

known Carigraphist. The Tomato War goes on, and the result seems to be that there is really as yet no good *Early* Tomato that we northerners can faithfully depend upon. Since the editor of *Gardeners' Monthly* has effectively shown all the reputed *Early* Tomatoes to be late ones, he cannot do better now than begin to show us which of the late ones is the earliest,—so that we may give it a fair trial. It does not matter so much at Philadelphia whether Tomatoes are early or late, but with us it is either early or none.

The *Mining Gazette* is a new monthly periodical issued by Mr. Heatherington, Somerset House, Halifax, at \$1.70 per annum. It contains a judicious selection of articles on mining matters, and notices of the various mining "operations," scientific and commercial, that are likely to interest those engaged in the development of our Mines. We hope the *Mining Journal* will meet with support, as it will do good service in attracting attention to our mineral resources, and thereby aid in their development.

### Miscellaneous.

#### WESTERN WHEAT CULTURE RUINOUS.

(From the *Washington Report*.)

In a tour to the northwest, undertaken for the purpose of increasing and improving facilities for the collection of agricultural statistics, and for conference with professional and other intelligent agriculturists relative to department co-operation in aid of the interests and supply of the wants of that great section, the Editor of this report was struck particularly with the ruinous tendency of the current system (or want of system) of wheat culture. A few suggestions on this point will be hazarded.

In what respect ruinous? In impoverishment of the soil, in deterioration of seed, in overrunning the country with weeds, in promoting a false and wasting system of political economy. These are serious charges, but they are made in good faith, can be easily substantiated, and will be acknowledged just by thousands of western wheat growers.

The prevalent mode of operating involves first a partial breaking of the soil, rendering sowing irregular in position and depth, and drilling difficult and imperfect, giving weeds quite as good a chance as the wheat. The next year a superficial, hasty ploughing partially covers the stubble, and very slightly the tangle of weeds, and wheat is again put in. Year after year wheat follows wheat and weeds increase, while the yield of grain diminishes, partially from loss of certain elements of the soil and partly because weeds have

usurped a large area of the fields. In the mean time, as if to increase the loss from the wheat necessarily carried away, the straw by millions of tons, worth almost as much per ton for feeding as the marsh or prairie hay of the country, is burned nightly in harvest time till the sky is bright with a continued holocaust of greenbacks in straw; and the excuse for thus dissipating in thin air, not only elements of nutrition, but valuable elements of fertilization, is that the way may be clear for the plough to scratch over again the maltreated soil. This picture may not be verified in every wheat field of the west, but who will deny its striking likeness in most cases?

Is proof of impoverishment wanted? One witness only is needed—the soil itself. First, thirty bushels per acre is the boast of the farmer; then the yield drops to twenty-five, to twenty, to fifteen, and finally to ten and eight. Minnesota claimed twenty-two bushels average a few years ago, (some of her enthusiastic friends made it twenty-seven,) but she will scarcely average this year twelve, and will never again make twenty-two under her present mode of farming. To be sure, there are excuses. The seasons do not suit as formerly, blight or rust comes, or the fly invades, but all these things are evidences of exhaustion, and prey upon the soil in proportion to its deterioration. Yet in comparatively new soils the depreciation is caused by excess of weeds through careless culture more than by actual loss of fertility.

The same causes that deplete the soil produce degeneracy in the seed, which perpetuates weakness and imperfection, reducing the yield so rapidly that new seed must be obtained at once or all profit must be foregone. A careful selection of seed should every year be practiced and new seed used after successful test. It is as easy to improve seed by special care as it is to injure it by this special neglect, and he who will undertake such improvement wisely as a business, will make a fortune and prove a public benefactor.

The weed nuisance is stupendous, destroying annually tens of millions of bushels of wheat. They have obtained a strong foothold. The evil is a radical one, and can only be cured by being torn up by the roots, which can never be done without a more thorough and careful system of culture. The average yield of wheat in England is stated at twenty-eight bushels per acre, never less than twenty-six, unless in a year of unusually bad harvests. The average in this country is less than half of the lowest of these figures. Why is it? Certainly not because our soil is poorer than theirs, neither because our climate is so much worse for wheat culture. It is mainly for want of a suitable rotation of crops, of a more care-

ful husbandry of resources of fertilization, of a more thorough and careful culture.

A fourth aspect of the case presents a no less ruinous feature. A false system of political economy is fostered. In the northwest wheat culture is a parody upon the cotton culture of years past. It is running one production into excess, and ignoring all others. Northwestern cultivators are scarcely farmers, they are wheat growers. Cattle are high in price, horses very high, milk is scarce and butter sometimes unknown, while straw stacks are burning and the wheat at the mercy of speculators and the railroads, and bringing high prices only under the curse of God upon foreign wheat fields, and when foreign nations are in danger of famine, and even then but a moiety of the supply comes from this country. Exchanged for a thousand other needed things at exorbitant prices, the wheat brings little, so improvements are ignored and wheat fields extended, until by and by, the soil exhausted or given up to weeds, they will share the fate of cotton fields, leaving the land poor, the owner poorer, and a pioneer in some more distant west.

A dependence on grain growing for exportation has ever been a fallacy in this country and ever will be; it has ever proved and ever will a curse to our agriculture. We want more grain and we want it all eaten in this country; we want the wheat-eaters among the wheat-growers; we want cloth-makers among wool-growers; we want in the west ten-fold greater variety in agricultural, manufacturing and mechanical industry; then twenty-five bushels per acre will bring two dollars per bushel, and the railroads will be employed in more profitable business than carrying wheat for shipment to Europe.

A more blind, senseless, and suicidal system of agriculture was never invented than that pictured above, and we ask wheat growers if they do not recognize the picture as altogether too real to pass as a caricature.

#### THE RECENT DUNDEE FLORAL FETE.

At a time when monster exhibitions of the above description are becoming the rage, it may interest many of our readers to have a peep behind the scenes, as far as the experience gained on the above occasion will afford such. The Managing Committee of the Society distributed 2000 circulars soliciting competition subjects, and 2000 prize schedules. They provided 4000 square yards of tent-room, 6500 square feet of tabling, 1000 feet of gas-pipe, and 1000 gas-jets. There were 1064 plants exhibited in pots, 3664 cut flowers, 290 dishes of fruit, 8 collections of fruit, 8 collections of Grapes, 335