

### Citrus Industry in California.—I.

By W. R. Dewar.

Oranges and lemons are the best-known fruits of the citrus family. The pomelo or grape-fruit, citron, kumquat and shaddock are others not so well known, and, excepting the pomelo, are of no commercial importance in California. Fruit-growing is easily the paramount industry in California, and, as a wealth-producer and home-maker, outdistances general agriculture and stock-raising, or gold-mining, or even the much-boasted petroleum industry. And in fruit-growing, the citrus branch leads the deciduous, not only, to my mind, as a wealth producer, but in general progressiveness and organization. The orange and lemon men can certainly teach the deciduous growers in organization. I think they can also act as teachers in the general completeness of cultural methods followed in their groves, and from the social or homemaking side.

Citrus-growing, to any extent, is limited to a few counties in Southern California, Riverside district leading, with Redlands a good second. It is stated that 10,000 to 12,000 growers are interested in the cultivation of the fruit, 100,000 to 150,000 people depend on it for a livelihood, and it represents from \$150,000,000 to \$200,000,000 capital invested. Last year, to be exact, 33,099 carloads of citrus fruits were shipped from the State, and this year it is estimated that nearly 50,000 carloads will go forward. Experts have made these statistics for us, and they also tell us that this industry is one of the most perfectly organized rural industries in the world. It can hold undisputed lead on this continent, at least.

All these statistics and statements one can read about over and over again on paper, but an inquirer searching to find how such a position has been attained, runs upon stories of early endeavor that are interesting and even romantic. Indeed, most descriptions of the "golden apple" contain a great deal about Hesperides, the Golden West, and Eternal Sunshine, and one has to sift a lot to get the commercial facts. However, romance is the lure of the West, and the orange, being a southern fruit, cannot be altogether free from it. Coupled with climate, romance is the great asset of the Western "boomster" and real-estate dealer; but even in the most prosaic of countries or of industries there is a glamour and a romantic side attached to most things when seen from the comfortable hotel or pullman of a traveller or read about in real-estate literature. If that traveller be wise, he will go farther, and inquire into the basis of things. Then he will usually find that it takes many commonplaces to make one romance. Let him look at the romantic side alone, and he is apt to miss the most important details, and vice versa; let him look at or, better still, work at, the commonplace alone, and he is apt to become cynical of all romance which makes life worth living and progress possible. Ergo, let him try all. He must do so to understand the wonderful growth of the citrus industry in Southern California. For there is enough sunshine and gold in that industry, if studied comfortably, to satisfy the most romantic, and there is enough commonplace in hoeing weeds, sorting lemons, or compiling daily returns, to fill one with eternal ennui of all sunshine and gold. Yet these all—the sunshine and the commonplace—have been essential to the success of the orange and lemon in Southern California, and have evolved two organizations which stand in the front rank of commercial horticultural effort. These are known as the California Fruit-growers' Exchange and the Citrus Protective League of California.

Before going on with a description of these organizations, it would be advisable to trace their history in conjunction with the growth of the citrus industry, because both the industry and the organizations have been evolved after years of struggle in a past colored with romance, marked here and there by temporary failure, but always lighted by superb confidence, unslacking industry, and a far-seeing intelligence.

Away back in 1769, over 140 years ago, a lone Franciscan Father, Junipero Serra, toiled along on foot with a body of Spanish soldier-colonizers who were going overland from Mexico City to a new country, which we now know as California. Any one who has been in such a country can imagine the indomitable pluck and great religious zeal necessary to carry him on over those parched and burning mesa-lands, covered with mesquite and cacti, to a country inhabited only by savage Indians. But to the priest it was enough that he was carrying the story of the cross. We are probably more interested in the fact that he was carrying in his cassock many fruit seeds, notably of the orange, lemon and olive, which, upon the establishment of the first mission, at San Diego, in Southern California, he planted with great hopes but little ado in the mission garden. Here, then, was started California's citrus fruit industry. Other missions were soon established at intervals up the coast to points even north of San Francisco, and each had its own garden, with the familiar trees, to remind the self-exiled monks of

their beloved Spain. For, with care and irrigation, the orange and lemon had thrived as well as in their adopted homes around the Mediterranean. The first settlers to follow these mission efforts were Spanish grandees, who received grants of large tracts of land from the Spanish King. On their vast ranches of thousands of acres they thought only of cattle-grazing, which the dry, scrubby mesa country was really only fit for before the introduction of extensive irrigation; so that for nearly 100 years the monks' object les-

inevitable reaction of such a boom, and it proved a rough jolt to many. The growers awoke from their dream to find that they had overplanted; that they had planted in all sorts of ridiculous places, without due regard to soil, freedom from frost, or availability of water for irrigation; that they had planted poor varieties, had forgotten about insect and fungous enemies; and, as if careless of receiving any profit at all, had permitted the dealers to dictate prices and the transportation companies to dictate rates.

