

CHERAW GAZETTE

AND
PEE DEE FARMER.

VOLUME IV.

CHERAW, SOUTH-CAROLINA, FRIDAY EVENING, AUGUST 23, 1839.

NUMBER XLII.

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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From the Southern Agriculturist, Agricultural Convention.

Mr. Editor,—In the May number of your periodical, there is a brief editorial, wherein you observe that you are requested "by several Agricultural Societies, to invite the planters of the several Parishes (and Districts too I suppose) of this State, and of our different Agricultural Societies, to appoint delegates to meet in Convention, at Columbia, during the first week of the session of our Legislature, to take into consideration the agricultural condition of our State, and to present to the Legislature such a memorial as will bring prominently to their view the necessity of enacting certain laws for the advancement of the same;" and one of your correspondents, "A Reader," has entered warmly into an advocacy of the measure. We all agree, no doubt, as to the objects contemplated, and I presume there is little or no difference as to the means necessary in accomplishing the end, but if by discussion any information can be elicited which would facilitate the operations of the Convention, it should not be withheld. Under this impression, and with the hope of drawing out some writer better fitted to the task, I forward you this communication.

Some ten or twelve years since, the Agricultural Society of South-Carolina was organized, and like the Mammoth Society "for the advancement of learning," was to have worked miracles; but to unlikewise this and many other bantlings, before it acquired that age which would enable it to leave the cradle it was destined to sleep "the sleep of death."

The second step in the State, I have heard of, to procure legislation, in aid of agriculture, was the petition of the Monticello Planters' Society in 1837, suggesting the benefits that would result from an agricultural survey of the State; from the introduction of agricultural school books into the common schools of the country; from the establishment of an agricultural professorship in the South-Carolina College; and from agricultural societies and libraries. That petition embodied arguments showing in detail the advantages that would follow the adoption of all or any of these plans, and sustained itself in the contrast it held up of the more laudable action of other States of the confederacy in connexion with this subject, designed as the document, was throughout and altogether, to meet in advance the extraordinary question so often propounded by legislators—what can be done?

The fate of that memorial is recorded in the Southern Agriculturist, vol. xi., No. 5. Its destiny was quite as remarkable, if not more so than the next move on the chess-board. In 1838, the Beaufort Agricultural Society, the Monticello Planters' Society, and sundry citizens of Marion District, presented their several petitions; and unless I greatly err, on motion to that effect, they were all laid on the table as undeserving the consideration of the high public functionaries, the political magnates who crowd our representative chamber. The Chief Magistrate, however, in his message of November 27th, 1838, it appears, had recommended a geological survey of the State, and suddenly members resolve that it is an affair of great moment. When the year before an agricultural survey was prayed for by the planters, which, besides embracing the agricultural statistics of the commonwealth also included an examination into its geological and mineralogical resources, the representatives then acted as if to discuss such a petition was an unnecessary consumption of time; but when, in 1838, the Executive suggests the propriety of a mere geological survey, "a change comes o'er the spirit of their dreams," and the thing must not be overlooked. Accordingly the Committee on Agriculture, to whom this portion of the message was assigned, after some deliberation, submitted a favorable report, and I now take the occasion to say that the resolutions appended to their Report were in every way worthy the Chairman, whose zeal in the cause of agriculture is equalled by many, but surpassed by few. The Report and Resolutions of this Committee were not pressed, for obvious reasons, though as I understand are to be called up in December for such action as representatives may deem advisable. Now, from this exhibit of facts, it certainly shows exceeding great perseverance on the part of the Monticello Planters' Society, that in March last they should have passed a resolution to be found in your Journal, vol. xi., No. 4, whereby a Committee is constituted "to present again in December the memorial presented at the last session of the

Legislature; and to furnish very elaborately, not only the mode by which the object is to be accomplished, but also, a full detail of all the advances that might accrue therefrom to the community at large." Though you pile your memorials mountain-high, to judge of the future by the past, can we anticipate any good from their presentation? By this rule, I apprehend not. It is true, this is, the most ostensible way through which planters are to be heard; but to carry out the objects of the Convention, something more must be done. The Delegates must meet the Committee on Agriculture in the Committee room, and if required, be prepared to furnish that Committee with a rough draft, or the outlines, of a bill to be introduced into the Legislative hall, presenting at large, the specific wants of the agricultural community; they must be able to give legislators correct information as to the past and present condition of our agriculture, and finally so arrange, that through yeas and nays, we shall have it completely in our power to commend or correct.

