

The Land Swindler's Victims.

Score another victim for the writer of the vivid land prospectus. A wealthy old farmer recently appeared before a district judge in a western Kansas county and asked for a judgment against a land firm in Chicago because they had swindled him on a deal in old Mexico. The judge questioned the old man, who, by the way, had earned a fortune of over \$50,000 by honest and hard work on the farm in his own community.

"How is it you purchased this land without seeing it?" the judge inquired of the farmer.

"Well, the writin' sent me by this firm said I could double my profits in a year, and that's a whole lot better than havin' my money in the bank. And these fellers said the banks were not safe, either. That is why I bought the land. I bought it before I saw it, because they said it might all be gone if I waited a week longer."

Thus it goes—stung, stung, stung. Farmers and city men, too, for that matter, fall a prey to the lurid writing of the land prospectus builder. This new crater, or grafter, in the world of business is making hay while the sun shines. He is reaping a rich reward for his labor. Bankers say hundreds and thousands of dollars are leaving their vaults to go into the coffers of so-called big land firms who are selling out large tracts of wild land in the West. They have the farmer and investor believing land is a better investment than a bank account. And so it is—if the land is all that is said for it.

Fortunes have been made in Western land in the last few years. There are farmers in many sections of the Middle West who have gone into Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and elsewhere and taken up cheap land and sold it again for big profits. These men talk about it, and the ever present land booklet writer takes their story and sends it all over the country, magnifying and adding color to suit his particular section, of course.

A satisfied customer in Western lands is a gold mine to a good "wild cat" land company. They often sell some few responsible men in each community land at a low price, and resell it for them in a few months at a profit in order to get their investment. They can afford to buy the land in themselves.

Land is sold in these modern times through advertising largely. The old system of having hundreds of sub-agents scattered over the country rounding up the purchasers and taking them West on free railroad passes has been eliminated by the railroads cutting off the passes, and the land is now sold by advertising direct to the purchaser.

It requires clever writers to "fix the dope." But there are clever young men in the West who know how to wield a pen in molding fanciful opinion about beautiful tracts of land open for settlement. These young men are not graduates of advertising schools; many of them have never seen the inside of a college, but they have been brought up out West and they know how to write about their country so it interests others.

A tall, lean young man in Chicago, known by his friends as "Hop"—because he talks like a man in a cocaine dream—came from Texas. At a tender age he wrote letters to his cousin and friends in Ohio and other Eastern States, and his letters were so filled with news about the Texas home and the splendid opportunities to get rich there that many went to Texas and bought land as a result of his booming. As he grew up his letters were printed in the local newspapers and hundreds of them mailed every week by enterprising, real estate agents to Eastern folk. "Hop" saw his writings were worth money, so he hired out to the biggest firm in his home town, and before he was through high school was making \$100 a month writing booklets and impressions on the coast country of Texas.

"Hop" was wise and soon engaged in business for himself. He optioned a tract of land just about the time he came of age and sold it out by advertising. Small tracts of five acres each at \$5 a month was the burden of his song. Five acres, he claimed, was enough to make any man rich, but it didn't. "Hop" paid \$5 an acre for land and sold it for \$20.

Of course, he is rich—such a foolish question. Rides in autos, wears big diamonds, and acts for all the world like the story-book grafter. He could never succeed as a direct salesman. His methods are too rank, and he has the bearing of a get-rich-quick man. In selling by mail he has the advantage of his customers—they never see him, and by his lurid description of himself and his proposition a great many of the unwisest get the idea he is something great.

This is only one of the many. Lots of young men with ordinary training have got a start in the land business

by writing booklets. They follow the "frame-up" of some older and wiser head, and then run in a lot of talk that means nothing, but sounds awfully good. The dollars begin to flow into their coffers, of course.

It is a marvel to a conservative man to read the incoming mail of one of the big mail-order land concerns. The number of people who insist upon sending their money to these firms for land before they have seen the property is unbelievable.

