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By M. MAC LEAN.

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AGRICULTURAL.

From the Western Farmer.

SILK.

Mount Pleasant, March, 16, 1841.

To *Mr.*———: *Dear Sir.*—Mr. Gill has just handed me yours of the 10th, and I feel unspeakable pleasure in answering you. I am always willing and ready to give that information necessary to the advancement and final prosperity of the silk business in this country. After being engaged in the silk business for the last 40 years, in London, Economy, Pa., and Mt. Pleasant, in all its various branches, standings and bearings, I flatter myself my remarks may be taken as facts, founded on a long and chequered experience. After the pertinent and judicious remarks made, by G. W. Gill upon silk raising, and published in the Western Farmer and Gardener, I should betray weakness were I to add any thing relative to that department. Still, as a pioneer in the silk business, I have many opponents to combat with, and much prejudice to remove, that stand as barriers to its more extended operations. Many good but mistaken gentleman have said to me. "What is the use of raising silk in this country? we can never get it wove as in France and England." I would invite those gentlemen to come to Mt. Pleasant and see six looms in operation on plain silk, flowering silks, silk velvet, &c., &c. From this place I would entreat them to take a trip to George Rapp's establishment, Economy, Pa., where my son superintends, and behold what an eminence they have arrived at. Neither France nor England can surpass their machinery or silk fabrics. About four years back I put in action for them 2 looms, silk velvet, and hat plush: now they have 6; and 18 months back there was not a loom in Mt. Pleasant, and now 6. Surely this must convince the most perverse and obstinate mind, of the practicability of weaving up our own raising. What has been done here and at Economy, can be done almost anywhere in the Union. We have lately purchased a considerable quantity of reeled silk from G. G. Stockly, Esq., Cleaveland, Ohio; his production speaks volumes of praise upon his exertions. We have purchased considerable quantities from various parts, but his exceeds all. For 30 years in England, I have had pass through my hands 200 to 250 lbs of silk weekly. (I appeal for the truth of this to Wm. Orange, Esq. Cincinnatti) from a Bengal single, to a Piedmont; and I do uot hesitate in giving the preference to the Cleveland produce. Upon the whole, from what we have raised ourselves and bought of others, I am constrained to give the decided preference to the American silk; and when the worms are fed upon the Italian or Multicaulis mulberries, the silk excels all I have seen from France, China, Italy or Piedmont, in scent and brilliancy. I am aware the loss of scent or fragrance in England, may be accounted for by the length of voyage and the silk oftentimes exposed to the saline air: but the brilliancy I believe is peculiar to American alone. This ought to be a great encouragement to those who have commenced, to persevere, and an inducement to others to begin, knowing ultimately it will be a source of wealth to this country; and if our state legislatures will give the silk raisers their smiles and encouragement, and Congress will afford its parental protection, we have nought to fear from any foreign competitor, or competitors. Let them try their worst, or do their best, they never can compete with us. I am happy to find you are about commencing this season; I wish you, sir, success and prosperity, and have no doubt of it; for success is sure if conducted in a proper manner.

We purahase cocoons to any amount, provided the crysalis is killed by suffocation, either by camphor, carbonated gas from charcoal, or sulphur; the latter I prefer, as sulphur is congenial to silk, and it is done much quicker and cheaper, —great injury has been done to good cocoons by baking them and steaming; the former draws out the staple from the silk—the latter causes it to flake off when reeling. This ought to be universally known. Cocoons perforated by the miller, and doubled and indented, are useless to us,—reeled silk we also buy; but the article we want for satins, velvet, &c., & must have exceed from 8 to 10 fibres. All our own silk we reel, we never suffer more than 6 to 8, for one thread; for this kind of silk we give the Phila. price—from $5, 50 to $6. 00 per lb. 16 oz.—Cocoons, as before named, $4. 00 per bushel; if flossed, the measure struck off; if not, piled up in the form of a cone. We have not yet concluded as respects having an agent in Cincinnati, but as we thing of increasing the number of looms shortly, we shall establish something of the kind you name. But this need not be any hindrance, as we are constantly receiving from all parts, cocoons packed in flour barrels, directed to John Bayne, Esq., Portland, near, Warren, Jefferson Co., O., for G. W. Gill. Portland is on the river bank, 7 miles from Mt. Pleasant. Mr. Gill's wagons go to that place every day, and bring home what's there. When you first start probably you may not be able to reel so fine as I have described. Should the silk be fuller, we will purchase it, say $4. 50 to $5. 50 as the silk may turn out,—we have no eggs to spare, as we intend this season to raise 2 millions of worms—the single crop worm, will only produce 1 crop, but the two crop worms, 2 crops prebabiy 3; but the latter crop is not of much account.—I strongly recommend Dennis's Silk Manual to your notice; it is the most coincise and judicious treaties I have seen; the price is 25 cts. We expect some on for sale shortly. The space for worms is entirely discretional, as some worms are much larger than others; but there is nothing lost by giving plenty of room: keep them clean, well ventilated, and never touch them with the hand if possible. I recommend the Burlington feeding frame above all others. Thus, sir, I have endeavored to answer your inquiries; any further information you need; dont be backward to write. I have upon the average 8 letters to answer every week, from Nashville to Maryland. Every state almost, seems alive to the silk business. Any remarks you may see calculated to encourage and stimulate, or the whole if you please, is at your disposal to publish in the Western Farmer; my respects to those gentleman the Editors.