There exists unhappily throughout this State a scarcity of agricultural records, agricultural references, and agricultural information; and I am assured this was one of the obstacles which defeated suitable action last winter on the merits of the geological survey. If copies of the agricultural survey of Massachusetts, as made by the Rev. Mr. Coleman, had been circulated in this State, I have little doubt they would have been of more service to our agriculture than all the memorials relating to husbandry that have ever been submitted to our Legislative council. With due deference to you, I'll go a little farther, and affirm that it is not yet too late for you to republish so valuable a pamphlet, together with the bill itself, which authorized the survey. The planters as well as their delegates wanted to be put in possession of this sort of information; they want facts like those to be discovered in this volume of the Southern Agriculturist No. 5, p. 263, and it is desirable such selections will hereafter be more frequent.

Public attention is awakening to the great and paramount interests of agriculture, and our planters generally are beginning to discover that book-planting and folly are not synonymous terms. Many of our most valuable citizens have been driven by State policy to seek their bread in the more fertile regions of the West; and the State, which might long since have prevented such a disastrous condition of affairs, has suffered her energies and resources to remain dormant. How long shall we submit to a policy so destructive and ruinous? VARRO.

On the Rearing and Feeding of Cattle.

In our island, where the domestic animals enter so largely into the article of human food, a great part of the farmer's attention must be devoted to the rearing of them to the degree of perfection their ultimate use requires; for every labor bestowed on any kind of cultivation and every article the farmer produces by the application of that labor tends to the same result—the production of food for man and beast. Before the introduction of green crops, a very imperfect system of rearing prevailed, from want of succulent food for winter; grass-fed animals could only be brought to market, and if kept through winter they lost during that time the degree of condition they had acquired during the summer, for hay and straw if used in profusion will not rear or feed the animals quickly and profitably. The cultivation of green crops has completely altered the whole system, and has introduced an entire revolution, both in the cultivation of the land, and in the management of the domestic animals, a better and more regular supply of food has been obtained, and a vast addition to the number and quality of every article produced on the farm. An improvement in the supply of food carried along with it corresponding improvements in the animals themselves, and on no point of rural economy has more skill and exertion been shown, or more persevering industry exercised, than we have witnessed by many breeders in this kingdom, in improving the qualities of the animals, by intermixing and engrafting the properties of the one on the other, so as to develop and bring forth those qualities for the use of man. Our breeds of cattle are numerous, but the various crosses and remnants of old breeds need not be enumerated, and they may be reduced to the few breeds that are now most approved, and from which we may choose for any situation in the kingdom. For all rich soils and favored situations, the Durham breed or short horns are preferred, and the long horns are still kept by many excellent cultivators. The Herefords and short horns seem nearly balanced in merits, if we may judge from the prizes awarded them. For inferior lands we have the Devon breed, not surpassed by any cattle in the kingdom, and besides we have multitudes of nondescript animals, that do not fall under any class, but which are yet much used in all parts of the kingdom. In Scotland, where great numbers of cattle are reared and exported, the native breeds are three—the Ayrshire, which are evidently allied to the Yorkshire breed—the Galloways, or polled blacks, and the West Highland breed of horned black, shaggy-haired animals, which are found, with some little variation, all over the Western and Northern Highlands of Scotland. Great numbers of these animals are fed in England; and an opinion is entertained, and my own experience goes far in support of it, that these mountain cattle pay more money per head and per acre, than any of our fine breeds, after

