

POMORA UP TO DATE

THE fruit season was at its height. Every cannery was running at full blast, the shipping sheds were loading and shipping carloads by the hundred every day, the drying grounds looked like acres of varicolored patchwork with their trays of dark and light fruit, and the orchardists were scouring the highways and hedges for "hands" to keep up with the demand.

The packing house at Rancho Pico swarmed with a motley crew gathered from the four corners of the earth, in the effort to handle the crop without a waste, for a few days of sudden and intense heat had ripened everything in double-quick time. A crew of Japs, working in the prune orchard, were hauling loads of dusky purple fruit to the west room to be dipped, spread, dried and graded by a lot of brawny Swedes. In the cutting room, a wiry little Dago was sweating and swearing over a band of low-browed Digger Indians, as he weighed out the fruit to them, and sent the filled trays to the leachers. At the main entrance stood a train of fruit wagons, waiting for their respective loads of peaches for cannery and shipment, while from the vineyard came "goose-necks" with their freight of grapes to be pressed into raisins. Everything was going swimmingly.

Above the rich brogue of the teamsters, the sputtering of the Japs, the guttural grunts of the Indians, and muttered cussings in every current tongue, arose the commanding voice of young Smithers, the manager. With a "d-d" to the Chinamen in the loading shed, a "get a move on" to a gang of young boys at the packing tables, a threatening gesture toward the Diggers, he kept everybody on a rush while his watchful eye covered every detail, from the bookkeeper in the office to the mule in the "goose-neck."

"We're going to get through all right, Tamaki," he said to the Jap boss, who combined the properties of intelligence office, general foreman and sub-lessee, in his own shifty person. "Men ver scarce, though," he answered, as he turned to steady a load of trays that were being switched on to the track.

"Yes, but we're full-handed for once," with a glance over his congress of nations.

Then Tamaki, seeing the iron hot, came nearer. "Ver sorry," he said, in confidential tones, "but I just came down to tell you boys think have to work a little more money. So much hard work, and hot weather."

"But they're getting a dollar and a half a day," said Smithers, "a ruinous rate for such a lot of—." He remembered just in time that this was not an occasion for crossing swords.

"Yes, I know," the little brown man answered, imperturbably; "but boys say they quit, no get dollar sixty-five." Smithers looked at the little grinning Shylock, and thought how easy it would be to throttle him on the spot, but he also thought of the sixty Japs picking fruit and the necessity of getting it harvested at once, so he kept his hands in his pockets, saying as coolly as he could: "Very sorry, too, but boys get no more money from me."

"I afraid boys quit," taunted Tamaki; "fine crop, too. Too had lose 'em." Then Smithers, knowing the scarcity of white men as laborers, and remembering how lucky he had thought himself to get this band of Japs when other growers were losing tons of fruit because labor was so scarce, choked down his wrath, and said:

"I'll tell you what I'll do, Tamaki; I'll give one sixty-five the rest of this week, if you'll see that they work hard and earn it," hoping to get out of the woods by then.

And Tamaki, seeing the "boys" had never thought of objecting to their regular one dollar a day, pocketed the prospect of his extra sixty-five cents per capita with a chuckle.

Two days later a heavy order came in from the East for a rush shipment of fresh fruit. Every department that could be cut down without too great a sacrifice was curtailed, and every available hand on the place was turned to picking peaches. In the midst of it all, Tamaki appeared in the office with a downcast countenance.

"Ver sorry, Mr. Smithers," he began; "ver rush, I know, but boys think have to quit."

"What's the matter now?" Smithers called from behind his desk.

"Boys think too hard work. They think like to go to hop fields, get more money."

Smithers, in the midst of a column, did not look up.

"I think maybe stay little while for one seventy-five," he added, dubiously. "Not a cent more, d'ye hear?" Smithers roared, as soon as he had reached his total. The cool-headed man of a few weeks before was now the haggard, heavy-eyed victim of overwork, overworry, and the intolerable heat.

As the shrewd Tamaki looked after his retreating figure, he wondered how much farther he might dare to toy with his endurance.