Yours, JOHN FOX.

From the Western Farmer & Gardener.

CATALPA POSTS.

Mt. Carmel, Ill., March 8, 1841.

General Harrison some years ago, from his residence on the Wabash, had entertained a high opinion of the vast importance to the farmers of Ohio and Kentucky, and of the great West generally, growing the Catalpa or Catawba tree for post and rail fences: his remarks were published in a Cincinnatti paper. Mr. Jefferson, in his notes on Virginia, or in some other, published forty or fifty years ago, states that this tree was a native of the Wabash valley. In 1816, '17, I found them here; but no one, not apprized of the fact, would take them at first to be the Catalpa or Catawba tree, as growing wild they look like the Linn.—That the high recommendation given by Gen. Harrison of the timber, is correct, I shall now state, that on yesterday passing the farm of Mr. Samuel Rigg, living three miles west of this, I was shown a post fixed for a barn, and a roof formed and covered ever; yet the post had shot out limbs; all but one was cut away, which formed a shade for the stock, as well as a post to sustain the barn! Another man, about three miles from Mr. Rigg, had fixed a similar post for a gate, which has grown into a *tree*, and no trace of the post is left! A tree, fallen across a creek near Vincinnes, has formed a bridge for the French for 70 years!—Mr. Rigg informed me that his barn post had lain exposed to the weather for several weeks before it was planted.

Discovering that the mere posts of the Catalpa, Catawba, or Warhoo, as it is as it is called, takes root, I do most seriously recommend to the farmers of Ohio and Kentucky, to secure a sufficient number of them to plant a grove; when planted close they grow well; and as the eccrentric old man, Joe Craig of Kentucky, said of the black Locust, that will "last forever," for he had tried it "three times;" our Wabash *Warhoo* will out go his Locusts as to durability; for we have found logs, which from appearance had reposed for *ages*, yet sound, and good timber, lasting much longer than my worthy yet eccentric old friend lived on earth. But I have no doubt but he has reached a better region than Kentucky, however highly that was extolled by him while living!

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY—HOW TO RENDER WOOD IMPERISHABLE AND INCOMBUSTIBLE.

From the Gennesee Farmer.

Messrs. Editors:—A discovery of the highest importance appears to have beeu made in France, by which the long-sought prererva tion of wood from ordinary decay, combustion, &c., is finally achieved. This has been done by introducing into the wood itself, through the agency of vegetable life, the substances which contribute to these important ends.

It has, indeed, been long known to amateur botanists, that the flowers of house plants, &c., may be colored by the introduction of coloring matter into the organnization of the plants; and that the flavors of fruits may sometimes be injured or destroyed by liquids poured upon the ground, at the root of the tree, at the season of their ripening, which are subsequently imbibed into the vegetable circulation. But these isolated facts have hitherto remained with their possessors, without any useful suggestions having been drawn from them, like a multitude of other scientific truths, which only require to be *aplied to the arts*, to produce the most important results of usefelness to mankind.

The announcement of this discovery comes to us under circumstances which leave little doubt of its truth. The discoverer having submitted his results to the Academy of Sciences, of Paris, a commission was named from that highly scientific body, to investigate the subject, and make a report thereon. In the hope of usefulness, I have made a translation of this report, (omitting some portions, as irrelvant to my purpose,) for your paper, which I subjoin; deeming it highly important that experiments should be extensively made, the ensuing summer, in conformity with the discoverers' process, as shown in the report. It would be no trifling result to secure timber, in all situations, from decay, and our buildings from conflagration, at a cost so trifling as to be within the reach of all.

A physician of Bordeaux, Mons. Boncherie, has arrived at the all-important result of rendering the tissue of wood almost entirely unattackable by those causes of destruction to which it is ordinarily subsubject; and at the same time his processes render it much more suitable to the various purposes to which it is applicable in the arts.

