

Southwestern Nebraska a Country Where Prosperity Follows Effort



ME. CHURCH

GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

MOST people living east of the Missouri river naturally think of Nebraska as being pretty much alike all over. They will tell you that there are valleys and highlands, and there are prairie lands, wheat lands and grass lands, and that the state as a whole is pretty much the same.

Nebraska presents a striking contrast to the conditions of the east. The state is not thought of as a whole taken together, but the eastern and central part taken together, make one of the greatest grain and stock raising districts of the world. On the other hand, southwestern Nebraska is a different character. As the eastern part is a general farming country, the southwest is a stock raising country. A reputation for the raising of such products that rise higher as time goes on, so the southwestern part is beginning to be understood as being valuable for its specialty. It is the only grain country of the United States.

The cause for this division into farming and stock raising is not artificial, but natural. The plateau that divides the surface of the state, slopes gently at the base of ten feet to the west, from the Missouri river up to the base of the Rocky Mountains. The general surface is nowhere absolutely level, and it is so perfect that a convention of men could not agree upon a single bench mark. Nor is there any dreariness of the wide landscape. It is diversified at intervals by broad, shallow valleys, and all these have wide valleys, and these valleys have wide valleys.

There are good farming regions in the United States whose farmers are better than those of any other country, and the general soil of the western part of Nebraska would be worth \$2 cents per acre for fertilizer.

The gradual rise of the surface of the Missouri river to the Rocky Mountains is the cause of the natural division of the state into two parts. Omaha, on the Missouri river, is a farming country, and the western part of Nebraska is a stock raising country. The soil of this western highland is as good as any in the eastern two-thirds of the state. It lacks only of seasonal rains for ordinary crops, solely because of its elevation. This is only difficult in a farming country, and to compensate for this, nature has blessed this region with grasses that run in varieties and qualities unknown elsewhere to such an elevation. There remains the connection, a fact that most appeal to the common sense of everybody. The soil is good, the water is good, and this as they were forty years ago, when this was buffalo land, where they lived in millions, and spent the winter in the grass country of southwestern Nebraska.

There land will grow alfalfa, it is a natural conclusion that, if anything is necessary in the business of raising stock. While the Nebraska climate is not so especially favorable to it, the difficulty is in getting a start—a good start.



GENERAL VIEW OF BENKELMAN, NEB.



RESIDENCE OF C. C. BARR



POSTMASTER FRANK ISRAEL'S RESIDENCE

with all they had, pushed on into the region that old freighters and frontiersmen called the high plains. These people all wanted to farm in their accustomed way, to improve the quarter section they had chosen, break the sod, reap the harvest, establish the home and remain in the country as farmers exclusively, with no other resources. There came to the plains country a farming season without a flaw. The crops on the newly broken sod were as fine as heart could wish. Such seasons have occurred before and since. They will occur again, but not with certainty, and there is the only trouble. The minds of thousands were turned again to the belief that the west was a desert. They failed also, to discriminate. Not willing to blame themselves, they in-

vented picturesque phrases with better and more briefly and emphatically describe the alleged God forsaken country they had tried and abandoned. This was the situation in which some fifteen years ago, a region was left which today has within it more possibilities for out-of-door money making than any other within the present boundaries of the American union.

And there is another story, a newer and better one, about this same country that was condemned. More than this, the present is the legitimate child of the story of calamity so widely spread and so often repeated. The attention of the visitor is especially directed to these often brief but plain and pointed records made by men who live on the ground. For to some men who were already there and to some others of the shrewder and more adventurous and enterprising kind, who were looking for opportunities, the question arose, if southwestern Nebraska is not a farming country, what is it? It was covered with the grasses already mentioned and a half-forgotten lesson of the buffalo came back. Then as a first result, the cattle barons came—men who were financially able to try extensive experiments and they were the first to occupy the land in the cattle industry. They demonstrated that the winters were short and mild, that the

snow was light and passed away quickly. The more the discovery that cattle, with the comeliness of all their kind, wandered about to graze upon the cured and curried herbage of the plains. A little later the reign of the cattle barons was infringed upon by the general run of mankind. The man with a bunch of cows began to come and take homestead or buy a mortgaged quarter and make himself a home. This man had his lesson learned from the experience of his predecessors. He was not looking for a grain country. His business was going to be the cattle business and all the general farming he wanted, was for roughness. This is the man who has a rule related the experience referred to, and he is now scattered by