all the improvements that have been made. The cost of production is small, and the beef commands a higher price in the market. In bringing cattle forward to the state when they are disposed of to the consumer, farmers have adopted two methods; some prefer to breed and feed on the farm, a number that they can support, and others to buy yearly a number they can afford to feed. The preference given to either of the two methods would seem to be, or should be, determined by locality and other circumstances, yet caprice and fancy would seem to do much, for it is hard to conceive how two farms adjoining each other should be suitable to different modes, except in the bare opinion of the farmer, or how two breeds of animals can be most profitable in similar cases, except in opinion only. In many situations the difference to be observed between breeding and feeding, is marked, and it is very fortunate that the diversity of opinion prevails in other places for it affords a ready market for our mountain breeds, which, if the case was otherwise, might not be so profitable. In choosing a native breed the farmer will be guided by the quality of the soil, the food he can produce, and by other circumstances, and much will depend on his own fancy; but if he prefer to buy in rather than breed, it will be found that the Scotch polled and West Highland breed will pay more money than any other. A very general mistake is committed in not allowing them sufficient time on the land, in order to feed—not less than eighteen months should be allowed, or twelve in cases where they have been bought in good condition. Green crops being now known to us, which if duly cultivated will afford succulent food during winter, it is understood that no farmer neglects providing a sufficient quantity if he wishes to rear and feed profitably, not only with regard to the profits of the animal itself, but to the manure raised for the future benefit of the farm. But notwithstanding the long acknowledged profits of these crops, and also of improved breeds of stock, we find great neglect prevail on both points; for if we look into Smithfield, or any other market, we find the improved animals bear a small proportion to the others; farmers yet persist in breeding very unthrifty animals, and for want of green crops they are bred and starved upon a system. In many cases, however, we find both breeding and feeding carried on systematically and profitably, with due attention to the profits expected from the animal itself, from the attention and food bestowed, and also to the future benefits expected from the system.

Cow sheds should be provided with calf pens adjoining, under the same roof, where the calves are confined in separate apartments for one animal, and floored with boards, pierced with sugar holes that they may lay dry and comfortable. From these apartments they are brought twice or thrice a day to be suckled, by a halter, and tied when sucking, to a rope extending along the cow-shed. Sucking is always to be preferred to nursing by the pail; when milk is exposed much of the value is lost, the gaseous fluids go off by evaporation, and the appearance of the calves nursed by the two methods is a sufficient decision. Suckling is attended with less trouble, and an experienced cowman will soon be able to judge of the proper quantity to be allowed them. From January to June is the proper time for weaning—early calves maintaining a decided superiority, unless greater encouragement be afterwards afforded to the later ones. In situations where fattening for veal is found profitable, both weaning and fattening go on together; and even where cheese and butter are manufactured, all the three may be easily managed, by allotting a number of cows for suckling and a number to be milked for the dairy. Calves fed for veal must not be restricted in the quantity of milk; for weaning, they must be allowed such a quantity as will keep them always in a sleek and thriving condition, without feeding them, for any fat produced at that time would be lost. An ordinary cow would feed four calves for veal, or make veal of two, and wean three, much depending on the milky nature of the cow, and on the quality of the pasture. The various substitutes for milk that have been pushed abroad among farmers have all proved an utter fallacy, only supplying the farmer with a few pounds of butter and cheese at the expense of the animal. They never fail in producing a large belly and offal, and infallible mark degeneracy and bad keep, in any animal, and in no case have we been yet able to improve upon what nature has provided the mother with in nursing her offspring. During that time the mother should form the chief object of our attention.

In the month of May, when the weather has become warm, and the young grass has sprung, the earliest calves will be turned out into a grass paddock of fine pasture, provided with water and shelter, and convenient to the homestead, and where they can be suckled twice a day. The cows' pasture should be adjacent if possible, and also well provided with water and shelter, and laid down or improved for the purpose. The paddock for the calves may consist of one or two acres, and an orchard suits very well, the fruit trees affording shelter from the heat and amusement in rubbing. A shelter shed is indispensable, with a dry, well littered bottom, and may be so contrived, as to suit for lambing the ewes in the spring, which business will be concluded before the calves are turned out. The ewes lying all night in the paddock, will be a good top dressing, which must be

attended to by rolling. At the age of 16 weeks the calves will be ready to go to the pasture field, the quantity of milk having been gradually reduced as the calves learned to eat the grass. As they are removed from the paddock the next oldest ones are turned out from the calf-pens, and when the weaning season is near a close, as many of the latest calves as the paddock can maintain may remain in it for the season, to be near at hand for receiving some better encouragement to raise them to an equality with the oldest. Nothing more disagrees a herd of cattle than to see them of different sizes and qualities, and colors, and in many cases of different breeds, showing a great want of skill in the breeding, and of care and attention in the nursing and rearing. After the weaning season is over, the milk for the remainder of the season may be applied to suckling for veal, or to making butter and cheese, as a situation may direct. In places where these articles are the staple produce, the weaning of calves will be on a small scale; but on these farms some are weaned, to which the above observations will equally apply.