"Is Mr. Smithers in?" a clear, high voice rang above the gruffer sounds, and before the overwrought Smithers had time to smooth out his forehead or trumpet the voice gurgled, rushing up to him: "Oh, Mr. Smithers, I've been trying all morning to get you on the telephone—I hope you are feeling very

good-natured and neighborly this morning, for I want to ask a little favor of you."

Smithers looked up blankly, but without noticing his woe-begone appearance the voice rattled on: "I'd like to borrow about five hundred trays from you if you can spare them, and your sprinkling cart, our roads are getting so frightfully dusty, and a dozen or two cutting knives, you always have such quantities on hand, and—Why, what in the world has happened? You look as if you had reached the last notch of endurance!"

"Something near it, I think," answered Smithers, with a sallow smile. "That damn Tama—I beg your pardon, Miss Smythe—that—"

"Oh, not at all!" she interrupted, taking in a good, long breath, "and if you could send over some pickers!" adjusting a turquoise stud in her blue shirt-waist, "we'd be so much obliged. We are getting along famously, don't you know, I think it's such fun to run a ranch. Do you have any trouble in getting men?"

"The scarcity of men is not so bad as—"

"Oh, yes, of course," the high, clear tones remarked, "isn't it a perfect shame? But do you know I was about to forget my main object in coming over, such a tragic thing has happened. My dear little Dandy, you know he has always been used to the park roads, has gotten something in his foot; do you suppose you could loan me a horse for a few days?"

Smithers made some sort of a dumb sign the lady was pleased to take for an assent.

"Oh, thank you so much," she gushed, "you know we find the neighbors around here simply dear in doing little things for us, and it is such a lark to be a business woman, don't you know?" And, gathering up her skirts, she picked her way daintily among the dripping boxes and over the sticky floor.

When the sound of her wheels was out of ear-shot, Smithers opened his eyes. "Well, this certainly is the last notch," he muttered. "These infernal women from the city, with their measly little twenty-acre patch, have disrupted the whole system of piecework by raising wages whenever there's a pinch, and have borrowed every unattached article on every ranch within ten miles, and—but this is my chance," he finished, with a wicked glint in his eye, "revenge is sweet!"

"Tamaki," he called, "Miss Sybil Smythe at the next ranch wants some more pickers. I am through with your men and I think you will just suit her."

It was because he saw his revenge, swift and sure, upon his two pet annoyances, that he was able to preserve his outward calm, and, with soothing feelings, turned his energies to solving the labor problem minus his Jap crew. But as the hop fields had begun to draw from the ranks of the workmen, the highways and hedges were almost depleted. One crop of peaches actually did go to waste for the lack of cutters, but as he saw the ground literally covered with twenty-dollar pieces, he said to himself: "It would have been a greater loss to handle it at the rate I was paying Tamaki!" then, with a chuckle: "I wonder how Miss Smythe is making it?"

In a few days, when that young lady returned to borrow a few more trifles in the nature of a ton of hay, a set of harness, and a garden hose, she said: "So immensely good of you to send us Damntamaki. His crew is simply elegant. Oh, yes, we have to pay them two dollars a day, but we haven't lost a peach," with an inquiring glance toward the Muir crop, yellowing on the ground.

Nevertheless, Smithers held on grimly. Tamaki's crew would break her up, he argued, she would not come back next year, and the consequent saving of his trays, harness, horses, hay, wagons, and every detachable implement would more than compensate for the loss of that one variety.

"How are you getting along, Tamaki?" Smithers asked the little "Jap boss" one morning, as he saw him scorching in to town.

"Oh, ver good; Miss Smythe ver fine lady. I think boys make good deal money this year, maybe," with a meaningful grin.

"Yes, I think boys do pretty well," Smithers agreed, with a sudden fear lest Miss Smythe might drop in upon him to borrow the money to pay them.

There were others who complained of the demoralizing effect of these women who ran their little ranch for the lark, and many ranchers found trouble in getting help when it was known Miss Smythe was paying two dollars a day, but "Let it go" Smithers always said to them. "This year will freeze them out, for at the end of the season they'll have to sell their ranch in order to pay their Japs."

At the close of the harvesting season Miss Smythe and her friend wound up their country life experience with a house party of friends from the city. This, of course, necessitated the borrowing of tents, hammocks and chairs from Smithers, until he was forced to accept their invitation to be one of their number, having nothing left in his own domain either to sit or lie upon.