The slump had come with a vengeance. Many thousands of citrus trees in the nursery rows, normally worth \$1.50 each, were sold for 8 cents apiece. Lemon-growing was so much a losing proposition that growers were grafting all their lemon trees over to oranges, and even oranges were oftentimes grown at a loss. I have seen it stated that, even as late as 1892-3 growers received not one penny for shipments on commission, and in many cases had to pay a certain amount of the freight charges. They were paying for the privilege of growing golden oranges in the golden sunshine of the golden west. Truly romantic, wasn't it? Something like Niagara fruit-growers have been known to do.

However, some of the orange-growers were wise. They were intelligent, and still confident. They loved their homes, and liked to make a little money once in a while. Although the annual production of citrus fruits then amounted to only about a thousand cars, they foresaw a rapid yearly increase, and knew that something must be done to save the industry. Out of their necessity arose their salvation, as always.

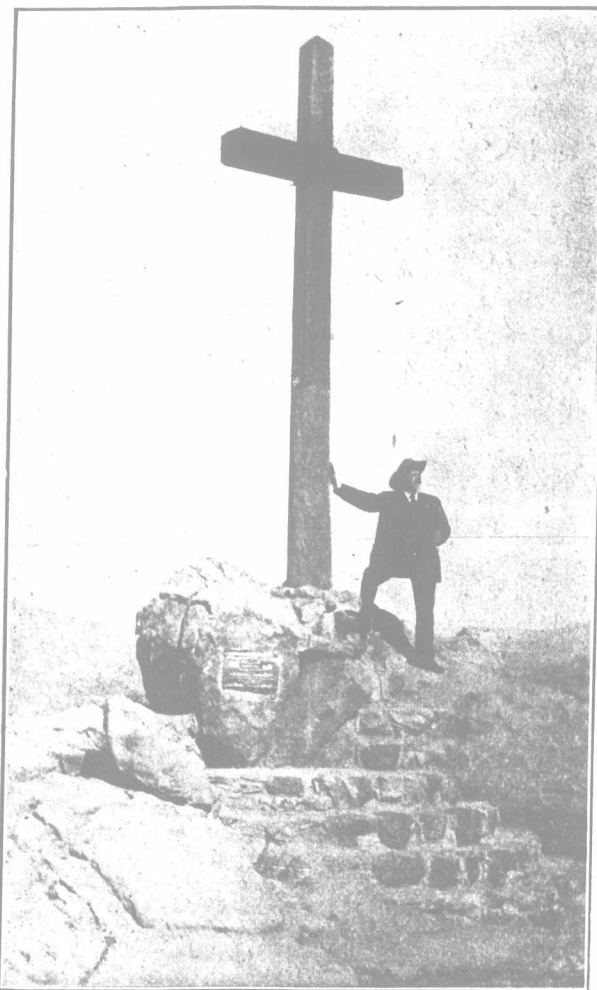
A mass meeting of growers was called in Los Angeles at the beginning of the season of 1885-6. It is recorded that the growers flocked to it as the Ontario growers did to Ottawa a little time back. Speech is very free in America, and we do not have to look up records to imagine the many nice things said. Suffice it to say that, after several days' session, an association was formed, known as the Orange-growers' Protective Union. This organization started off very well, but the dealers fought it fairly and unfairly, until they broke it up. It was the same story of big prices on first shipments, or big prices to a few growers in each district, which prices were by no means concealed; and then, after victims had been ensnared, and their association broken—any old price at all.

