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PLANTING AND CULTIVATING SORGHUM.

In the treatise on "Sorgho" of Isaac A. Hedges—who is said to have been the pioneer and practical experimenter with the Chinese sugar-cane in the West—he states that sufficient attention has not usually been given to the preparation of the soil and planting of the seed. The soil should be ploughed very deep, as the roots sometimes penetrate three feet downwards. A free use of lime and wood-ashes is advantageous to the crop. It has been recommended to plant the seed in rows running north and south, but as the westerly winds are most destructive in laying the standing crop, rows running east and west should be made, because they will stand up much better against such gales. The Chinese cane may be transplanted like cabbage plants, and early crops may be raised by starting hot beds and transplanting in May or June. Or when the seed is planted in the field, missing hills may be supplied with plants taken from a prepared bed. Every farmer who plants sorghum should pursue this method. If planted in hills, these should be about four feet apart; if in drills the seeds should be about six inches apart. Careful planting is the first important step to secure an early and a paying crop.

Upon the subject of treating the seed of the imphee Leonard Wray, who introduced it from South Africa, says:—"I have sometimes soaked it for twenty-four hours in warm water previous to planting, in order to expedite its germination, as seeds so treated will in warm moist weather, be up in four days afterwards; whereas, being planted (during showery weather) without this assistance, they usually take six or seven days for sprouting; and if dry weather sets in after planting, it will be ten or fourteen days before they appear above ground. The practice of soaking I hold to be a good one." An argument in favor of soaking the seed is also advanced by Mr. Hedges; he says:—"I would especially caution farmers against planting seed without first having tested its capability of germination; then having satisfied themselves on this point, let care be taken not to plant too thickly." Shallow planting is also recommended. In no case should the seed be set more than an inch in depth, and half an inch is sufficient. When set deep the seed is liable to rot should rain occur immediately after planting. In all cases it should be planted in ridges—never in furrows, so that it may receive greater warmth from the sunshine and not be so liable to be saturated with moisture during wet weather. About from eight to ten seeds are recommended for each hill.

After the plants of the cane are up, an occasional top-dressing of plaster and lime is suggested by Mr. Hedges. The best crop of sorghum we ever examined in New York was planted on loamy soil sloping to the south, and the plants had received a top-dressing of manure from the hen-house. A prize was awarded to this crop by one of the county agricultural societies. The custom of hilling around the rows, as in corn culture, is advantageous; and early cultivation between the rows to keep down the weeds is positively necessary to secure a good crop.

THE *Genesee Farmer* says:—In 1816 half a pound of hops to a barrel of beer was deemed sufficient; now, from five to eight pounds are used in making a barrel of "pale ale."

SENSELESS NOMENCLATURE.

An exchange paper says that a new name has been invented and attached to a textile fabric introduced some months ago; the title in question is "Fibrilia." When are we to have a reform on the subject of proper names? When will people learn that a high sounding cognomen confers no desirable eminence, nor any value upon its recipient. Every person has an undoubted right to bestow any hideous appellative he may fancy upon his children or his personal property of whatever description, but there is not the slightest propriety in tormenting the public eye and ear with titles without sense or euphony. The name of a new fabric is something that will endure forever, provided the fabric is good; and how, under such circumstances, an inventor could consent to baptize the product of his ingenuity with an appellation as senseless as it is absurd, seems incredible. If he have a good surname let him bestow that upon the fabric, but let us have no "Fibrilia." We read only the other day that the good citizens of Washoe (Nebraska) had decided to call a new township in their territory by the name of "Argentum City." Whereupon a grave discussion ensued in the local papers as to whether the title belonged to an ancient city, or was like some stocks in that portion of the world—a fancy article; the difficulty being finally settled by the decision that *argentum* was the Latin term for "silver," and consequently applicable.

Synonyms of proper names are not uncommon. Two steamers recently running upon Lake Erie, both belonging to one company and one line, had similar names—the one was the *City of Buffalo*, and the other the *Western Metropolis*. The word "metropolis" might apply to any collocation of shanties between here and the Rocky Mountains; in this case, however, an obvious honor was intended to the incorporated city of Buffalo itself.

The worst evil of this system of applying names indiscriminately is that the towns they are bestowed upon are generally anything but suggestive of the titles which dignify them. "Silver City" can well be imagined, there is no necessity to describe it; so also "Dead Man's Bar," "Shirt-tail Bend," "Murderer's Gulch," and a thousand others—all hideous and repulsive—adorn and "beautify" some of the most degraded places in California. In the State of Connecticut there are little hamlets, or nuclei of houses on the outskirts of large villages, which have the most singular titles. "Macedonia" and "Pig-tail," are the names of two opposite points of one village in the State alluded to; and "Skunk's Misery" and "Hardscrabble," in New Jersey, are titles expressive, doubtless, of the refinement of the inhabitants who dwell therein. It is only a short time since nearly every other steamer in the mercantile and naval service, and at least one locomotive on every road in the country, was called either an *Arctic* or a *Niagara*, or a *Mohawk*, and it is with great pleasure that we observe that most of our new gun-boats have names which reflect credit upon those who suggested them. Our country is full of beautiful Indian names, sole relics of those mighty races who once held undisputed sway and dominion over the broad acres which compose it; but even these are only limitedly adopted, and we hear such gross terms as "Porkopolis" applied to one of the most attractive cities on the continent.