"And do you know," Miss Smythe confided to him, as they talked of her departure, "this has been such an aw-

fully jolly outing, I'd really like to come up here to live."

"But haven't you found it a rather expensive experiment?" Smithers gasped.

"Expensive?" Miss Smythe echoed in surprise.

"Yes, expensive," Smithers repeated. "If I may ask the question, haven't you found the price of labor overbalances the profit on the crop?"

Miss Smythe threw back her head and laughed. Her mouth was very pretty when she laughed, he noticed. "Poor Damntamaki!" she exclaimed, "you can't think what a little idiot he is, for all he thinks he is so shrewd." And saying that, she laughed again.

Smithers laughed, too—at his own expense, and waited for her to go on. "His men did splendid work for us," she explained, "because he was getting so much money, and I kept telling him he could not do so well if we turned him off. And what do you suppose he charged us for picking our crop?"

Smithers discreetly refrained from guessing.

"Nine hundred and four dollars," she told him, and again she went off in a gale of laughter.

"Is that the joke?" Smithers asked, wishing he could regard his own disbursements with the same levity.

"Oh, no," she gurgled. "The joke is that I put in a little bill of nearly three hundred dollars for lost time, breakage of boxes, warping of trays, and damage to machinery from the leaves and dirt sent in in the prune boxes."

"Did he pay it?" Smithers inquired.

"Of course he did. I had drawn up a contract providing for protection against unnecessary loss, which I made him sign. Then there was a fire in the Jap camp, which damaged the trees and implements to some extent."

"What did he do about that?" the man asked, curiously.

"Paid it, of course," she answered, gaily.

"Then is it possible you did not come out behind, after all?" Smithers asked, in amazement.

"Why, we did better than any of you," she answered, "for while those Japs stayed, they worked like beavers, and got through in almost half the time, which made our harvesting cost less than yours, or anybody's. The actual cost of our labor was about 85 cents a day."

"Well, I'm glad this is the last of those gold-blamed women folks," sighed one of the injured old codgers, as he saw the train pull out a few days later.

"But it's not," said Smithers, joyfully. "What! They're not coming' back next year, be they?" he snarled.

"One of them is," Smithers answered, proudly. "Sybil is coming back to run my ranch for me."—San Francisco Argonaut.

BLUE ROSE GROWN AT LAST.
Floricultural Freak Long Dreamed of Is at Last a Reality.

The announcement was made a few days ago in a London paper that a perfect blue rose had been received from America at Kew Gardens. There was nothing in the short notice, aside from the mention that the rose was considered a botanical curiosity, to indicate that the flower, a perfect blue, marks an epoch in rose culture.

Among the faddists in the growing of the rose it has been for ages the sought for color. Not that there would be any particularly large money reward, but there seems to be some allurements in the hope that their name may go down in botanical history trailing after a Latin prefix as the grower of "a perfect blue."

The cultivation of the blue rose has long been considered an impossibility. "A seeker after blue roses" is an old phrase signifying the unattainable. But such wonderful things have been done with the rose in the way of cultivation, enlargement, beauty and fragrance that it is not surprising that ambitious rose culturists should strive for this high goal.

One head gardener, in speaking of the matter, said that it did not surprise him that the blue rose had been grown at last. There have, according to him, always been some few enthusiasts working to that end. Probably their patience had at last been rewarded.

"For you must understand," he continued, "that the perfection of such a rose means much—the work of a lifetime. Even the attempted cultivation of such a monstrosity presupposes a membership in the ranks of botanists. It involves an age of personal experience and a knowledge of the continued experiences of others along the same line."

"Years and years of individual experiment are required," says the New York Times, "all the while keeping minute records of the habits of the plant in its different stages, its varying color, at times in the seventh heaven of ecstasy over some slight indication of advancement toward the goal, only to be cast into the nethermost depths of despair by the contrariness of the next cross."

Pigmy Camels of Persia.
The western part of Persia is inhabited by a species of camel which is the pigmy of its kind. These camels are snow white, and are on that account almost worshipped by the people. The Shah presented the municipality of Berlin with two of these little wonders. The larger is 27 inches high and weighs 61 lbs. The other is 4 inches less, but the weight is not given.