Then came the disastrous season of 1892-3, when the grower was lucky to get rid of his fruit at any price. Individually, he was at the mercy of the dealer and transportation company. As a result, more mass meetings were held, more resolutions passed, and eventually the old organization was resuscitated under more perfect conditions. From that time on it grew, changed names once or twice, and gradually underwent reorganization for the better, as the directors learned from experience, until in 1905 it received the name of the California Fruit-growers' Exchange, and became virtually the perfected organization that it is to-day. And this season of 1910-11, so perfected is its marketing system, it is standing the test of a bumper crop of close upon 50,000 cars without a tremor. Its system has been and is being freely copied all over the

United States, from the apple orchards of Utah and Oregon to the orange groves of Florida. It has put nearly all the private dealers out of the citrus business, as many closed and partially-ruined packing-houses attest. It transacts business over a territory 500 miles long, and spends \$100,000 a year advertising California citrus fruits. It has sold many million dollars' worth of fruit in one year, and not lost over a few hundred dollars in collection (this year its sales must reach nearly \$25,000,000). It pays its manager \$8,000 a year, or more, and

several Eastern representatives proportionate salaries. Still, it has cost the growers less than three per cent. on their gross returns. How is it done? I shall describe the organization, its marketing and advertising system, and the allied supply company, in the next article.

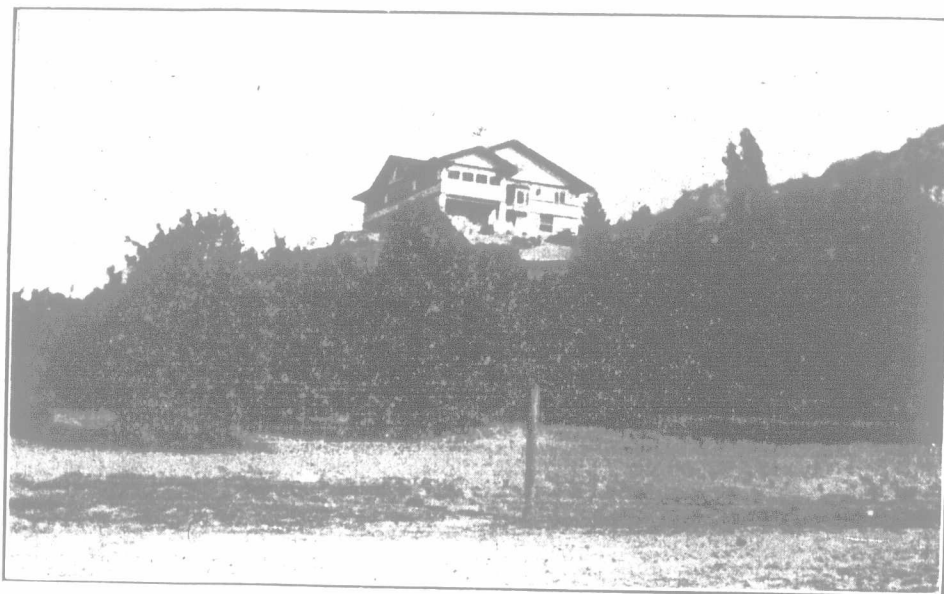
Gradation in superlatives would seem to be the California orange-growers' principle in the branding of his fruit. Listen to this: Extra fancy, fancy, extra choice, choice, and standard. What does "standard" stand for?



Cross at Mt. Rubidoux, Riverside, Cal.

In memory of Fra Junipero Serra. Col. Wm. Cody, "Buffalo Bill," at base.

sons in citrus culture were not considered of more value than to suggest planting a few trees around each home. The Americans began to come over the Rockies in the gold rush of '49 (out West, 1849 is unknown; it's only '49), but it was not until 1870 that they went into Southern California to any extent. Judge North, of Tennessee, headed the first party, which bought land where the present City of Riverside stands. It is recorded that they paid \$3.50 an acre for it—land which now fetches anywhere from \$500 to \$3,000



"Prosperity."

Millionaire's residence overlooking California orange grove.

for orange and lemon groves. These men planted groves, and began irrigation schemes which laid the foundation of present prosperity. Citrus culture spread, gradually at first, until about 1880, and then, owing to several reasons (the most important of which was the building of transcontinental railways), it sprang ahead with great acceleration. Its commercial success had become established; pioneers had become very wealthy, citrus nurseries were springing up all over, groves were planted with feverish haste, and the value of land jumped to fabulous prices. Then came the