When the calves are removed from the home paddock, the best pasture on the farm will be given them, well watered and sheltered if possible; in many cases the latter part of a hay crop answers well. When fallow is in permanent grass, a shed with a view to permanency may be erected in each field at a very trifling cost, and may be so contrived as to suit both cattle and sheep. Where the alternate system of farming prevails, a corner where the plough does not strike may be got, and a very useful shelter erected. Cattle of an age should pasture together, and the smaller the lots the better.

By the end of October, the approach of cold weather will render necessary the removal of the cattle to the home yard. Every farm, or ought to be provided with a number of yards suited to its size and to the quality of the soil, the bottoms level with that of the shelter-shed raised above that of the yard, to throw the moisture outwards, that the cattle may lie dry; cribs for holding the roots given to the cattle are ranged along the sub-division walls, and sometimes placed in the shelter-shed under cover; the most approved are of a square shape, with a latticed bottom which allows all moisture to escape. Buildings of stone and lime have been erected along the walls, but they hold water and sludge very much; wood is cleaner, and where used the bottom planks should be perforated with holes to discharge the water. Troughs of stone, of wood, or of cast iron are placed across the provision-walls, so as to supply two yards; and the water is conveyed in pipes from a pump, or supplied by ball cocks and pipes from a cistern placed aloft for that purpose, in some house of the farmery, and to which the water is raised by a forcing valve in the yard pump. Turnips are now mostly given in a cut state, and where straw is rank and abundant, it may be cut to shorter lengths, which will render it more manageable and easier of reduction.

Into three yards properly furnished, the cattle are put in lots of ages and sizes, varying in number from 3 to 7 when feeding; young cattle may be kept in greater numbers. Most feeders now prefer the open yard to housing, though on turnip farms, a feeding house is very necessary where a few choice animals may be fattened, or a few inferior ones may be brought more quickly to perfection. Fresh straw should be put frequently into the racks, and cabbages are a very proper article to begin the feeding of young stock for the first winter. These and turnip tops are given once, or better if twice a day, and continued through the winter—if they fail, potatoes and beets are given in moderate quantities, so as to keep the young animals in a sleek and thriving condition, without any tendency to gorge them, or induce them to nauseate their food. They should always show a keen appetite, and seem able to eat more than is given. The yards are frequently littered, thinly at a time, so as to keep them dry and comfortable, and also mix the manure properly. The straw racks are shifted often, and the yards are of such a size as will admit of the cattle treading, dunging, and watering on every part. A very common error prevails on this point, the yards are much too large, the straw lies dry and unmixed in many parts, and the good dung lies huddled together in other places. Space sufficient for the cattle to move about freely for air and exercise is quite enough, due regard being had to warmth in the shelter shed. An equal mistake with too much space lies in making the yards too small.

In the month of May of each year the pasture fields will be ready for stocking, when the different sizes and ages will be arranged by the best judgment of the farmer. In October of each year, the cattle will be turned into the fold yards and fed with ample allowances of roots and straw, and with the yards kept dry and comfortable. As the cattle increase in age, the fewer numbers must be put together in one yard, and during the third and fourth winter they will be fed off and sold. I have recommended all calves to suck the cow for veal or for weaning, and I now mention that the treatment of any animal during the first year of its growth generally stamps its future distinction. If it be stinted in the quantity or in the quality of the food, future pampering will not recover its lost growth, and if it be well fed during the first year, and attain a good size, indifferent treatment afterwards will have much less effect. If a calf be well suckled, great attention is necessary during

the first winter that it receive such treatment as will carry it forward, and that it does not lose in that time what it gained the previous summer. This result often happens from want of winter food of roots, for though hay and straw be in profusion, they never can supply the place of green crops.

Cattle when feeding must have a full supply of food, but not to pall their appetites, which must always be keen and in full action. The food previously given them should be clean eaten up, or nearly so before any more is supplied, and the cribs regularly cleaned out and every filth removed. The first feed of cut turnips, potatoes, or beets, is given by break of day, and the last so long before darkness sets in as will allow time for the cattle to eat the whole during day light, as any accidents from hiving or chocking have a better chance of being seen and remedied. A dry bed in the shelter shed and in any part of the yard during dry weather, is indispensable.

