Correspondence.

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British Columbia.

SIR,—In my last letter I promised to write you a fuller account of the Upper Country, and I now purpose to do so. What I now write is from information gathered from most reliable sources, as well as from my own personal observation, and it must be remembered that I am trying to give as favorable an account as I can of the country I live in. Whatever I must say against it is not from any narrow-minded prejudice, but from an earnest desire not to mislead people by false reports and glowing accounts.

The district I am speaking of is not a farming country, nor can it ever be a large producer of grain, although it will support a much larger population than it does at present. Such a vast extent of country must necessarily present many different kinds of soil and climate, but I have asked several who have traveled over the greater part of it whether the portion I saw would allow me to form a fair estimate of the whole. They told me it would. This is to the east of the Cascade Mountains, and is known as the Upper Country. The first change is noticeable about Lytton, and leaving the moist, mild, heavily-timbered country behind, the traveler sees a dry, rocky, barren looking sea of mountains, covered with wash gravel to their very summits; and he will say, where is the farming country he was expecting to find? and some miner or hotel keeper will tell him it is farther on, and so he may travel and keep traveling to find what is not in existence. There is lots of room to travel in, too, for the country is large, being about 420 miles long by about 200 to 225 miles wide, and from its rough, mountainous nature, a long way is only a very short distance. Persons traveling into the interior generally take the steamboat from New Westminster to Yale, 110 miles from the sea. Very few of the farms in the Frazer Valley can be seen from the steamboat, as the principal settlements lay away back from the river. The reason of this is that the banks of the river are in many places subject to overflow, and that there are a number of Indian reservations. Yale is a very small town with two streets and perhaps 250 inhabitants. There are stages running regularly twice a week to Barkerville and Kamloops. The wagon road passes through the Cascade Range, and is often blasted out of the face of perpendicular rocks. Some portions of it cost $12,000 a mile to construct. It is kept in excellent repair. Lytton is the next town, and is a very miserable little place at the junction of the Thompson with the Frazer River, 56 miles above Yale. The stage road here leaves the Frazer behind, and follows the Thompson as far as Cook's Ferry, 81 miles above Yale. There is so little cultivation between Yale and Cook's Ferry that it is scarcely worth speaking about. The Nicola River joins the Thompson at Cook's Ferry. Nicola Valley is about 30 miles long, and is very much cracked up as an agricultural settlement. There are perhaps about 30 white settlers in the valley, and there is not room for very many more, as almost all the available water is taken up, and without water cultivation is impossible. It was here that the sample of wheat that took the prize at the Centennial Exhibition was grown. There is not much farming done; most of the people depend upon stock raising for a living. There is a very fine range for a limited number of cattle *now*.

I might go on describing a number of widely scattered settlements, but perhaps it will be better to try and give an idea of what the country looks like. There is nothing green but what is irrigated, and to a stranger everything looks dried up and miserable. The hills are covered with tufts of bunch grass wherever it has not been destroyed by cattle. The people say that in the spring, when the ground is soft from the melting of the snow, the cattle tread the grass out or so injure the roots that it dies. One thing is certain, that it dies out and sage brush takes its place after two or three years' feeding down. The tufts of bunch grass are about one foot apart, with bare ground between. It grows in long hair-like bunches, and fattens stock faster than any green feed I know of. When I have said this I have told all I can honestly say in praise of the Upper Country.

Now, suppose a person has found a suitable bench of land on to which water can be brought from an adjoining creek at a moderate cost, let us examine the soil. These benches, which are often 100 or more acres in extent, are formed by the river upon which they stand, and once were its bottom before it cut a deeper channel for itself. There are often two or three tiers of them. They are covered with a sediment varying from a foot to six inches deep; below that are from 50 to 150 feet of coarse gravel. This sediment is so light that when it is plowed it is necessary to turn the water on to it to keep it from blowing away. With careful irrigation it will grow good crops of almost anything for a time. No amount of care will prevent some of it from washing away, and the country is so dry that manure will not rot. No man would like to cultivate a piece of land and see it steadily getting worse year after year in spite of anything he could do. It may answer now because there is lots of land to cultivate and a very limited market to supply, but when the country becomes more thickly settled what will people do who have exhausted the soil? Nothing but leave or starve. There is not a man in this hopeful country but what expects the Canadian Government will build the railway and so give them a chance to sell out and leave. The farmers say that they only want an outside market to dispose of their wheat. They have to employ a Chinaman at $40 a month to raise wheat at all, and how they ever expect to make it pay is more than I can find out. The Chinese seem to do better than the whites here, for they are content with small profits, and by working steadily along soon become rich. The wages of a white man is $60 a month in summer, or from $3 to $2.50 by the day. There is a very limited demand for labor, but a good, steady, industrious man will almost always get a job after he becomes known. Those who are there at present seem greatly given to gambling, drinking, &c. The farmers as a class are well off, as they were mostly all there when the Cariboo mines paid well, and they got 50c. a pound for beef and 10c. a pound for grain. A new settler would have none of these advantages, for if the railway was being built through the country they would have the outside market to compete with.