If we are at a loss for nomenclature, and must have some tongue-furling high-sounding name to confer upon our towns, steamers, horses, or what not, let us at least avoid such solecisms as have been enumerated, and consult the ancient mythologies for appellatives, at once beautiful and suggestive. Good names are to be had there for the seeking, and there are but few that have not the sweetness and musical terminations of the Greek tongue clinging as firmly to them as the vine to the oak. Let us adopt these for ships and locomotives at least, if for nothing else, if we cannot have our native Indian designations, and we shall be spared the pain of having our ears shocked by any such barbarisms as the ones hereinbefore mentioned.

SOME silk-growers in the south of France have determined to import from China and Japan an immense quantity of silkworm spawn, in order to improve the native breed, which is deteriorated by chronic disease.

APPRENTICES AND EMPLOYERS.

In days—happily for the credit of mankind—long since passed, an apprentice was regarded chiefly as a fit subject for the abuse and spleen of the hard-hearted master. No matter how trivial the offense or how slight the shortcoming, the word and the blow, and oftener the latter without the admonition, followed closely on the transgression. The life of the apprentice was a constant scene of starvation, overwork, and personal indignity, and the press of remote periods had usually a column or so, in which an individual was depicted as fleeing from the wrath behind him, with a bundle and a stick—his sole earthly possessions. "Walked away, too lazy to run," was the common heading, and "one cent reward" was offered for the apprehension of the fellow, as the most caustic satire that could be uttered respecting the value of the fugitive's services.

Hogarth thought it not beneath his eminent talent to illustrate the career of the idle apprentice, and he did it in such a powerful manner that it awakened universal attention. The regeneration of the apprentice system cannot, of course, be traced to the publication of those cartoons, but it is very certain that, in this country, a much needed and desirable reform has been gradually inaugurated, until it may be safely said that the artisan's assistant is more favored here than elsewhere. From the position of a slave and a hireling, he is elevated to an equality with his master, or more properly speaking, his employer, for in this country no man is master except the slaveholder. From a companionship with low associates and lewd fellows of the baser sort, the apprentice has been rescued, and now there are few places of honor and trust to which a faithful one may not aspire.

In former times, when the arts were as yet undeveloped, the idea prevailed that a trade which limited the number of its members enhanced its value in the community, so that by observing the law rigidly, the organization could demand any compensation it chose. Were it possible to do this, if the laws of supply and demand were variable to suit circumstances, and if the seasons of the year were all equally busy, then some such arrangement might be feasible, but it is not, for the reasons set forth. When apprentices were bound for a certain period, they almost invariably ran away before its expiration. The young man seeking to acquire mechanical knowledge is no longer bound, legally, to a stated period, but enters the handicraft he chooses, in most cases, of his free will and accord. He signs no parchment rolls, but his agreement is none the less binding or compulsory upon him on that account. Certain instances have come to our knowledge wherein young men have broken faith with their employers, and violated the confidence reposed in them, and these cases are the more flagrant because, in pursuing such a course, the apprentices damaged their own characters for integrity and veracity. When a manufacturer takes a youth into his service, he does it at a considerable loss for the first two or three years, expecting to remunerate himself in the closing term of the novice's education, by the skill he may have acquired. When, therefore, the apprentice violates his verbal pledge, he is, in effect, dishonest, because he carries away with him a portion of experience for which he has rendered no equivalent. Extraordinary cases sometimes happen, no doubt, which admit of much extenuation, such as those wherein the self-respect of the apprentice will not brook the indignities to which he is subjected, but these are of rare occurrence, and we mention them with hesitation lest we furnish a specious excuse for some young man desiring to defraud his employer of his time. Our manufacturing mechanics and firms are, as a class, extremely liberal in their provisions for the welfare of the young men under their care, as it is for their interest to be; and we admonish all young men who are dissatisfied with their condition and treatment, to remonstrate, if necessary, quietly and respectfully, and take in all cases the advice of those competent to decide for them, before taking hasty steps which they will be sure to regret hereafter.

COMMANDER WORDEN, whose eyesight is yet weak from injuries received on the *Monitor*, has been ordered to New York to assist in fitting out iron-clads.