing on her own account, having saved up quite a little money. But she had a run of bad luck, and it was apparent her bank roll was almost gone when Johnny came to the rescue.

"First he dealt a few times for her, and every time the house won. Then he made the mistake of his career. He showed her his trick of dealing brace and put in all the time he could spare from his own game in teaching her how to make the shift. And that was simply signing his own death warrant. He had delivered himself over to an unusually treacherous specimen of a treacherous class.

"Of course after a little while some occasion for dispute arose between them, and the girl, having the temper of a beautiful fiend, began to hate Johnny more than she liked him at first. In the camp was a miner named Judson, who had had two or three little disagreements with Johnny and in addition had gone broke trying to beat Johnny's bank. The Mexican girl sent word for Judson to come to her place. Then she explained to him Johnny's method of dealing and showed him a box similar to the one Johnny used himself, a box he had made for her. Judson tipped off two or three other men who had lost heavily at the game, and they laid their trap to catch Johnny and put a permanent end to his career as a brace dealer.

"It was arranged that two of the men should play and play high, while Judson was to stand at one side behind the lookout, as if he was watching the game. Judson was to give the signal. Then all three were to begin shooting, for they knew Johnny Keefer and were certain that when the time for action came there would be no talking. After the first word about brace dealing was uttered things would begin to

happen mighty sudden. It was before the days of self cocking revolvers, but a trained shot by snapping the hammer back with his thumb could get about as quick action as a man with the most modern gun.

"For nearly an hour Judson stood at one side looking on while his confederates played. The bank had been hit pretty hard, but either Johnny had dealt straight or else even the men who knew how he shifted the cards were unable to feel certain he had turned a trick. The ace and seven were both cases, and the ace had won three times in a row, while the seven had lost correspondingly. When it came time to call the turn, nearly everybody at the table put down a big bet, calling the ace to lose and the seven to win. Judson and his partners exchanged glances. If the dealer was going to shift the cards, it would come just at this turn.

"Johnny always pushed out the cards pretty fast, especially near the end of a deal. Just how the cards would come out this time no one ever knew. Johnny had just begun pushing off the exposed one when Judson called out:

"You're dealing!" "Probably he meant to say 'brace,' but the sentence was never finished. At the first syllable Johnny, apparently without taking the time to look up, sent his hand to his coat pocket. Three or four shots rang out at the same instant. Then two more, and Johnny Keefer slipped to the floor. He had four wounds, any one of which would have been mortal. When we picked him up, it was plain he had dealt his last deal at either straight or brace faro.

"When Judson spoke his first words, Johnny had fired through his coat at one of the men across the table who was just drawing his gun. The shot missed the man's heart, but by a decidedly small margin. Before Johnny could fire again the bullets from the others took effect. Judson's first shot going through his head just above the right eye. These men had been prepared, while the emergency came on Johnny without warning. If he had had half a chance, he might have won out even against such terrible odds.

"And when we came to look at the faro box we couldn't tell whether Johnny meant to deal a crooked turn or not. In the excitement the box had got knocked off the table, and the cards fell or were knocked out. Perhaps Johnny Keefer was on the point of making an honest deal when the end came."

## LIVING WOMAN WALLED UP.

Terrible Revenge Planned by a Russian Against His Erring Wife.

A singular story, which sounds more like fiction than reality, comes from Baku, Russia, to the effect that a stone-mason who was at work in one of the main streets of the town was recently kidnaped and compelled to wall up a living woman.

The mason was seized by two men who drove up in a rubber tired covered carriage, his head was enveloped in a sack, and he was driven away rapidly in a direction he was unable to indicate.

After a lengthy drive, which was accomplished at a good speed, the carriage stopped, and the workman was taken to an empty room in a house apparently some distance from the town. From a large hole in the wall the terrified face of a woman looked out, and a man in a mask ordered the mason to brick up the wall.

Seeing that a terrible crime was about to be perpetrated, the man refused, but on being threatened with a



THE MASON BRICKED UP THE WALL.

revolver was compelled to do the work, and the wall was filled up. He was then again muffled in the sack and driven back into Baku, where he was released.

The police were duly informed of what had taken place, but no traces of the kidnapers could be discovered, but the victim was released. It is said that the woman condemned to die behind the brick wall was a Mohammedan and that her husband had revenged himself on her in this terrible manner for her infidelity.



ORANGE PICKER AT WORK.

ruary and will not be ended until the first of June. It is the biggest orange crop that has ever been seen in California. Experts have tried to estimate its size, but we shall not know until the last tree has been stripped just how big it really is. They put their estimate at about 6,500,000 boxes. There are too many figures here to give us much of an idea. We may repeat them glibly enough, but they don't mean much to us. To learn that these 6,500,000 boxes would make 22,000 carloads is perhaps more enlightening. We can figure that 22,000 cars would make more than 1,000 trains of good length and that strung out one after the other they would reach almost from New York to Baltimore.

Should all these oranges ripen at one time our markets would be glutted with oranges. Our whole population, big as it is, could not eat up in a week all of California's orange crop even if every family had its share. But the golden harvest stretches itself over four of the winter and spring months and only ceases when strawberries and other native fruits begin to come in.

While the orange crop is being gathered, however, the groves are busy places. Every little valley along the Sierra foothills is bustling active, and the long trains of fruit cars that start daily on their long way across the continent tell how the harvest is progressing. The orange groves ring with the songs of the pickers among the trees.

Everybody in the orange business in California is in good humor this year. The season has been warm, and the rains have come just right for the groves. There has not been the least



LOADING THE PACKED BOXES.

alarm about frosts, and, above all else, the market prices for oranges are way up. The grower in southern California who does not make good money this season ought to give it up.

Thousands of boys, men and women are employed in gathering the product of an orange orchard. Nowadays many



HEAVILY LADEN BRANCHES.

look. From the brushes they drop into an elevator that lifts them to the sorting table, where they jostle each other in their hurry to get past the keen eye of the sorter.

The sorting table has a gentle pitch, and the divided stream pours single file upon two narrow tracks of moving ropes which gradually diverge. The smallest oranges fall through first, the next size further on, and the next slip into bins below, graded in a dozen sizes from those that run 360 to the box to the great ones that cannot be spanned with both hands and run eighty to the box. Both extremes and the next four smallest sizes are subject to discount from market price as "off sizes."

Then comes the packing. The packers are almost wholly women and girls. A deftness of hand is essential, and as the work is done by piece—2 to 3 cents a packed box—it is seen that the one who would earn \$1 or \$1.50 a day must be quick with her hands and attend closely to business. From the sorting table the oranges, now separated as to sizes and color and blemishes, run in troughs to the packers and empty into bins.

The growth of the orange industry is one of the marvels of California. From an aggregate invested capital of about \$10,000 in orange groves in that locality twenty years ago there is now invested in growing oranges in southern California something more than \$50,000,000. This capital embraces money spent in land, trees, irrigation devices, packing houses, agricultural implements and fertilizing of groves. Fifteen years ago the annual orange product of California averaged 500 carloads, and then when new groves came into bearing the output leaped forward by 2,000 and 4,000 carloads every year. In time California expects to raise enough oranges to supply the wants of all north America and part of Europe as well.