



ORANGE GROVE OF H. S. BRINK



RESIDENCE STREET IN BIGGS



PEARS AND PUMPKINS



SACRAMENTO VALLEY BANK



90 BUSHELS TO THE ACRE

GRIDLEY AND BIGGS

By F. C. Mitchell

The Butte County Canal, built in 1905, is rapidly transforming into a region of highly specialized and exceedingly profitable crops, what was but a few years ago a vast expanse of wheat fields. Homes have sprung up in numbers where before the coming of the canal there were practically none. Simultaneously with this increase of farm activities and farm population, the two towns of the district have taken on new life and are among the most live and progressive of the State.

Gridley was the first to feel this impetus because the earliest colonization under the canal system was near that place. Always an important grain center and the shipping point for extensive orchards lying near the Feather River to the east, Gridley forged ahead rapidly when new people began to settle there in numbers and the production of adjacent lands to multiply. Additions to the town were platted and homes built upon them, the population increased materially, business of all kinds advanced by leaps and bounds.

Biggs is now on the eve of a similar development. Lateral canals now cover large areas near this place and will soon be settled. Nothing can stop this growth. It is already begun, as may be seen by the handsome and commodious business blocks recently erected. These include a fine new hotel, the equal of any found in a town of this size anywhere, a new bank building and a full block of brick business buildings. Biggs is an important point in the grain world, and has one of the largest grain warehouses in the Sacramento Valley; the near future will see it more important as a large shipper of alfalfa and alfalfa products and other crops of irrigated lands.

The Butte County Canal takes its water supply from the Feather River a short distance below Oroville. It was the first large system





to be completed in this valley. The main canal is fifty feet wide at the headgate, narrowing to thirty feet, and is designed to irrigate 80,000 acres. Additional acreage will be irrigated in time, probably not less than 200,000 acres lying tributary to the diversion point.

The land under this canal is divided into "colonies" to facilitate settlement. The canal company, for a consideration of \$10 an acre, contracts to deliver the water to the highest corner of each farm tract. After building the lateral systems the company makes over each to the colonists thereunder who are organized into a ditch company for the purpose, each acre entitling the owner to one share of stock. The lateral canals are thus in the hands of the farmers themselves and managed by them, the costs of maintenance being assessed on an acreage basis. The charge for water in the Gridley and Biggs districts is \$2.00 an acre a year.

The value of the lands of the Biggs-Gridley district is best shown by the successful farms that have been developed during the past three years. There are many of these and upon them may be found every product of this State. Alfalfa is the leading crop, but there are many others, including corn, millet, vegetables, berries, fruits of all kinds, including oranges and olives. As an example of what has been done and will no doubt be repeated I will relate the experience of a single settler: Mr. Henry Hughes purchased twenty acres in Colony No. 3, planting twenty acres to alfalfa, and is making more money from this twelve acres this year than he paid for the land.

These fertile lands show for themselves. Their crops tell of their productive capacity. They have excellent transportation facilities, the Southern Pacific Railway and the Northern Electric Interurban cross the tract; the Western Pacific is but three miles distant. There is a large fruit and vegetable cannery at Gridley, fruit packing houses at both Biggs and Gridley. Schools are excellent, both in the towns and in the country districts. There are well maintained churches of several denominations.

A FARM HOME



EUCALYPTUS FOREST



DAIRY CATTLE



GRIDLEY CANNERY



A LATERAL DITCH



A PAYING CROP



A PRUNE ORCHARD