

THE HOMESEKER

time. It will not be many years before even that which is now considered poor land will be considered valuable land.

I invite the people of the world—ten millions of them—to come and settle in a State that has 1,200 miles of ocean, gulf and bay coast. Florida's eastern shore line is laved by the cooling waters of the Atlantic ocean for a distance of 400 miles; on the southern and western shore line it is bathed by the warm waters of the Gulf stream and the Gulf of Mexico for a distance of 700 miles, with an atmosphere that is tempered by the breezes from the ocean and the Gulf and the warm waters of the Gulf stream running parallel with the coast for 600 miles; a country where there is no winter, only spring, summer and autumn.

We can offer you a greater number of sunny days than can any other State in

the Union; we can offer you as hospitable a people for neighbors as can be found on the face of the globe; and in my humble judgment, after a careful inspection by the people of the world, by travel over the surface of Florida, and investigating it—the lands, climate, health-giving atmospheric conditions and locality—after enjoying the health-giving breezes, sunshine, atmosphere perfumed by the odor of flowers, of tropical plants and orange blossoms, while the rest of the country is locked in the arms of Winter, all will agree that any person with any degree of intelligence who does not feel grateful to the Creator of all things for this piece of his handiwork can not claim any higher place in the scale of animated being than can the brute that with unconscious gaze wanders among the works of God.

Soil That is Worth Six Dollars a Ton

By S. MAYE BALL

SO far, more than thirty miles of canals have been opened in the Everglades, and hundreds, yes, thousands, of acres of land are being reclaimed and crops are now growing profusely on them.

There is no question as to the wonderful productivity of the reclaimed soil. There is a peculiar thing about this soil—the element of nitrogen in it is nearly two and a half per cent, and this element has a value in the fertilizer markets of fifteen cents a pound. In other words, the soil of the Everglades is actually worth, if dug up, carted away and sold in the open market, more than \$6 per ton.

But the soil is not to be dug up and sold; on the contrary the lands are now being sold on two-year installment contracts in tracts of ten acres at \$24 per acre.

The Bolles lands organization will sell immediately 12,000 of these contracts, and it is stated that there has been such a demand for them that it is more than probable the whole of them will be taken before the end of 1910, meaning a great tide of immigration into Florida. The people of the northwest portion of the United States have been much interested in these reclaimed lands; much of the property has been sold to them through representatives who visited and inspected the lands before buying.

The base of operations now on the Everglades is at Miami; two of the great dredges are working from New River and one is heading from the Miami River, while the other is on the west side of the lake in the Caloosahatchee River.

The cutting of the first canal in the Everglades drained a very considerable acreage. The character of the land is rich in quality and very valuable. In the opinion of those living in the vicinity, the land after being reclaimed will be worth much more than \$30 per acre.

Along the banks of the first constructed canal there are many truck farms, upon which there is growing a crop of tomatoes on land which was from twelve to sixteen inches under water before the canal was built. One of the plots of ground used for a truck farm, just mentioned, was about an acre in area; the crop in character was finer in quality than anything theretofore grown in Florida and of an estimated value of \$750.

Where the great canals have cut their way for miles through the saw-grass, the water has run off, the grass has been cut and burnt, the soil heaped up in beds—just as in planting cotton—and along many of these beds run as luxuriant truck farms as one can ever see. All that is necessary to break this soil is the use of the hoe, therefore the labor cost for preparing this land is very slight indeed. With a scythe blade the grass is cut like standing grain; then with a hoe a narrow seed bed is made and the seed planted. The middle is worked

THE possibilities of reclamation by drainage in this country, are not inferior to those of reclamation by irrigation; and the land that will be gained by drainage is decayed vegetable matter enriched by the deposits of ages.—James J. Hill, in *World's Work*.

out from time to time as the bed is widened and the crop is cultivated.

Avenues of thirty feet straight to the canal are being left open for the use of the back-lot purchasers.

A Mr. Griffin, one of the farmers of this reclaimed land, when asked what his land was now worth, replied, "\$100 per acre." As his land is producing per acre \$300 to \$850 worth of tomatoes annually, his estimate seems low enough, surely!

(For the rest of this excellent article, see *Putnam's Magazine* for April.)

A VISIT TO THE DREDGES

By Dr. John Gifford.

WE ascended the New River, in the Everglades, a beautiful, winding stream that is very deep in places, one spot having a depth of 85 feet. The banks were quite low and sandy, and lined with moss-draped cypress, oak, maple, magnolia, cocoa-plum, pond-apple, etc., and after a short ride we reached the beginning of the drainage work.

One long canal ran northwestward, with the dredge Everglade at its head, hard at work. Another ran due west, with the dredge Okeechobee at work. These canals will run about 20 miles out into the 'Glade, and will be met by a canal running north and south from Lake Okeechobee to a point about 20 miles west of Miami. The dredge Miami is now at work at the head of the Miami river, and another dredge is at work on the West Coast, opening the old Disston canal.

As these canals are finished, dams are made to hold back the water to facilitate dredging, showing rather a surprising amount of fall and how effective these canals will prove in discharging the floods of water from this big area.

There were no mosquitoes in the Everglades during our visit, and crops were already growing on the land, owned by eager settlers, showing what can be done on land only partially drained.

Western capitalists mainly have bought this land. The money from the sale is doing the work, and the further it progresses the more the land will bring, and the more eager people will be to get hold of it.

There are agents at work selling this land in every State in the Union. Men of wealth and influence are behind this project, and if anyone doubts its feasibility, he should come to Florida and see with his own eyes.

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