

JAPANESE FARMING.

CULTURE OF RICE, BARLEY, WHEAT, FLOWERS AND WEEDS.

How Irrigation is Carried Out—Thorough Cultivation—Some Peculiar Gardening Features—Ornamental Boundary Lines—Weeding the Field—Sparing the Flowers.

My first drive was into a rice region. The fields were cut up into all sizes and arranged upon ever varying levels. Some were but a few feet square, while a quarter of an acre was a large field. The best land yields fifty bushels an acre, more or less, and the poorest about thirty. It is rare to find two adjacent fields on the same level. Sloping land is, of course, more convenient for irrigation, but on this flat area through which we were traveling the little rice fields were laboriously divided up at differing heights, so that the water might be made to flow easily from one to the other. The water is raised to the higher patches mostly by treadmill pumps. We were on the ground in season to witness the earlier stages of rice cultivation. In some fields the bars stubs of the last crop were usually peering out of the mud. In others laborers were tearing up the stubs with heavy pronged forks, standing nearly to the hips in water and using bullocks drawing long toothed harrows were engaged in the same operation. Wooden plows were also at work, more stirring up implements of wood with one handle. They had a rounded nose fortified with an iron chisel, point leveled downward. Then there was a wide plow with broad nose, slanting forward a shallow furrow, and heavy churning logs for working the soil over and over. Grading scoops completed the grand utensils, but for shaping the canals or narrow dikes between the fields, the coolies used the usual hand weapons. In some of the fields the rice was already showing thickly, about six inches in height, giving a beautiful variety to the dismal landscape of mud and steam. In other areas the seedling plants were being set out in rows, six inches apart each way. The crop is sown in May and reaped in October or November, being grubbed or puddled three times during the season. This means that the whole population wade into the slime, pull out the weeds, and stir up the mud about the roots of the plants.

THE GRASS FIELDS.

The first thing that struck us in the dry and wheat region was the peculiar furrows. They were very shallow at first, varying somewhat in depth, and considerably in width and architecture, as to speak. They were in the rough at the outlet, so that the water in Japan is entitled to that character, though they would be smooth and elegant furrows anywhere else. Then they began to be sloped up slanting, smoothed off as evenly as the sides of a house. Others were squared with mathematical precision. On the ridges the barley is sown in thick set rows, apparently by hand. On the lower ridges that a single row appeared on the broader ones were two rows, and more rarely three. Outside these grain rows the ridges were utilized for other crops, mostly rows of buckwheat, but we saw also sweet potatoes, turnips, beans, and the like. In one place we observed a man watering this extra crop, which appeared odd, as the ground seemed moist enough. To accomplish this primitive irrigation he carried two buckets slung over his shoulders on a pole, and used a wooden hand dipper with a slit in the side at the bottom, which let out a thin disk of water. Throughout the fields of this vast region were numerous wells, with the traditional wall sweep. Not only the fields, but the furrows themselves are constantly utilized for crops. The only thing we saw growing there, however, was what our courier informed us was bird seed.

Aside from the barley was wheat also, used mostly for the manufacture of vermicelli—for we did not discover any use of bread by the Japs, except in rare cases where the custom had been borrowed from Europeans. There were immense fields also of what our guide called oil plant, which we took to be rape seed. This crop was being harvested, as also was the barley in warm localities, it being the latter part of May. There were also large patches of beans and peas, and of the thin grass-like root whose pith furnishes Japanese lamps with wicking. We were, however, more occupied with the style and character of the farming than with crop statistics. And this style was really amazing on a grand scale. The nice little furrows, to which I have referred, all had the appearance of being carefully patred by hand, so smooth and even were their surfaces.

ORNAMENTAL BOUNDARY LINES.

Then, in addition to the nice regularity of the town crops, there was another peculiar gardening feature. No fences or hedges, as we understand them, were to be seen in the rice region. The boundary line is the valuable, being worth \$500 to \$600 the acre, and even more in some cases. Boundaries are marked by stakes or stones, with the owner's names or symbol attached. This is not difficult to regulate, as many of the patches are very small. But in place of fences there were crop boundaries in many places on the rim of the fields. For example a thickly sown row of wheat would extend all around a barley field. The rows of grain usually ran with the ends toward the road and the bordering row of another crop had a pretty effect. In some cases, however, the grain rows would run one way for a certain distance and then would cross another patch sown at right angles. Sometimes the ornamental border would be of the same crop, as barley around barley, but this was not usually the case.