I can relate an actual experience that came to my personal attention. A man living in Mississippi was a subscriber to a Pacific coast daily. This Pacific coast daily carried the two-inch advertisement of a Chicago land firm selling lands in New Mexico. The Mississippi man answered the ad. and got the beautiful illustrated booklet and the selling talk. He at once bought a bank draft for \$5000, the first payment required on a certain tract of land, and remitted it to Chicago. I know this transaction occurred within a week's time—just time enough for the mails to handle the deal. I saw the letters written by the customer down in Mississippi and saw the draft. The Mississippi man had never been in New Mexico, knew no one there, and did not know the firm with whom he was doing business—they were not rated in any mercantile report and the man who sent the draft was assistant cashier in a bank.

Such transactions as this travel quickly—the advertising agents hear about it and they tell other aspiring land grafters how easy it is to get money by mail, and so the story induces others to "get busy."

The man who can write a lurid land booklet that will bring in lots of money and still so represent the conditions near enough as to "stick" is the man sought by the near-honest promoter who wants to take the people's money, but has a horror of a fraud order, a jail sentence, or having to refund any of his ill-gotten gains.

It is the man who writes so near the lie and yet keeps within the pale and at the same time gets results who is paid big money for his work. Frequently writers of such books get \$1000 a month, others work on a commission. I know a young man who gets one cent for every acre sold as a result of his literary efforts; he is living easy at big hotels, and his profits are piling up so fast that he cannot spend them.

Land promotion is one of the important fields of endeavor in Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, St. Louis and smaller cities surrounding. You will find all of the big office buildings crowded with land men—they always have the best suites and the finest equipment for business. Their offices are luxuriously furnished and they themselves are examples of fitness. Their high-salaried prospectus writers have private offices and only work when the "muse" hits them. In writing selling talk they are perhaps the most successful modern advertising writers, but they do not work along the same principles of most advertising writers—they do not lose any sleep sticking to the truth.

The land publicist is a man created for the purpose. When the investor finds it is best to investigate where he buys Western land this creature of circumstance will pass into oblivion.—Detroit News-Tribune.

The Cheapness of Life.

During last year labor in the United States lost nearly 35,000 lives in the course of employment. There were also about 2,000,000 accidents. Most industries involve risks, some greater than others. The accident rate of electricians is excessive. That of coal miners is 3.10 per 1000 in the United States to 1.29 per 1000 in the United Kingdom. This proportion holds among the railroad employes. We lost 2.50 per 1000 to Germany's .98 per 1000. In other words, we slaughtered on the average 915 more coal miners than England and 1735 more railroad employes than Germany.

Two conditions account for this excessive death rate that runs throughout all our departments of labor. First, the reckless indifference and carelessness, united with an inherent dislike to obedience, that characterize our American workmen. Second, the unwillingness of employers to install accident saving devices, and to compel military obedience to preventive orders.

Germany has a permanent exhibition of accident saving devices which has been productive of great benefit to life. This feature England is copying.—Boston Post.

Rural Diplomacy.

"Judgin' from the price ye charged me, neighbor, ye put three gallon uv 'lasses in a two-gallon jug. Now I ain't b'grudin' the money, but I don't eat-late ter hev the jug stretched."—Judge.

THE WILD VIOLET AS AN AGGRESSOR.

A Remarkable Illustration of Nature's Way of Preserving and Spreading the Plant.

The common wild violet affords one of the most remarkable illustrations of the care and apparent forethought of nature in preserving a species, says the St. Louis Globe Democrat. As everybody knows, the violet grows in the shade, in pastures, woods and fields, where the grass is abundant and long. It comes up early in the spring, and flowers at a time when the grass is most abundant and succulent. Of course, it is liable to be cut down by the scythe when mowing is done, but much more likely is it to be bitten off by grazing animals.

The violets that come in the spring either do not seed at all or very sparingly, so that if the plant relied on its spring flowers for seed, it would probably perish off the earth in a very few years.

But in the late fall the plant bears another crop of blossoms, that are never seen, save by the professional botanist. They are very small, utterly insignificant in appearance, and grow either just at or below the surface of the ground. These are the flowers which produce the seeds for the next season.

The flowers on long stems blooming in the spring are only for show; the hidden flowers are for use, and the number of seeds they bear may be judged from the ease with which a wild violet bed spreads in every direction. When the seeds are ripe the pod explodes, scattering them to a considerable distance, often ten to twelve feet from the parent plant, so that, in spite of its boasted modesty, the violet not only takes care of itself, but because a troublesome aggressor.

WISE WORDS.

No wise man overshoots his own moral aim.

The dogmatic are always strong on barking.

