

JEWISH HUSBANDMEN.

EXPATRIATED RUSSIAN JEWS AS AGRICULTURISTS—AN EXPERIMENTAL COLONY IN THE WEST—BRIGHT HOPES FOR THE FUTURE—GENIAL CLIMATE AND FERTILE SOIL.

COTOPAXI, Col., July 22, 1882.

It is probably not generally known that the Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society in New York has exerted itself to provide some of the expatriated Russian Jews with farms and make them thereby self-supporting. According to this plan the committee decided to take up government land around Cotopaxi, in the State of Colorado, and to found there an experimental colony. The scheme was soon matured, and after the proper persons—mostly trained farmers—had been carefully selected, the colony left for Cotopaxi on the 31 of May last, arriving there after a five days' journey. Cotopaxi is the headquarters of a rich mining district and lies in a valley surrounded by high mountains, all of which contain valuable minerals—especially silver, copper, Galena and lead. The Arkansas River runs at the foot of the valley. Cotopaxi obtained its name from the famous volcano in South America, and is a pretty lively railroad station. Opposite Cotopaxi, on the southern banks of the Arkansas River, there are about 700 acres of farming land which ascends in easy grades and is surrounded on both sides by high mountains whose interior resounds with the drilling and blasting of the miners. This hilly land covered with fresh, green grass extends to the length of three and one-half English miles, and forms the first link in the chain of farms that await the working hands of the expatriated Russian Jews. A steep mountain range strewn with gigantic rocks separates these farms from the second division of the colony—from Wet Mountain Valley, so called on account of the frequent rainfalls and because of the natural humidity of its soil.

THE LITTLE COLONY.

All these lands, comprising an area of about 2,400 acres, have been carefully surveyed and possess a rich phosphate soil. There are twelve families in the colony and each family receives 160 acres of farm land. Nobody is allowed to occupy more than 160 acres of government land, this being the legal claim allowed to each occupant. The laws of Colorado have pretty strict provisions in this respect. They compel each colonist to cultivate at least five acres of his claim within six months from the day of his setting upon it and to stake the balance of 155 acres. After the occupation has been made the occupant has to file a declaration in the office of the Register of his county, who then issues the necessary papers constituting the title and the ownership of the occupant. Until the colonists' houses are completed they live in and around Cotopaxi. On Sunday morning they go to their respective farms, where they remain during the week. The nights they spend in tents pitched for this purpose, and on Friday evening, the entering of the Sabbath, they return to their families in order to keep with them the day of rest. In a few weeks, however, the houses designed for each family will be completed, and thus they will be enabled to live in their own homes. Some of the houses will stand in Cotopaxi proper, others on the first division of the colonists' land on the so-called Oak Grove Creek, while the remainder will be built in Wet Mountain Valley. Besides the house each family will receive one cow, several chickens and, if possible, one team. Since the 9th of May, the day on which the colonists arrived, they have been provided for and fed at the expense of the New York Society. About \$300 a month is allowed for provisions, which is a very moderate expenditure. Every cent expended is carefully booked and charged to each family separately, so as to enable the society to proportion its demands to each colonist, who will have to repay the outlay of the society in yearly instalments. On the 9th of May the colony consisted of fifty persons. On the 27th of May a fifteen months old child of one of the colonists died, thus reducing their number to forty-nine. Since then one of the colonist's wives gave birth to a girl, thus re-establishing the original fifty. These fifty persons are composed of twenty-nine males and twenty-one females. The grown up people number thirty-four, the remainder consisting of children under nine years of age. The best proof that they are being well provided for is the fact that, despite of the comparatively narrow localities in which they live, no serious case of sickness has occurred, the infant that died having been sick since its arrival at New York. Altogether the colonists belong to a good class of people and behave themselves very well. They consume a great deal of soap, are very clean and neat, and, as a rule, make a very good impression. All of them work willingly and industriously, and it is to be hoped that, with a little perseverance, they will in a short time be able not only to gain their own livelihood, but also to partially repay the outlay of the New York society.

RICHNESS OF THE SOIL.

The farms are well worked and promise an excellent harvest. Despite the dry weather and the lack of water for purposes of irrigation, the potato crop will be excellent in quality as well as in quantity. So full of phosphate is the ground, and so rich, that cabbage seed came up on the fourth day after it had been sown. The neighboring farmers assure me that our cabbages will grow almost incredibly large, and that the turnips, for instance when up, will prove very giants in comparison to those of the East. Many of the Eastern people are erroneously informed as to the qualities of the Centennial State. It is a general belief in that section of the country that Colorado is nothing but a mining land, and there is only one thing to be raised with hope of success, and that is stock. There never was a more egregious error than this. To be sure, Colorado has not too frequent rainfalls, but the system of irrigation adopted by the farmers of this State compensates for the scarcity of rain, and tillers of the soil say that they prefer irrigation to natural rainfalls. The season having been too far advanced to sow wheat or oats, the colonists planted mostly garden stuff and vegetables. Thousands upon thousands of pounds of potatoes were sown, besides cabbages, beans, beets, turnips, squash, melons, muskmelons, peas, cucumbers, &c., all of which promise a fine crop.

There is a public school in Cotopaxi, which, according to the assurance given by the County School Superintendent to the managers of the colony, will be opened in the fall. It is contemplated to organize a school for the grown colonists, to teach them the English language—arithmetic, geography, &c. Every Sabbath—that is Friday evening and Saturday forenoons—divine services are held in the handsome little synagogue of the colony, which recently has been adorned and presented with a Sephar Thora or scroll of the Mosaic laws, by the Rev. Dr. Baar, director of the New York Hebrew Orphan Asylum. The divine services are noted for the solemn and impressive way in which they are conducted and are generally attended by many of the Christian citizens of the village.