

Women as Farmers in California

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She resides upon
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[EDITOR'S NOTE.]

AMONG the occupations that are opening for women, that of farming is attracting more and more attention; and while all country life has pleasant phases, the country life of California is particularly alluring, both on account of the glamour of romance that has always hung over it, and on account of the mild climate and fertile soil.

What are the opportunities for women as farmers in our State? They are good for a resourceful woman with some capital; a woman who can face some discouragements, some trouble, and some labor. The prospecti that are sent out by advertisers can not always be relied upon, for the reason that many times they give the maximum profit with the minimum expense, with no allowance for partial failure of crops, or unforeseen contingencies.

NO ROYAL ROAD

There are women in the State who have built a fine business from a comparatively small beginning, but there is no royal road to fortune in any business. California, how-

ever, offers many favorable conditions, especially in our great valleys.

No woman should come here to engage in business without capital. There is now little desirable land that is not under private ownership. While water in many places is not absolutely necessary, yet it adds a value to every acre upon which it can be placed. In the Sacramento Valley, with which I am most familiar, excellent fruit and alfalfa can be raised without irrigation; but it is always better to pay a little more, and get land where the fruit can be irrigated in seasons when the rainfall is below normal, and where the alfalfa can be irrigated every season, thus insuring almost double the amount of hay per acre.

The price of land varies with the location and distance from a town. The alluvial land near the water courses in the Sacramento Valley can be bought at from \$250 to \$500 per acre. It is well to buy land that has demonstrated its adaptability to different crops and general farming, for poor land often lies within a short distance of good;

but all this alluvial soil has already proved its value.

SPECIALIZATION

As this is the age of specialists, some women have specialized and have done well. One woman, for instance, on land in the Santa Clara Valley, specialized with violets, and from a small beginning acquired a competence. Her location was particularly adapted to violets, and her market was at her door. Another woman whose home was in the Sacramento Valley devoted her energies to olives, and she, too, acquired a competence; but her home was her own, and did not require a purchase.

While these and other specialists have made money, the door of special opportunity does not open to all women; the safest way is to plan for intensive farming. To use a homely phrase, your eggs are not all in one basket, but a rotation of crops and diversity of interests not only equalize the farm work through the year, but are more likely to insure a reliable income.

Let a woman buy twenty acres in a favorable part of the Sacramento Valley. She ought to allow at least \$300 an acre for her land, a price which should insure her land subject to irrigation, possibly with the water already on it. The alluvial valley land is capable of producing a wide diversity of crops; not only cereals and alfalfa, but all kinds of fruit, including prunes, almonds, olives, pomelos, oranges and lemons.

ALFALFA DEPENDABLE

Alfalfa can be depended on to produce five crops per year, with an average yearly yield of from five to ten tons per acre. The latter, however, is unusual. If one markets the alfalfa in cattle and hogs, a maximum price can be obtained, provided it is borne in mind that a poor cow will eat as much as a good one. It is not advisable to keep a cow that will produce less than an average of a pound of butter a day, and in these days, an average of two pounds is nearer

the mark, which with the by-products of the milk gives a good margin of profit.

Raisin grapes are particularly adapted to the valley soils, and after they are well started can nearly always be depended on for a crop that with average prices will net close to \$100 per acre. Almonds also are as profitable a crop as raisins, and are easily cared for and harvested. Peaches, apricots and plums are more perishable and need prompt harvesting. Prunes require irrigation to obtain the best results, and care should be taken in the selection of varieties. The citrus fruits are also profitable, and so far have been free from damage by frost; these, too, need irrigation and careful cultivation. Fowls ought to find a place on our small farm, and with care can yield a profit besides furnishing the eggs used in the household.

A selection of any of these fruit products may be made, which in conjunction with part of the land devoted to alfalfa, and to a rotation of crops, will yield a good income if one has freedom from expensive sickness, has an average family, and not too great a desire for luxuries; so there is no reason why women should not succeed as farmers in California.

Even with a small income of money, the farm life of California can bring in a generous income of happiness. Food and clothes for the body are not the sum of life; the food for the soul is equally necessary. Each season in California is a delight; the verdure and flowers of spring, the long summer days, which, though hot and dry, bring the perfect mornings and the wonderful, star-lit nights; the hazy autumnal days that are something to remember, and the rainy ones of winter that waken the earth to new life—all these bring "an inward joy in all things heard and seen"—a joy that can not be measured by dollars and cents, but is measured by growth of soul and love of God.