A commission to the Academy of Sciences, at Paris, having been named, to examine the subject, Mons. Dumas, in the name of the commission, made in December last the following report, as the result of its investigations:

"The Academy has charged Messrs. Arago, de Mibrel, Poncelet, Gambey, Audoin, Boussaingault, and myself, with the examination of the Memoir of Mons. Boucherie, relative to the preservation of wood, the following is the result of our labors:

"The Academy has already examined, with the most lively interest, the preparations of the author; and it has before it, at this moment, pieces of these so remarkable that the task of its commission is thereby greatly abridgod. Mons. Boucherie proposes to render wood much more durable, to preserve its elasticity, to prevent the voriations in volume which it experiences through the agencies of dry and humid atmospheres, to diminish its combustibleness, to augment its tenacity and its hardiness; and, finally, to communicate to it various and durable colors and odors.

"To assume that all these exigencies have been satisfied, and that this has been accomplished by methods, cheap, simple and new; and consummated through the agency of substances that are common, and which bear but a low price, is to fix the attention of the Academy, in a few words, upon the important features of the subject we are charged to examine.

"For the purpose of penetrating an entire tree with preservative, coloring, or other matter, the author has recourse to no mechanical, costly or complicated means; he finds all the force of which he has need, in that process, within the tree itself,—the same force by which its own sap is elevated and distributed through its various parts. This, alone, suffices to convey from of the trunk to the very leaves all the liquids which he wishes to iutroduce, provided that these are maintained within certain limits of chemical concentration. If a tree be felled, while in full sap and leaf, and the base of the trunk be at once plunged into a vat or reservoir containing the liquid which it is desired the timber shall imbibe, that liquid in the space of a few days, will ascend to the very leaves, and penetrate every part of the tissue, except the heart of the tree, which in some instances of great age and hardness, or imperfect vitality, resists the absorption, and is not penetrated.

"It is not entirely necessary that the tree shall retain all its branches and leaves during this process, although it is important that those of the extreme top should remain uninjured.

"It is not important that the tree shall remain standing during the operation, which would not always be convenient: it may be felled, and its but submurged in the liquid it is destined to absorb, when this will find its way to every part.

"On the other hand, the tree may be treated standing, if this be preferred; for it is only necessary that cavities be cut near the bottom, or the trunk be partially severed by a saw, and that the parts thus prepared be put in contact with the liquid to ensure the desired result.

"This species of penetration, or absorption, which is effected in a few days, without either difficulty or labor, is, as well be readily seen, wholly different from any means hitherto employed.—Previous methods are well known to consist of forcing the ingredients into the pores of the wood, by powerful pressure or of introducing them by the prolonged and imperfect action of liquids prepared at much cost, in huge vats, in which the timber is kept suomerged.

"The new and ingenious process of Mens. Boucherie has placed at the command of industry an immense *natural* force, which enables it, without cost, to conduct into the most delicate vegetable tissues all soluble suhstances which it may be desirable to deposite there.

"If the author has received, in a simple and ready manner, the great problem which he at first proposed, he has not manifested less sagacity in his choice of the substances which he has adopted for fulfilling all the indications announced above.

"To augment the duration and hardness of wood, and to oppose its decay, either dry or humid, the crude pyrolignite of iron is to be introduced into its tissue. This substance is wisely chosen, because crude pyroligneous acid is produced in all the forests, in the process of manufacturing charcoal; and it is easy to convert this into the pyrolignite of iron, by simply putting it, even when cold, in contact with scraps of cold iron; and because, also, that the liquid, thus prepared, contains much creosote, which, independently of the salt of iron, itself possesses the property of hardening, and of guarding against the attacks of decomposition, as well as the destruction caused by insects, wood and timber employed in constructions and for other purposes.

"Authentic experiments tried in the celiars of Bordeaux, upon hoops, prepared by the author, have proved in the most conclusive manner, the prolonged duration of wood, after subjection to his process. The ordinary hoops fell to powder, upon the least application of force to them, while these of the same age, which had been subjected to his preparation, were as solid as upon the first day they were placed there.

"If he wishes to preserve the elasticity of wood, and to render it less combustible, the author has found in the employment of chlorine with an earthy base, the means of accomplishing these ends. Ever preoccupied with the thought that his discoveries, to be most serviceable, must receive universal practical application, the author has not contented himself with the employment of the chlorate of calcium, notwithstanding its great cheapness but he has annulyzed the sea water from the pits of the salt works, which is without value, and by so doing has obtained therefrom all the qualities necessary to his purpose. The different woods prepared by his saline solutions preserve their flexibility, even after several years' exposure to the air; and thin sheets of this wood were twisted into spirals, first in one direction then in the contrary one, without their suffering the slightest fracture or injury of any kind. Exposed to the air these thin pieces were neither split or otherwise injured, however dry they became; and, finally, they were so far incombustibly as to be incapable of sustaining or propagating conflagration.

