

ETNA INSURANCE COMPANY, of Hartford, has been established 56 years, and has paid over \$40,000,000 losses.

VEGETABLES.—That class of the farmer's product commonly denominated as vegetables, as distinguished from cereals, trees, fibrous plants and fruits, are grown to perfection in California. Potatoes flourish most successfully in the coast counties, where the cool and moist climate of summer is exceedingly favorable; also in the moderately elevated regions of the Sierra Nevada. In some localities the product is reported at 500 bushels per acre, and the quality is as good as the production is prolific. Onions were ever a favorite with the Spanish occupants of the land, and well they might be, for the onions of California, large and crisp, bear slight resemblance to their tough and bitter congeners of the east. This, too, is the land of the vine, growing the watermelon, muskmelon, canteloupe, cucumber, pumpkin, squash and other cucurbitaceous plants. These grow everywhere, of unparalleled size and excellence, watermelons attaining a weight of fifty pounds, and squashes two hundred and forty pounds. Cabbages have been reported as weighing sixty pounds a single head, and beets eighty pounds. Carrots, parsnips, turnips and all roots flourish similarly, and where the growth is great the quality is usually enhanced in like proportion. Often, and is it the popular belief at the east, that rank growth is at the expense of the quality; but the rule does not hold good on the Pacific Coast, as here the reverse obtains. The capacity of our agricultural sections in the productions of root and garden vegetables is unlimited, and in these as in many other things the Golden State would take the premium of the Union.

The many articles successfully cultivated it would be difficult to mention, as the list would be interminable. Sweet potatoes constitute a large item among the farmer's products, 5,519 tons being reported as the crop of 1873, from 1,324 acres. Chicory is cultivated to a considerable extent, chiefly in Sacramento County, where an incorporated company is organized for its production. The root of this plant is prepared as a substitute for coffee. Large quantities are imported from Germany. Millet, canary seed, poppy, pie plant, mustard, tomatoes, garlic, okra, peppers—in fact all classes of plants and vegetables known to the cuisine are cultivated with success.

California may be classed, par excellence, "the land of sun and flowers." Nowhere is the flora more extensive or varied, either cultivated or in the wildness of nature. The broad plains and the grassy hills, when the warmth of spring follows the refreshing rains of winter, are vast beds of flowers of every hue, presenting a landscape most enchanting to the pioneers who first invaded the wilderness. Since then delicate and tasteful cultivation has greatly enriched the store. Throughout the country, in the village garden or about the farmer's cottage, where are people of aesthetic tastes, the dwellings are embowered in roses and vines, which in the spring and summer months are bedecked in the rich array of many colored flowers. Roses grow to veritable trees, with thousands of brilliant blossoms, and fuschias flame in variegated hues to the second story windows. A single rose bush, trained over a modest cottage in Santa Rosa, had at one time four thousand full blown roses and twenty thousand buds! In such a manner can the homes of Californians be ornamented, the soil and climate affording all, asking only the slight aid of industry and taste.

The sunflower is the posy of the peasant. Though usually grown in the gardens of the poor, or those of simple tastes for ornamentation, it possesses a value scarcely appreciated. In California they grow to immense size, some attaining a height of fifteen feet, with a flower four feet in circumference. A field of this plant will yield about fifty bushels of seed per acre, with a heavy and wooded stalk suitable for fuel. Each bushel of seed will give one gallon of oil, said to be equal to that from the olive, while the residue, or oil-cake, is exceedingly nutritious as a food for animals. Thus every part returns a value. Besides its worth for the products mentioned, it is claimed to possess the properties of the eucalyptus in being an absorbent of the miasma causing malarial fevers; and for this purpose its planting is recommended by the Superintendent of the Smithsonian Institute, at Washington.

DIVERSITY OF CROPS.

In California, the farm is generally more the field of business operations than the family house. It is where the investment in land and improvements is counted and interest rated; where labor is hired and driven as upon a soulless corporation, and where dividends of cent per cent. are demanded. The farms that figure in statistics, and swell our exports; that are the themes of newspaper reports and the pride of our people, are, when not covered with the waving grain, bleak and dismal to the eye as they stretch away for miles, unnumbered by fences and unadorned by trees, without roads or barns, and at long intervals only the low and comfortless farm house, merely a shelter and a rendezvous for the hands, in the midst of a vast field. These great farms are from 1,000 to 20,000 acres, and are usually devoted to a single purpose, as wheat-growing, a cattle or sheep range. The wheat-grower supplies his men with potatoes, cabbages and bacon from a distant section; the cattle-raiser lives without milk or butter, and the shepherd follows his flocks in the manner of past centuries, while the small farms and neat homesteads, where neighbors vie with each other in advancing comforts, and where the varied fields, orchards, pastures and gardens, which supply nearly every want of the household, are seldom seen. No country offers better opportunities for the moderate farmer than does California, and were the same industry and economy displayed here as in opening farms on the bleak prairies of the West, a far higher degree of comfort and prosperity would be attained. Instead, great operations are the fashion, and wealth the first year, or an annual increase of thousands, alone satisfies. To follow in the groove of the great land owner, or despair for want of capital, is the failing of the small farmer. While the possessor of many miles exhausts his soil in wheat, the careful farmer, with his various fields, orchards and gardens, marketing his high-priced products, and renewing the wealth of his ground, will add beauty and value to the country; and eventually the system will absorb the great estates.

LIVE STOCK.

The stock-rearing capacity of California was never disputed. To this purpose were the broad plains and grass-covered hills of the coast devoted prior to the discovery of gold and the occupation of the country by Americans. Horned cattle were the principal species reared, and these were valuable only for their hides, horns and tallow, which constituted the staple articles of export. Horses were reared for guarding and managing the cattle, and these, with small flocks of sheep and goats, constituted the stock and wealth of the country. All were in half-wild condition, reproducing themselves without the aid of man, and from the finest original breeds of the earth had so degenerated that its replacement was deemed necessary. For this purpose the best of thorough-bred stock has been imported and great improvements made.

Horses.—The original horse of the country was the Spanish Barb, formerly one of the most famous and best bloods of the world, but through several centuries of neglect it had degenerated into the mustang. Even in its latter form it is hardy and spirited, and was excellent for the saddle and for the purpose for which it was required—that of herding stock. The mustang is quickly improved by the thorough-bred, a half-breed horse being handsome, strong, hardy and free, and well adapted to the saddle or carriage, making one of the best of stage horses. For draft, carriage and racing, the best of English breeds have been imported, and the horses of California will, on an average, favorably compare with the best in the world. The health of this noble animal in this State is usually good, the diseases to which he is subject in most countries not prevailing. All, when brought here, seem to develop themselves more fully and increase in size and spirit. The number of horses in California in 1873, as reported by the Surveyor-General, was 214,463.