All worthy education is training of the will.

Counting your blessings discounts your burdens.

No none was ever left sad by giving happiness away.

The ability to learn marks the limits of actual living.

Too many men lay to a gentle heart the faults of a soft head.

You cannot improve the breed by polishing the brass on the harness.

No man is master of himself who cannot control the guests in his heart.

You do not secure a clean bill for yourself by indicting the rest of humanity.

There never can be sufficient public virtues in a life to balance private vices.

The worst failures are those successes that have come at the cost of the soul.

There are many things we can not afford to get for less than their full price.

Whether earth shall be like heaven depends on whether heaven is in our hearts.

Practice is the one preservative of religion.

Sitting still is always the most trying situation in life.

The best evidence of a healthy soul is its hunger for work to do.

No man can own any more than he can carry in his own heart.

No man can take iniquity into his creed and keep it out of his character.

No prayer meeting is long enough that does not reach to the market place.

The man who hasn't the vigor to be vicious usually prides himself on his virtues.

There never is room at the top for the man who thinks it was built only for one.

Some of the virtues of our friends grow out of the graves where we have buried their faults.

Our example when we are on parade has no influence at all compared to the effect of our every living day.

When a man makes a distinction between his creed and his conduct, he will discover a breach between his aspirations and his heaven.—From "Sentence Sermons," in the Chicago Tribune.

Brief Conversation.

There is a Government official in Washington to whom an unnecessary or insane question is as a red rag to a bull.

Last summer he made his usual trip to Europe. On the first day out from New York he was strolling on the promenade deck, when suddenly there appeared before him a man whom he had not seen for years.

"Why, professor," exclaimed the man, "to meet you, of all men! Are you going across?"

"Yes," growled the professor. "Are you?"—Harper's Weekly.

PRACTICAL ADVICE ABOUT DIVERSIFIED FARMING

What Legumes Would Do.

Attention was called last week to the fact that cowpeas in Michigan gathered 139 pounds of nitrogen to the acre. Now if these results can be had up in Michigan how much greater the amount of nitrogen the pea will bring to the soils of the South in our longer season. A ton per acre of 2-3-2 fertilizer would give but forty pounds of ammonia, or about thirty-four pounds of actual nitrogen, more than 100 pounds less than an acre of peas gave in Michigan and much less in proportion than an acre in the South will give. The forty pounds in the ton of low grade fertilizer would cost at the lowest estimate \$6. Two tons of cowpea hay per acre would have a feeding value of at least \$20, and fully eighty per cent. of its manurial value could be saved if the manure is rightly handled, and a profit made from the feeding, while the manure would not only give us the nitrogen, but would add organic matter and tend to the restoration of the humus to the soil, which the 2-3-2 will never do.

And yet in the South men are buying cottonseed hulls to feed, and keeping no stock but the mules that have been paid for out of the cotton crop, and are planting cotton year after year—gambling on the chances with 200 pounds per acre of a poor grade fertilizer, in which they pay for sacking and freight on 500 pounds of worthless filler.

And then, for every crop planted, their continual inquiry is, "What sort of fertilizer?" and "How much shall I use?" never dreaming apparently that if they farmed right they would not need to buy any fertilizer except phosphoric acid and potash for the peas, making at home through the peas a fertilizer worth far more in the permanent improvement of their land than all the chemical fertilizers ever compounded.

Oh, the pity of it all!—Professor Massey, in the Progressive Farmer.

Kind of Cotton to Resist Boll Weevil.

The improvement of cotton by breeding, or more properly speaking, by selection, to meet the new conditions brought about by the boll weevil, is of the greatest importance. Especially should the territory not yet infested get ready for his appearance by selecting those varieties found best in the infested areas and by acclimating and further improving them. It is none too early to begin this work, for the weevil does most damage when it first appears.

In selecting the cotton plant to save seed from, having a view to boll weevil conditions, the early fruiting, best yielding, vigorous plants should be chosen, and according to Bennett, in Farmers' Bulletin No. 314, which we advise every cotton farmer to send for, should have the following special characteristics:

(1) The first fruit limb must be low, not higher than the fifth or sixth joint above the seed leaf joint.

(2) The wood or primary limbs must be low, and should not exceed four in number. The first limb should not be higher than the fifth or sixth joint above the seed leaf joint.