"To those highly useful properties, which the constructions of ships, bridges, dwellings, &c., will readily appreciate, and turn to profit, the author has joined others, less important certainly, put still new, and not without interest, in the arts. He *colors* woods in clouds so varied and casual as to promise much utility, by the employment of his metnod in ornamenting the most ordinary woods, so as to fit them for the fabrication of furniture, and for other purposes of ornamental use.

"The specimens of this kind, now before the Academy, relieve us from all details upon this head: and it therefore suffices for us to say:

"That the pyrolignite of iron, alone, gives a very beautiful brown tint;

"That by causing tannin to be absorbed by the tree, after the pyrolignite of iron, the mass of the tree is rendered black, while some portions exhibit tints of blue, black and gray;

"That by introducing, first, the pyrolignite of iron, and afterwards the prussiate of potassa, a fine Prussian blue is produced;

"That by introducing, successively, the acetate of lead and the chromate of potassa, a lemon, or chromate of lead color is produced;

"That by introducing into the same trunk, the pyrolignite of iron, prussiate, and acetate of lead, and chromate of potassa, the wood assumes a series of clouds of blue, green, yellow and brown, which collectively produce the most varied and pleasing effect.

"The colors and shades may be varied almost to infinity, according to taste or fancy: as chemistry is sufficiently rich, in agents of this nature, to satisfy the wants, and even the caprices of the most fastidious.

"We have said nothing here, of the communication of odors to woods, by impregnations of this kind, because this is an application easily comprehended without explanation; and also because it is too strictly limited to the demands of luxury to be placed in the same scale of importance with the valuable results which we have above enumerated.

"It is evident, from the bare announcement of these results, that they have not been, and could not be, the result of accidental discovery. The author has deduced them from simple ideas; and they are the fruit of long continued and laborious studies and experiments.

The commission closed their labors with a recommendation that a copy of their report be transmitted to the ministers of agriculture and commerce, of the public works and the marine, of finances and of war, which recommendation was adopted by the Academy.

At a subsequent sitting of the Academy that body received notice from the ministers of war and finance, that they had recommended the method of Dr. Boucherie to the special attention of the commissioners of engineers, the artillery, and the woods and forests. This shows the importance that is attached to the discovery, by public functionaries, and by the first scientific men of this, or any age, residing upon the spot where its results have been witnessed and investigated.

R. W. HASKINS.

Buffalo, March 22, 1841.

To the President of the Agricultural Society of South Carolina.—

GENTLEMEN—I ask your attention to the following resolution, adopted by the State Agricultural Society, at its last meeting, held at Columbia:

That the District and Parish Societies be invited to present to this Society, at its annual meeting, an essay or memoir on the subject to which their notice may respectively be drawn by the President, whose business it shall be to designate the topics on which information is needed."

There is, perhaps, no member of the confederacy more dependent on agriculture than South-Carolina, and none where that important branch of industry is more neglected. Of the States composing the Union, twenty have deemed it necessary to aid the cause of the husbanman by legislative enactments. South-Carolina Has so far steadily refused to lend even the influence of her name to the upholding of that pursuit on which her wealth and prosperity so intimately depend. On this exigency, when, too, the moral and political elements have assumed a sombre hue, it becomes the southern tiller of the soil to arouse from his lethargy, and to direct his efforts to the devising of means best calculated to promote the true interest of his vacation.—Accurate knowledge concerning the defects of our agricultural practices, and the remedies that are accessable and certain, is what is now mainly wanted.—In furtherance of this object, and the better to attain the end substantially aimed at by the Society I now respectfully submit theselection of the topics for the essays to your better judgement, in the confident hope that subjects may be chosen, adapted to localities, as will afford light enough to guide us to the goal of useful and profitable labour.

It is conceded that there exist ruinous errors in management, and great neglect of means and facilities for agricultural improvement. The fault is too common for the planter to look exclusively to the annual income from his crops, without taking into the estimate at the year's end whether his plantation, regarded as a permanent investment of capital, has been improved or deteriorated.

Learned or obstuse dessertations on husbandry, although they would assist in bringing about correct opinions on many points perhaps assential to our calling, are not, at this time, the surest means far accomplishing our purpose. Plain practical essays alone, the necessity of the occasoin, imperatively requires. If the service designated in the above resolation be faithfully performed. I scarcely need say to you, that an impulse will be given to agriculture, in this State, of vast and permanent utility. May I add, that this is a cause in which all can embark. Here there are no collission of interestor of opinion to overcome, and no motives at variance with private feelings, or puhlic inentives to action.