thousands over the face of southwestern Nebraska. And it must not be forgotten that he has brought with him law, order, social life, the preacher, the teacher, the church, the school house and the home. The state of Nebraska is the least illiterate of any in the union. One of the surprising disappointments of the visitor to the west, who is looking for excitement and something characteristically of the west, is the lack of these things that are described in western stories. There is energy, quickness of appreciation and action and character. There is also courtesy, hospitality, education, good manners and good clothes. People who know the facts are moving to western Nebraska every year, with young families, largely induced by the system of

education created by the state, which is among the best, if not the best, that has been organized since the idea of public schools was born. Each statement here made applies to the remotest corner of southwestern Nebraska. One cannot get away from the schools and the church. It may safely be said that this country does not much represent anything the newcomer ever saw before, looked at from a view point of a place in which to make a home. Some of the pictures herein contained, all reproductions from photographs, show the characteristics of the landscape, together with whatever of life the picture was intended to represent. The vast landscape lies before the eye, roll upon roll, ending at last with the rim of the horizon, but it is not a flat plain. A huge snowdrift, broken into heaps and hollows, represents it. If the snow were green and brown and were magnified in size some thousands of times, there is no mud and there are no swamps.

The country roads wind among the hills and through the valleys, called here, divides and draws, hard and smooth, winter and summer. Distance does not much count. Footmen along these roads are almost unknown. It is the land of the saddle, the buggy and the light wagon. Nothing is thought of little boys and girls riding ponies each day to school and distance a little greater or less does not matter in the least. Already this country is extensively crossed by railroads and on these roads stand the pretty little country towns. Here are schools, often one of them a high school established under the Nebraska law. In the case of a county seat there is usually a court house, better than the average one in eastern states. A feature regarding the depot is an extensive stock yard and cattle chutes. As a rule, there is nothing about these western Nebraska towns that is sordid, decayed and tumble-down. Paint and tiling are used without stint. As one approaches them by train, it is curious at night to see twinkling far away on the horizon the rows of electric lights.

In summer this wide slope is green, starred with yellow; in winter it is brown, sometimes flecked with white snow patches. In early autumn brown clumps that are stacks of hay dot the same for miles. The striking feature to a stranger, is the scattered groups of grazing cattle that even in mid-winter dot the landscape. This grass would not to the same stranger seem of much value if he saw it in mid-summer. It was not thick on the ground and was browner than it was green, yet here it is the winter choice of beasts who usually understand their own appetite. There is a charm in this plain life and, besides, the country is a health resort almost, if not quite, unequalled. It is not advertised as such. People there are not keeping summer hotel and printing analysis of mineral springs, yet it is a known fact that the asthmatic and the prospective convalescent can find no better place.

One of the first questions that ever arose here was the question of water. When in the early times of the freighters, the Pike Peak emigrants and forty-niners did not find running streams for each day's march they called the country names. There are frequent enough to supply hosts of buffalo in the olden times, but there are not enough to supply all the near-by water the profit seeking modern cattle man wants. A remedy was found—a better one than nature can furnish by herself. The country is so dotted with windmills now that to the passerby they are a feature of the landscape. They stand over inexhaustible wells. Sometimes there are only twenty-five feet deep—often they are more than a hundred, but they do not fall and the southwestern Nebraska breeze does not remain idle an hour in the twenty-four. The tanks set full and run over, small lakes are formed and still the windmills grin on. There seems to be no reason for turning it off, except that it will all the sooner wear out. The cattle know all about it. They rejoice in the invention of the windmill and the tank and would not go to the creek if they could. This means watering stock is one of the reasons for the thrift and freedom of diseases of all domestic animals, of these plain cattle.

The solution is simple. If the stomach is not in perfect order, its lining is covered August 20.

There is no mud and there are no swamps.



RESIDENCE OF R. D. DRULINER BENKELMAN, NEB.

CORN WAITING FOR THE SHELLER

beginning of the school vacation, reports the Philadelphia Times. He had not begun to return to school, but was hopeful of becoming a real journalist. One day, about three weeks after he had begun the work of police reporting, an incident happened which extinguished him as a reporter. Magee was a good observer. He was not such a good reporter, for he did not have the "nose sense." What he had heard he told his rival as they covered their round of the police stations. Magee forgot the incident for he saw no news in it. His rival did. In his colleague's newspaper appeared a column of Magee's report on the first page next day. Magee's paper had nothing. "I see you were scooped," said the city editor to Magee. "Oh, no," said Magee. "I knew about that. I told Scotty, of the Post." The city editor said nothing. A few months later he came to Magee's desk, with more force than fatherly interest: "Magee, you are not thorough school yet. You are going back, aren't you?" Magee looked at his superior and saw that this interest was a discharge. He said: "Oh, yes. I am going back." He left the paper, continued in school and later became a lawyer.