Opinions differ as to the most profitable age of feeding our best breeds of cattle. My own experience agrees with the opinion expressed by Earl Spencer, one of our highest authorities, that the age of four years seems the most advantageous, as the most likely to secure the utmost weight of the animal, and to avoid unnecessary expenditure in trying to obtain more bulk, and also the loss by slaughtering at too early an age, before the animal had reached maturity. I have observed that a great part of our cattle are starved on system—they are grazed and gain something in summer and lose it in winter. The miserable appearance of young stock both in the yard and in the fields sufficiently support this opinion, and the case will not be mended till green crops are more extensively cultivated. We know plants adapted I may say to almost every soil, and it only remains to cultivate them. In order to produce a thoroughly well fed and ripe animal, it must be gradually fed from the day of its birth, by good keeping which will keep the body in a thriving condition and full of juices, and also produce that mixture of fat and lean so necessary to constitute beef of good quality. Hence arises the well furnished animal in the hands of the butcher, and from the starving system is owing the bad quality of much of our animal food, for unless the animal be well fattened and regularly, the lean is dry and wholly wanting in juices which can only be imparted by a ripe state. The one-half at least of our cattle in market are not fat, they are starved in early years, and then for a short time they are tied to a stake and gorged with food to produce an appearance quickly, and sold off to save expense, and hence arises the badly furnishing animal in the hands of the butcher. An animal always in good condition is fattening gradually and profitably, the dung is of more value, and when the age of fattening off arrives, a small application of more food concludes the process. A greater number of cattle is often kept on a farm than it can maintain profitably—an erroneous policy but very common.

I have observed that where a farmer chooses partly or wholly to follow the buying system in place of breeding, it will be found that our small mountain breeds will pay more money than any other. In most cases too short a time is allowed them to feed, for the natural propensity to fatten has not been in them any way improved by breeding or keeping, and in that respect they differ from our new breeds. They are mostly fed very poorly in their youth, and when transported to rich pastures, fat cannot be laid instantly, but in course of time if in fair condition, a year will be sufficient, but if bought in a lean state from droves, they should be on the ground for 18 months, fed the first winter on half the full allowance of green food, well grazed the following summer, and fed off the ensuing winter. This is gradual feeding and indispensable if we wish for good beef. The age should be four or rather five years when slaughtered.

Oil cake, bean, and barley meal, oats, and other articles have been used in the feeding of cattle, but experience has long since proved that if the farmer will only try to raise potatoes, beet, cabbages, and turnips in quantity, he need no substitute, except in case of a failure of the above crops. Straw alone is required for litter, and for the cattle to eat a little when inclined.—*British Farmer's Magazine for July.*

From the Journal of the American Silk Society. Coccooneries in the United States. We have been repeatedly called on for information as to what is really doing in the silk business in the United States. The following statement will probably be satisfactory to the public, and may possibly serve to quiet the nervous excitement of certain persons and presses, in relation to the "morbus multicaulis speculation." We only regret we could not obtain a complete list. We sincerely believe there are five times as many cocooneries in the country as we have enumerated; but even the present list will serve to show, that the morbus multicaulis trade is no "humbug," and that the silk business is an object worthy of national regard, rather than a fit subject for sneers and jests.

The cocoonery and silk factory of the society at Economy, Beaver county, Penn. under the management of Mr. Rapp, is entitled to the credit of being first on the list. It is a pioneer establishment. In 1832, they had progressed so far as to manufacture silk vesting of beautiful and excellent quality, silk; handkerchiefs, and various other kinds of goods. The writer of this was honoured with the presentation of a vest

and handkerchief of their manufacture, in 1832. At the present time they are manufacturing all kinds of silk goods, and we have now before us eight specimens of satin, lusting, figured vesting, of three patterns, gros de tins, &c. &c. all from cocoons of their own raising.

Mr. Cobb's cocoonery, at Dedham, Massachusetts, is probably next to that at Economy in age and extent. Mr. Whitmarsh's, at Northampton, and another, belonging to a company, at the same place, are believed to be the most extensive in New England. Mr. Timothy Smith has a cocoonery at Amherst, Massachusetts, and has made silk extensively and profitably for five or six years.