I have the honnor to be, very respeatfully,
Your obedient servant,
WHITEMARSH B. SEABROOK,
President S. A. S. of So. Ca.

Edisto Island; June 14, 1841.

Editors of papers, friendly to the objects of this circular, are requested to give it an insertion.

REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL.

Post Office Department, May 29, 1841.

Sir: The arrangement of business at, and the manner of returns to, the General Post Office, forbid a detailed report of its operations at the approaching session of Congress. I have, however, felt it my duty, at this time, to call public attention to the present state of its finances, so far as I have yet been able to learn their condition.

When first entering upon my official duties, my attention was forced to the constant demands for payment beyond the ability of the Depurtment to discharge; and with a view to ascertain, as nearly as might be, its undisputed liabilities and probable means, on the 27th day of March last a letter was addressed to the Auditor of the Treasury for the Post Office Department, requesting from him information on those subjects. A copy of which letter, marked A, is herewith submitted. Such statements have not been furnished, for reasons clearly set forth in a letter from the Auditor, dated the 26th day of May instant; of which a copy is hereto appended, Marked B.

It was also important to learn, without delay, what were the pressing liabilities and what the active funds of the Department. For this purpose, directions were given to the chief clerk to state the amount due to contractors anterior to and for the quarter ending the 31st December, 1840, so far as they had been reported by the Auditor, and also the amount in deposite, subject to draft, for the discharge of such arrearages. His report is herewith submitted, marked C.

By an examination of that statement, it will be seen that there was due and unpaid to contractors, of ascertained balances, on the first day of January last, the sum of *four hundred and forty-seven thousand and seventy-nine dollars*, ($447,079,) a considerable portion of which has been paid from the revenues of the quarter ending on the 31st March. A report from the Auditor upon all the outstanding contracts will undoubtedly increase this amount of indebtedness to a total exceeding *half a million* of dollars. In addition to which, heavy demands are frequently made on the Department upon unliquidated claims. Of such demands, no notice can be taken at this time, nor is it proper that an opinion as to their justice should be now expressed.

Under these circumstances, two questions naturally present themselves; How is the Department to be sustained under its present embarrassments? and, What are its financial hopes for the future?

As no estimates, upon which can be based an answer to the first inquiry, can be presented until a full statement of the balances due from postmasters shall have been reported by the Auditor, it is passed, with the single remark, that, although it can hardly be doubted that a large aggregate sum will be found due, it is to be feared that, from the small amount of most of such separate balances, scattered throughout this wide-spread nation, the want of responsibility in many of these offcers and many of their securities, and the lapse of time since these balances accrued, but an inconsiderable part of the amount actually due will ever be received. It therefore remains for Congress to determine whether the amount now due to contractors shall be paid from the National Treasury, or whether this Department shall struggle on with its present embarrassments, consuming its daily accruing revenues in the partial payment of old debts, and still leaving large balances which it has not the ability to discharge.

Notwithstanding the heavy increased expenditure consequent upon the act of 7th July, 1838, and although, instead of the supposed gradual increase of revenue, the receipts for the quarter ending 31st March last present, as compared with the corresponding quarter of the year before, a diminution of more than 6 per cent. still the Department would probably find sufficient relief in its future operations from the decrease of prices which, it may be calculated, will be hereafter demanded upon most of the routes, were it not for the continually increasing exactions in other branches of the service.

To present this subject in its most intelligible form, the First Assistant Postmaster General has prepared a tabular view of recent proposals, that comparison may be made between the amount of present bids and the sums now paid for mail service upon the same routes.—This table is hereto annexed, marked D.

On examination of this statement, it will be seen that, in some cases, the amount demanded by railroad companies for transportation of the mails is more than two hundred per cent. higher than is paid for coach service, upon roads forming connecting links between different railroad companies, upon the same main route, and that too where the night service upon the railroads is less than that performed in coaches. Such demands deserve more consideration from the fact that, whilst at the recent lettings in New York and in the six Eastern States the accepted service by coaches and other modes of conveyance has been secured at an average saving of twenty-two per cent. upon the contracts of 1837, there are but few instances where the demands of incorporated companies have not been increased in such manner as imposed upon me the necessity of suspending the contracts. Nor is the extravagant price demanded for mail transportation upon railroads the only manner in which these incorporations affect the revenue of this Department. The facilities secured by this mode of conveyance for sending letters by private hands very seriously diminish the receidts of the offices upon