(3) The joints in the main stem, in the fruit limbs and in the primary limbs must be short, not exceeding one to three inches in the lower part of the plant.

(4) Fruit limbs should grow at the successive joints of both the main stem and the wood limbs.

(5) Fruit limbs should be continuous in growth for continuous fruiting until the plant is matured.

In addition to these qualities, size of boll, percentage of lint to seed, length of fiber and storm resistance should be well looked to.

To do this, it will be necessary to at first select only a few stalks that come nearest to these conditions and plant the seed of these in a plot from which the best stalks are to be taken for the seed plot the next year.—Progressive Farmer.

Asparagus Culture.

For a seed bed break thoroughly a piece of dark, well drained soil, as nearly free of grass as can be had; make the rows two and one-half feet apart and sow the seed about one inch apart about the middle of February. A crop of pea vines grown the year before will put the land in fine condition. A liberal use of high-grade fertilizer is essential to the best development of the roots. The delicate nature of the plants makes hand picking of grass constantly necessary. The plants should be two to four feet high when killed by frost in the fall.

In February take up the roots and promptly set in proper soil—bright sandy loam—on six-foot rows, two feet on the row, at a depth of ten or twelve inches, according to the density of the soil, deepest on lightest soil. Choose best crowns and extend the roots both ways in the track, one-half each way. Cover not deeper than three inches carefully by hand. After the plants get up rake in just

enough soil to cover the fine grass, and repeat as often as necessary to prevent grass getting ahead. At the end of the summer there should still be a valley over the roots. The alleys must be kept clear of grass. Some crop of small growth may be grown. Two crops of cowpeas sown in April and July work well for the purpose.—T. J. Hamlin.

Advantages of White Breeds.

A well known Southern poultryman who is making an enviable record with market poultry and who is so well known as a fancier that his name is becoming almost a household word, says he raises white fowls exclusively, not because "white is an emblem of purity and innocence," but because he has proven them the most profitable. He asks, "Whoever saw a commercial poultry farm, where Black Leghorns were the leading breed, or any other colored breed the favorite, if depended on for eggs?"

Every one knows the record White Leghorns have as layers; and their early maturity makes them desirable as broilers. But the large breeds of white fowls are crowding close on their records. Of the numerous egg records kept in the East during the last year or two, White Plymouth Rocks stand at the head of heavy breeds as layers. Some have equaled, if not surpassed, White Leghorns—with this in their favor, that their heaviest egg production is in winter when prices are highest. A White Plymouth Rock hen should weigh seven and a half pounds and be worth seventy-five cents on the market when no longer valuable as a layer. Nothing can surpass a White Rock, either for frying, roasting or the good old time chicken pie.—Mrs. C. S. Everts.

Tripod Hay Fork Derrick.

Three poles thirty-five feet long are required to make the hay derrick shown in the illustration. They are



Tripod Derrick For Hay Fork.

fastened together at the top in the manner indicated at A and can be raised with a team, fastening a rope to the end of the single pole and passing it out between the two poles on the opposite side, which have been placed in holes. Draw steadily until the desired height is reached. Almost any size or shape of stack can be built under these poles.

Don't Plant Honeysuckles.

I saw in the Progressive Farmer some time ago some one recommending the planting of honeysuckle to stop gullies. My advice is "don't." If you do you will surely regret it, for the honeysuckle is harder to get rid of than the gully. When it once gets a start it is almost impossible to get rid of it. Some of my neighbors would give a good sum to get rid of what they have.—G. R. Graham.

Mr. Graham is perfectly right in his advice so far as cultivated fields are concerned, the editor of that publication admits. The honeysuckle is fine to cover banks or trellises about the house or other buildings, but in the fields is an unmitigated nuisance.

Devise a System of Rotation.

Think out and lay down a system of rotation of crops adapted to your farm, and which will work in well with one another, so that you may be able to get them all planted, cultivated and harvested on time, and aim not so much to have the greatest area as that area which can be most thoroughly prepared and fertilized, and thus secure maximum crops. It will pay much better to make fifty bushels of corn on one acre than on four.—Southern Planter.

Better Than Terraces.

Catle and sod with deep plowing and subsoiling on our red hills will do more to prevent washing than all the terraces ever made.—W. F. Massey.