There are several pretty extensive cocooneries at and in the neighbourhood of Hartford, and in other parts of Connecticut. Messrs. Prince, at Flushing, N. Y. have erected an extensive cocoonery, and were feeding, when we last heard from them, about 1,000,000 of worms. There are several other establishments on Long Island, at Poughkeepsie, and other places in that state, from which we have no particulars.

The Messrs. Cheney, and Mr. Gummere at Burlington, New Jersey, have extensive cocooneries, as also have Mr. Samuel Haskins, and Mr. Joseph White, of Mount Holly, and Messrs. Jones & Yorke, of Salem, in the same state.

In Pennsylvania, Mr. Physick's cocoonery, at Germantown, is first on the list in extent. Mr. Maupay, at the Rising Sun, has a cocoonery adapted to feed a million of worms. Mr. Lloyd, and Messrs. Janney & Luedom, in or near Philadelphia, and various other individuals and companies in the vicinity, have commenced raising worms. At Doyleston, Messrs. J. H. Anderson, S. Dubois, D. Byrnes, M. Opp, Mr. Burgess, and Capt. Donaldson, are all engaged in raising silk worms. At Lancaster, Messrs. R. & H. Carson have made great progress. They have not only an extensive cocoonery, but they reel and manufacture their silk. We have seen some handkerchiefs made by them of very superior quality, and have some sewing silk now before us, of unequalled beauty. The Rock Hill cocoonery, at the same place, owned by Mr. S. C. Humes, is intended to accommodate a million of worms; 100,000 were fed there the present season. Near Bristol, Penn. Mr. James Swain is erecting a cocoonery, calculated to accommodate 1,000,000 of worms.

There are several cocooneries also at Beaver city, Beaver county, Penn. and numerous others in the state, but of which we have no particulars.

In Delaware, there is a silk company at Wilmington, which has recently erected a large cocoonery, a few miles from the city. They fed from 4 to 5,000,000 worms the present season, on the white and native mulberry, which have spun cocoons without the loss of any portion from disease. Another company, in Wilmington, have fed 150,000 worms the present season; another, belonging to Mr. Ziba Ferris, in the same place, has been very successful this season. Doctors Gibbons, Samuel Wollaston, and several others, have cocooneries in or near Wilmington. In Smyrna, Del. Mr. Benson has a cocoonery of considerable extent, and various other individuals and companies in different parts of the State.

In Maryland, there are numerous silk companies and private cocooneries in operation. On the eastern shore there are eight or ten incorporated companies, but we have no particulars as to the extent of their operations. The oldest cocoonery in the state, is probably that of Messrs. Jenks and Ramsburg, of Frederick, who have the present season, fed about half a million of worms, with success. In and near Baltimore we have the Mary and Silk Company, with an extensive cocoonery, and a factory house for working up the cocoons; the old Central race course has been purchased by Rev. Luther J. Cox, who is erecting an extensive cocoonery there, and has already reared a large number of silk worms. Numerous individuals in Baltimore have fed large numbers of worms the present season, among whom we may mention, Mr. Conner, proprietor of the silk agency, in Baltimore street, Mr. French, of South street, Mr. Walker, and others. The Centreville Silk Company is one of the oldest in the state, but we have no particulars as to its operations. Besides individuals and companies engaged in the silk business, we find this branch of industry has been introduced into the alma houses of eight counties of the state, and authority given them by the legislature to raise small sums of money to accomplish the object.

In the District of Columbia there are several cocooneries in progress, but we have the particulars of only that of John Mason, Jr. Esq. of Georgetown. He has erected a large cocoonery, well adapted to accommodate from three to five millions in the course of the season. He also began right, having provided himself with a full supply of mulberry leaves before he hatched his worms. We anticipate a handsome report from his establishment.

In Virginia they are going on busily. There are two or three large cocooneries near Fredericksburg. The Potomac Silk and Agricultural Company has a large cocoonery, that will accommodate one or two millions of worms, and seventeen acres of mulberry orchard. Another belonging to W. K. Smith & Co. of that place, equal extent, and, as we are informed, several others. Near Richmond, we have the cocoonery of Curtis Carter, Esq. that will accommodate two or three millions of worms, in the course of the season; and that of Mr.