Flour for China.
Two modern forcing mills, with American machinery, have recently been constructed at Herbin, Manchuria.

NONE OF US ARE PERFECT.

"Since this society of ours represents a reform movement, we must be careful about the choice of the fifth director," the postmaster said to the group of townsmen who had met in the village drug store. "We need a clean man, and I propose Mr. Mountfort—Henry Mountfort."

"But haven't you heard the rumor that his home life is not quite what it should be?" the apothecary suggested. "To tell the truth, it has prejudiced me against him, and very likely others feel the same way. I had thought of offering the name of J. M. Littlejohn."

There was silence for a moment, but it did not seem to be the silence of approval. Finally the town clerk spoke.

"But what about that business transaction of his out West? You know the story I refer to," he added. "Least said, soonest mended, of course. Seems to me, though, even admitting it's a slander, we'd be safer to put forward a man like Hastings, who we know was never mixed up in anything of the kind."

"But Hastings used to be a drinking man," objected the editor of the village newspaper. "That might be brought up against him to hurt the society. Why not take Jerry Harlow? He's always been right around amongst us, and he stands pretty well, as far as I know."

"But we couldn't get along with him," the apothecary said, promptly. "He's so cranky that you might say he's vicious."

The old sea captain had uttered no criticisms and made no suggestions. Now his eyes twinkled humorously as he glanced round at the party.

"Seems as though it's easy to take up a 'but' against almost anybody, doesn't it?" he asked. "Curious, when you come to think of it, how few people there are in this community that are fit to associate with us."

"Taking it the other way round, though, I suppose if I was really drove to it I'd have to admit that I've done things I'm ashamed of; things I'm trying to forget and to kind of cover up by doing better things. How about the rest of ye? All perfect? If you are, I'll have to get off this committee a-d-y-in' before I contaminate ye."

"Otherways, I should tell ye, for the sake of the cause I, for one, could manage to worry along with any of the men you've mentioned. If they can stand my record, the way the gossips have logged it, I can stand theirs; and p'raps if they and I both pulled together, and you all backed us up, we could give the gossips something more improv'n' to talk about."

The apothecary took four slips of paper and wrote upon them the four names that had been mentioned. He shook them in a hat.

"The fifth director shall be the man whose name is on the slip the captain draws," he said.—Youth's Companion.

FROGS POPULAR AS FOOD.
Americans Consume More of Them than the People of France.

"The eating of frogs' legs is considered a la Française," said a popular New York caterer the other day to one of his guests, "but as a matter of fact more frogs at the present time are killed for the table in this country than in France. I have no means of estimating how great the business of killing frogs for the market has grown in this country, but I am warranted when I say that twice as many are served for the American palate every day as on the tables of the French."

"In France the frogs are raised for the most part in what have been termed froggeries. Here they grow in our creeks and ponds and are caught by the hook or speared. By the way, did you ever undertake to catch a frog?"

"Never did," answered the guest.

"It is great sport," replied the proprietor of the cafe. "You think you have got a whale on the end of your line. A fly or a piece of red rag will do for bait, and, for that matter, the bullfrog will grab at anything red with more avidity than an animate object. He is like his namesake in his inclinations toward this particular color. But when you have him on the hook, don't let him drop into the water again, or the chances are that he will get a foothold and it will be impossible to extricate him. I have often hauled in a bullfrog which had in his mouth the broken ends of old hooks and other similar reminders of past attempts on his life."

"Much of the old-time aversion to the bullfrog has been overcome by a better knowledge of the little animal. Indeed, he is not half as bad as he has been made out to be. It has been said that he lives on flies and insects. The same thing can be said of chickens and all kinds of birds. I am sure his habits are not as indiscriminate and unconvictional as that of the hog, and the Americans have become famous for the raising and eating of pork."

Balling Passion Strong in Death.
A man whose first name was John and who was notoriously close and stingy died some years ago in this city, and two young men who were well aware of his proclivities sat up with the remains the night after he passed away. It is a greswome occupation at best, and in order to make it as cheerful as possible the two men lighted all the gas in the room and prepared to make themselves comfortable. They dozed, but were awakened by some noise that sounded very uncanny; one of the young men sprang to his feet in terror. The other merely yawned and remarked: "John wants us to turn down the gas!"—St. Paul Globe.