The weeding of these fields is perfect, and our cultivators might take a lesson from the Japs. Numbers of women were employed in weeding the rice, they working by hand. With the furrow system the cultivator is out of place; and, moreover, handwork is the rule in this crowded country, and in a day's drive of thirty-two miles we only saw two horses. Where animals were employed they were bullocks or wretched little cows. All were shod with sandals of rice straw. The weeding women were attended by boys who carefully ligged the soil out of the fields in baskets or mats. Near the scattered farm houses the weeds were spread out to cure. They are utilized as food for people and cattle, and for bedding for the beasts, but mostly for manure. Along the roadsides men were cutting grass and weeds with short, curved blades knives. In one little grove men and boys were weeding by hand, and starting off the pretty and harmless flowering plants and shrubs. The roadsides were permitted also to retain some of the flowering weeds, buttercups, dandelions, chickweed and the like, but no more was shown to any growth of pestilent propensities.—American Agriculturist.

REPUBLICAN PLATFORM.

The Republicans of the United States, assembled by their delegates in national convention, pause on the threshold of their proceedings to honor the memory of their first great leader and illustrious champion of liberty and the rights of the people, Abraham Lincoln, and to cover also with wreaths of imperishable remembrance and gratitude the noble souls of our later leaders who have been more recently called away from our councils, Grant, Garfield, Arthur, Logan and McKinley. May their memory be faithfully cherished, and may we, with our greetings and prayer for his recovery, the name of our first Lincoln, be the name of the noble soldier and favorite child of history, John A. Logan.

In the spirit of those great leaders and our devotion to human liberty and with that loyalty to the forms of government and to the principles which is the fundamental idea of the republican party, we send fraternal congratulations to our fellow Americans of Brazil upon their successful election to office, which completed the abolition of slavery throughout the two American continents. We earnestly hope we may soon congratulate our fellow citizens of Irish origin upon the peaceful recovery of home rule for Ireland.

WE AFFIRM OUR UNSWERVING DEVOTION to the national constitution and to the indissoluble union of states to the autonomy reserved to the states under the constitution, to the personal rights and liberties of citizens in all states and territories in the union, and especially to the supreme and sovereign right of every citizen, rich or poor, native or foreign born, white or black, to cast one free ballot in the public elections and to have that ballot duly counted. We hold a free and honest popular ballot and just and equal representation of all people to be the foundation of our republican government and demand effective legislation to secure the integrity and purity of elections which are the foundation of all public authority. We charge that the present administration and the Democratic majority in congress are in fact a deliberate and systematic effort to destroy the fundamental principles of the constitution and laws of the United States.

We are uncompromisingly in favor of the American system of protection. We protest against the destruction proposed by the present and its party. They serve the interests of Europe.

WE WILL SUPPORT INTERESTS OF AMERICA. We accept the issue and confidently appeal to the people for their judgment. The protective system must be maintained. Its administration has always been followed by general disaster to all interests except those of the manner and kind.

We denounce the Mills bill as destructive to general business, labor, and the farming interests of the country, and we earnestly endorse the consistent and patriotic action of the republican representatives in congress in opposition to it. We demand the proposition of the democratic party to place "veto" on the free list and limit that the duties thereon should be adjusted and maintained so as to furnish full and adequate protection to that industry.

The republican party would effect an needed reduction of the national tariff by repealing the laws on tobacco, which are an annoyance and burden to agriculturists, and the tax upon the user of the art and for medicinal purposes, and by such reduction of the tariff laws as will tend to check the import of such articles as are produced by our people in the production of which gives employment to our labor, and revenue from import duties these articles of foreign production, except luxuries, the like of which cannot be produced at home there still remain a larger revenue than is requisite for the wants of government, of internal taxes, other than such as are levied upon articles of luxury, and of the production of the whiskey and spirits of foreign manufacture.

We declare our opposition to the introduction of a tariff on the basis of the tariff and agents of foreign manufacturers. We declare our opposition to the introduction into the country of foreign contract labor and of Chinese labor into our territory and our constitution and we demand the effective enforcement of existing laws against it and for such appropriate legislation as will secure our labor from our shores.

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