Gossip Concerning People of Note

Howell's Tribute to Mark Twain.
OUT of a nature rich and fertile beyond any I have known," W. D. Howells in Harpers, writes the mystery that makes a man and then leaves him to make himself over, he wrought a character of high nobility upon a foundation of clear and solid truth. At the last day he will not have to confess anything, for all his life was the free knowledge of anyone who would ask him of it. The searcher of hearts will not bring him to shame at that day, for he did not try to hide any of the things for which he was often so bitterly sorry. He knew where the responsibility lay, and he took a man share of it bravely, but not the least feebly; he left the rest of the answer to the God who had imagined men.

"It is in vain that I try to give a notion of the intensity with which he pierced to the heart of things, and the breadth of vision with which he compassed the whole world, and tried for the reason of things, and then left trying. We have other researches, insignificantly sad and brief, but the last time I saw him alive was made memorable to me by the kind, clear, judicial sense with which he explained and justified the labor unions as the sole present help of the weak against the strong.

"The next I saw him dead, lying in his coffin amidst those flowers with which we gaid our despair in that pitiless hour. After the voice of his old friend, Twitcheil, had been lifted in the prayer, which it walked through in broken-hearted supplication, I looked a moment at the face I knew so well, and it was patient with the patience I had so often seen in it; something of peace, a great silent dignity, an assent to what must be, from the depths of a nature whose tragical seriousness broke in the laughter, which the unwise took for the whole of him."

Quaint Features of Every-Day Life

Washcloths in Campaign.
WOMEN as congressional campaign managers in Mississippi have demonstrated their usefulness in the summer time. Political aspirants are not advised to place their fortunes in the hands of the gentler sex during the colder months. Mary Jane Brunson, a winsome brunette of twenty summers, put some bristles of twenty summers, put "Pat" Harrison in contrast from the Sixth Congressional district of Mississippi over J. R. Tally, by 1,232 votes in the second primary.

The chief assets of Mary Jane Brunson in the Harrison campaign were open-work hosiery and gauze-like shirtwaists. When she appeared before an audience in her bewitching and cool summer garb, the tally men had to succumb. Then, too, she had a line of argument against trusts, combines, high tariff and scandals in mighty circles that was hard to get around.

Certain girl acquaintances assert that Miss Brunson would never have landed her man if the campaign had been fought out during the winter.

He Matched It

After ten years he returned, footsore and weary. His wife met him at the door. "I thought you were dead," she told him. "You should have known better than that," he said. "Do you remember that last place of net I tried to match for you? You scooped me because there was a difference of an eighth of an inch in the width of the folds, and I swore that I would never again return from matching anything for you until I had found the exact thing you wanted."

He handed her a package. "Here is that old rose binding braid that you told me to buy. I found it last Monday in Billings, Mont. I have looked for it in thirty-seven states."

She tore off the wrappings. "It is a little too dark," she said. "But the sample has faded some in ten years," he reminded her. "It is a little too heavy, besides."

"But handling by thousands of clerks has worn the sample away some. It was heavier when I started out."

"I suppose I can make it do," she said. —Newark News.

Peekaboo Clothes in Campaign

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Cat Mothered a Rooster

On a farm at West Hurley, N. Y., two small boys who had a pigeon coop on the roof of their father's barn, tried the experiment of putting a hen's egg under a pigeon and then, boy-like, forgot all about it.

The farmer one day at dinner said, "There's the queerest pep on the top of the barn, sounds most like a chicken, but it beats me how one could ever get up there." The boys looked at each other and then dashed out of the house, and climbed up to find a wee chicken peeping most piteously. It was trembling in the chill air, and the boys' first thought was for warmth. As the family cat was nursing a plump little quartet of kittens, chickie was tucked in with them, and pussy's maternal instinct was broad enough to cover the little shivering bunch of feathers, while the boys provided corn-meal mush and juicy worms.

The chicken grew to be a loud self-assertive rooster, but whenever the foster-mother cat appeared in the barnyard the cock would strut up close to her and she would rub against him, purring her pride in such a stalwart son.

When the visit of the stork was expected Councilman Shute laughingly predicted that it would arrive with its precious freight on August 23, and he "guessed right the very hour."

Hereafter all important transactions in the Shute home will take place on August 23.

Stork Never Varies Date

In the future August 23 will be made the occasion for the biggest celebration of the year in the home of Councilman J. Emory Shute of Altoona, Pa. His sixth child, a girl, was born August 23 last. She is the third of his growing family to have been born on that date. John, now aged 23, was the first; Thomas, aged 8, the second, and the girl the last.

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