Love is blind. That is why so many women marry men to reform them.

STRUCK IT RICH IN MEXICO.

Gen. Charles F. Egan Now on the Road to Fabulous Wealth.

General Charles F. Egan, former Commissary General of the United States Army, who became unpleasantly prominent during the "embalmed beef scandal" of the Spanish-American war, is now on the road to become a Mexican bonanza king.

Following the famous controversy at Washington Egan started out to find a new field for his energies. When he left

was by no means a wealthy man, and his reduced pay as a retired officer came as an added worry. Despite the fact that his honorable record as a soldier during the civil war and later as an Indian fighter was destroyed in a day, he did not lose heart. He traveled through Mexico and at last located at Guaymas, a port on the Gulf of California, near where he had heard there were valuable coal deposits.

Egan looked over the field and what he saw impressed him. He returned to the United States and told some friends about what he had seen in Old Mexico. The men he saw and told about the coal fields were Alvirza Hayward and Charles D. Lane, both of San Francisco. As soon as they heard what he had found about the coal fields they decided to investigate the matter and help him in the enterprise if things turned out to be as rosy as he thought they were.

These men to whom Egan appealed and who are millionaires sent experts to Mexico to investigate his find. It did not take the latter long to decide that General Egan had stumbled upon a bonanza. The experts said that there was as much coal there as in the State of Pennsylvania; that it could be much more easily mined than most coal can; that transportation facilities could be provided without too great expense, and that, taking everything together, General Egan had certainly "struck it rich."

General Egan's capitalistic friends told him to go back to Mexico and do those things which it was necessary for him to do in order to control that coal, with a feeling of absolute certainty that he would be financially backed to any extent that the enterprise demanded.

At about the same time that General Egan had this assurance and started back, William C. Greene, a one-time Arizona prospector, and now the operator of the copper fields at Canans, also heard about those coal fields down in Mexico and started to get the right to work them. Mr. Greene is a man of great determination, and the fact that he is known as the "Copper King of Arizona" shows that he is also probably a man of enterprise and fertile resource. In speculation he is said to be one of the cleverest men that ever turned a deal in mining stocks, and he has a good reputation as a fighter.

The fields were located in Sonora, and General Egan, on his return, and Mr. Greene reached there at about the same time. Here was trouble brewing. Each claimed priority of discovery, and with every passing day the apparent richness of the finds increased, so that each was most eager to sustain his claim.

Egan claimed right to the land under a purchase from the county of Sonora. Greene based a claim upon the fact that he had bought the interests of Carlos Johnson, the actual owner. Johnson was the original owner of the land under the Spanish grant.

Egan rushed machinery down by carloads. So did Greene. In all the holding includes something like 2,500,000 acres—a vast domain. General Egan's ownership of this would make him one of the greatest landed proprietors in the world. The territory which both men claimed so eagerly embraces practically all the good coal land in the section, and so compromise and division was quite impossible.

Greene and his machinery got there first. When the ex-Commissary General arrived with his he found the land pre-empted and operations under way. This was disconcerting. General Egan carried the matter to the courts. The courts in the vicinity at once declared that Greene was a trespasser and ordered him off the land. Then Egan took possession.

By this time Greene had had some opportunity for lawyer's work, and just as Egan was about to begin operations he was served with a notice to vacate and charged with being a trespasser. Greene had gone to another court.

Both sides then had machinery on the ground and had engaged laborers. The fight in the courts was in deadly earnest, for both had spent large sums of money and were feeling more and more certain every day of the value of the land. Greene had spent \$40,000, and had commenced to survey for a railroad to run from Naco, Ariz., to La Cananea, and thence to San Marcial, where the land is situated. He had also surveyed another line running to the Pacific coast, a distance of 300 miles.

General Egan then went to Guaymas and secured the backing of the local judge, the prefect of the district and the president of the town. Matters at once became serious for Greene. Two of his experts and all their employes were taken to court. General Egan began to show his military training and his Irish blood. He armed his laborers, engaged a number of other Mexicans to patrol the property with rifles and took possession, beginning work again at once and very energetically.