Now for the crops. Timothy does not grow well, that is, has no very large tonnage to the acre, and they have as yet had but little success in raising fruit. Keeping the water on too late is perhaps the cause, as the sap freezes up in the limbs, or they have no hardy kinds. There is too little trouble taken in selecting seeds. Oats and barley are mostly grown together. I saw a great deal of very indifferent wheat—too much mixed to grow a good sample of grain. Roots are not much grown and do better in the lower country. I wanted some of the farmers to send to Canada and get good seed, but they seemed too much down in the mouth. The say—"Where can we sell it if we do raise it?" The answer is—Then why raise any at all?

J. S.

Beet-Sugar.

SIR,—In view of the fact that the Quebec Government has offered a bonus of $7,000 to a Company now formed in the City of Quebec, for the purpose of manufacturing beet-sugar, it might be worth while for some of our Canadian farmers, instead of keeping their money locked up in bank deposits, to organize a Company to manufacture beet-sugar in this Province, and petition our Legislature to grant them a bonus of sufficient amount to make a fair start. Some years ago a capitalist, who intended to start a beet-sugar factory, brought out the necessary machinery to Toronto, but as the then Minister of Finance, Sir Francis Hincks, did not see his way clear to a remission of the excise duty on sugar, the intended enterprise was given up. An arrangement has now been made between the Quebec and Dominion Governments, by which beet-sugar is to be exempt from excise duties for seven years; and probably a similar arrangement might be made between the Ontario and Dominion Governments also. I should consider this a safer speculation than starting a Bank with a poor $100,000 capital. Besides, if one beet-sugar company should go into successful operation, private capitalists would soon engage in it also, as it is expected that in a few years England will procure all the wheat she requires from India, where cheap land and labor will enable shippers to lay it down in England at a price far below what we could afford to sell it for, so that a complete revolution will be worked in our Canadian system of agriculture, and we shall require a new industry to take the place of wheat-raising, and will have to depend more on stock-raising; and the refuse of the beet factories is very useful for fattening cattle, and will encourage the farmers to pay more attention to the breeding and feeding of stock. Where ever on the continent of Europe, the beet-sugar industry has been introduced, the agriculturist has been materially benefitted. Land formerly worth only $30 is now worth $300. Our Canadian climate and soil are suited for raising beets of a superior quality to those raised on the Continent of Europe. The first beet-sugar factory ever started in the United States, was in the State of Massachusetts. No difficulty was experienced in making the sugar; still it was raw sugar, and cost six cents per pound. At that time raw West India sugar could be bought for four cents per pound, consequently that factory had to be given up. We cannot get raw West India sugar now at four cents per pound. We have to pay by retail from eight and a-half to nine and a-half cents per pound for it, and adulterated American sugar at that. Besides, when we consider the immense amount of money sent out of the country every year to pay for sugar which might, by being circulated amongst ourselves, prove generally beneficial to every interest, it must be evident that the object in view is well worth the exertion necessary to secure it.

SARAWAK.

Superphosphates.

SIR,—I feel satisfied that the benefits of superphosphates are not sufficiently known. I have tried it on several occasions. I used many kinds of artificial manures in England. I have used superphosphates for the past three years on my farm here, and have received double the quantity of turnips. I sowed some of my turnips with it; and on my barley field I had ten bushels more on the part of the field where I used the superphosphates. The barley matured 10 days earlier than in the part that had no phosphates, and it was a much better grain. I can tell the effects of it on land for three years. I sow my superphosphates at the same time as I sow my seed, and drag it in with the grain. I sow 200 pounds per acre when I use no barn manure. I think it much cheaper than barn yard manure, and I shall use between two and three tons next spring. I wish you would inform me where I could procure a drill that would sow superphosphates and grain at the same time, as I want to buy one.

F. A., Caradoc.

SIR,—The unusually mild fall we have had this year has caused a too rapid growth of the young wheat wherever it was sown early, so that it is in danger of being either winter-killed or smothered under the snow. To prevent this the only remedy is to feed it down with cattle. I do not approve of feeding down with sheep, as they are more inclined to feed where the wheat is short, whereas cattle graze where the wheat grows rankest; the upward growth of the wheat being checked, its strength is expended in striking root downwards, and by tilling more than it would otherwise do. The cattle would also eat up the Hessian Fly, and thereby check its increase. I have known a farmer in the west of England, where we seldom had much frost or snow, turn his young cattle on his wheat and keep them there most of the winter; he cut turnips on the ground every day for them, as otherwise they would not have had enough to eat, and, as he told me, the ground was so soft that the cattle were almost knee deep in it. The only exception I would make to this rule would be in what we call burnt slash, where the vegetable soil is all burnt down to the hard pan, which is too retentive of water; and even in such cases, if the ground were thoroughly underdrained, I should not hesitate to turn the cattle on it until the ground was frozen.

It has frequently been observed in England that wherever sportsmen riding after a pack of hounds have crossed a field of wheat, and apparently destroyed it, there the crop was best the following harvest. A neighbor of mine in this township, who was formerly engaged in farming on a large scale, tells me he always used to turn his cattle on the young wheat whenever from the mildness of the season it was growing too fast. It might, of course, be advisable to clear out the water furrows after the cattle were removed from the field, to prevent the water from lodging in the springs. Should the Hessian Fly become as prevalent as it