This by no means discouraged the

other party, and at this point things assumed a phase which was serious in other matters than financial. At some distance Greene gathered a crowd of cowboys and armed them. All night they rode desperately, reaching the scene of Egan's operation at about dawn. There was a fierce contest for the land, with some bloodshed, but Greene's men triumphed and drove Egan's men away, in the meantime securing an order against Egan as a trespasser.

But Egan's experience in government matters stood him in good stead. He went to the City of Mexico and declared that the peace and good government of the province was disturbed and that riots were in progress. He called for the aid of the Federal Government and demanded the assistance of the Rurales.

The Rurales are as picturesque as any body of mounted police in the world. Indeed, they are better called soldiers than police. They are heavily armed and magnificently mounted. They are trained in the maneuvers of bushwhacking and carry carbines, revolvers and sabers. They descended on Greene and his cowboys and a battle ensued, in which there is believed to have been considerable loss of life. How many were actually killed is not known.

Still, Greene was not discouraged, or at least he would not give in. His cowboys drew away, but did not entirely leave, and for a month there were occasional skirmishes between them and the Rurales.

Greene and his contingent then waited, without further hostilities, for the action of the court, which rendered a decision leaving General Egan in possession of a property rich enough to put him forever beyond the necessity of bothering with embalmed beef.

SHINES IN PORTO RICO.
How an American Bootblack Founded a New Industry.

"The American occupancy of Porto Rico has resulted in the introduction of one Anglo-Saxon institution among the Latin peoples of the West Indies that has already become fast and permanent," said Dr. J. W. Fewkes, of the Bureau of Ethnology, who returned some time ago from an archaeological tour of that island, in the course of which he was afforded unusual opportunities for viewing the life and customs of the islanders tempered by American influence, says the Washington Post. Continuing, he says:

"The first American troops that landed on the island were accompanied by a colored bootblack, a boy about 12 or 14 years of age, from New York, who drove a thriving business shining the shoes of the officers. The Porto Ricans were strangers to such an institution, but being of an imitative turn were not long in adopting what to them seemed worth copying. Following on the heels of the army came other Americans, so that the little bootblack from New York soon had more business than he could attend to. But this, however, did not last very long, and in less than two months after his arrival he experienced very lively competition from the youngsters of San Juan, who, watching his movements, straightway provided themselves with boxes, brushes and blacking, and, learning the word 'shine,' were ready to black shoes after the most approved American fashion."

"To-day every city and town in Porto Rico is full of little bootblacks; for the natives have noticed that properly polished shoes constituted part of the make-up of well-dressed Americans, and, anxious not to be outdone in the matter of style, adopted the custom of keeping their shoes shined."

"The American occupation and influence is being felt in other ways throughout the island, and is more especially noticeable in the schools. The people are anxious to learn, and education is looking up all over the island. During my sojourn among these people I visited a country school one day where a teacher, a bright young Porto Rican, called one of his pupils, a little boy ten years of age, to the blackboard and directed him to draw a map of the State of Pennsylvania. The little fellow executed the map as well as I could have done myself, if not better, putting in the rivers and cities, the names of which he wrote out in Spanish. Another little fellow drew a map of Connecticut, and I am free to confess that I never in my life saw a brighter class in geography."

"Another thing I noticed is that everybody on the island is anxious to learn English, which is coming into use more and more every day. It is now being taught in all the schools, and the generation now growing up will be able to speak and read the language as well as their native Spanish."

Eastern Imagery.
The specimen below of Moorish epistolary style which comes from Budget Meakin's recent book, "The Moors," and is merely an invitation to dinner, is calculated to make the imaginative resources of the English entertainer, who writes on a visiting-card, "Come and dine," look small indeed.

To my gracious master, my respected lord:

This evening, please God, when the king of the army of stars, the sun of the worlds, will turn toward the realm of shades and place his foot in the stirrup of speed, thou art becomg to lighten us with the dazzling rays of thy face, rivalled only by the sun. Thy arrival, like a spring breeze, will dissipate the dark night of solitude and isolation.

There are some who go to church for no other apparent reason than to look in a superior way at those who don't.

Pay a man a compliment, and in a few minutes he will fish for another.

Love is blind. That is why so many women marry men to reform them.