

New Crops For Uncle Sam.

FRUITS, GRAINS AND TREES WHICH WILL ADD MILLIONS TO OUR NATIONAL WEALTH.

Fresh Dates for American Dinners—The Story of the Naval Orange—Mangoes and Mangosteens for Porto Rico—Jordan Almonds—Bamboo Forests for the Yazoo Valley—Japanese Paper Plants and What They Will Do for the United States—New Things in Vegetables and Clovers—A Talk With a Seed-Hunting Globe-Trotter About His Work and the Results.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

WASHINGTON, D. C.—"Fresh dates will come day by day as common in this country as bananas are now."

These were the words of David G. Fairchild, the agricultural explorer, who recently returned from Persia, where he was sent to look up date culture in the interest of the United States. Mr. Fairchild is one of the first, and I may say, the chief of his profession. Educated as a botanist, he worked for a time as such in the department of Agriculture, and then resigned to go to Buitenzorg, Java, and study plants and fungus diseases in the botanical garden there, the largest and finest garden of the world. The expenses of this trip were furnished by Mr. Barbour Lathrop of Chicago, at whose suggestion and under whose patronage Mr. Fairchild later on began to hunt the world for new plants for the United States.

PHILANTHROPY IN SEEDS.

Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy runs in libraries, Stanford's millions were poured out in his great California University, and John Rockefeller's surplus—a small part of it, I fear—goes to the Baptist Church and his famous Chicago College. Barbour Lathrop, although a poor man in comparison with these three, has devoted his surplus to a pursuit which may result in greater value to the United States than all the others. Born rich, his life before he met Mr. Fairchild had been largely devoted to traveling up and down the world for his own study and amusement. A typical American, with practical business sense, he investigated the vegetation of other lands, and as he went conceived the idea that many foreign plants might be profitably grown in the United States. He had been traveling 20 years before he came to the conclusion to put this thought into action, and it was with this idea that he sent Mr. Fairchild to Buitenzorg, and later took him with him as a plant expert, and traveled with him to the continent, seeking new seeds and plants for Uncle Sam. All this was done without cost to the government, save that the results were distributed through the agricultural department.

Almost at the same time Secy. Wilson became interested in the subject. Indeed, he had taken it up about the time that Mr. Lathrop began his active investigations, and since then the work of the two men has gone on side by side. The secretary has established a bureau for the introduction of valuable plants and seeds, and he has today a number of agricultural explorers traveling over the world at the expense of the department. At present Mr. Fairchild is here at Washington in charge of this bureau working directly under the secretary, although most of his work as an explorer has been under the direction of Mr. Lathrop and in connection with him. I first met Mr. Fairchild in 1897, just before I started out on a newspaper trip of 25,000 miles, which was to cover the South American continent, and at his request I sent him corn and other seeds from about Lake Titicaca and other parts of the Andes. I afterward tramped over

his tracks in Siam and Java, and I found him just ahead of me in Sumatra, New Guinea, Australia and the Fiji Islands. Since then he has explored South America, has gone up and down the coast of Africa, and lately to Arabia and the Persian gulf to Bagdad, the land of dates and the "Arabian Nights."

DATES FOR EVERYONE.

"Yes," said Mr. Fairchild, "we will have fresh dates, and no one who has not tasted the date fresh from the tree knows what that means. Dates are of as many varieties as apples, and some are so delicious that they will form one of the favorite fruits of our tables. We have introduced date palms on the high dry lands of the southwest, and now know that they can be as well grown in some parts of Arizona and California as in the Desert of Sahara and Mesopotamia. Indeed, President Roosevelt and members of his cabinet have eaten dates thus grown in America, and we have men in the west who are going into date raising as a business. The new irrigation works which are being established will open up a large area of possible date country, and dates may in the future be one of our most profitable fruit crops."

"How much will dates pay to the acre?"

"Mr. Walter T. Swingle, who investigated date culture in the Sahara, estimates that 4,000 pounds can be annually produced on an acre of land, and that after setting aside a good amount for expenses the net profit from them will be \$150 per acre. As it is now, we use only about 18,000,000 pounds of dates a year, but if they were raised here and sold fresh the consumption would be enormously increased and the profits can hardly be estimated."

THE SEEDLESS DATE AND NAVAL ORANGE.

"We have introduced a number of different kinds of dates into the west," continued Mr. Fairchild, "and we are raising some as delicious as any I have tasted in Persia. I have heard lately, however, of a seedless date, and am trying to get suckers to plant in Arizona or in California. So far I have not been able to get them, but there is no reason why it should not exist. No one knew of naval oranges until an American woman, traveling along the coast of Brazil, was given a seedless orange. She asked about it, and was told that it was cultivated by the people of that state. When she came to Washington she called at the department of agriculture and told Mr. Saunders about it. The old gentleman was very polite, and although he evidently doubted the statement, he sent down to Bahia, asking about this orange and for slips of the tree. Some came, and they were planted in the department garden. They grew into trees, and upon them were produced the first naval oranges ever seen in the United States. Slips of the tree were sent to California and Florida, and our enormous seedless orange crop of today is the result. Not long ago a delegation of California fruit growers visited Washington. They called at the department garden, and one of them said:

"Those naval orange trees have given more to the United States than the cost of the Agricultural department since its beginning."

NEW FRUITS FOR PORTO RICO.

"I should think that such things

might be grown in Porto Rico, Mr. Fairchild," said I. "That is a dry country," said Mr. Fairchild. "But the naval orange can undoubtedly be grown there. Porto Rico is a virgin field for plant introduction. We are now staying the tropical fruits to see what will grow there, and I think it is fair to say that that island will some time be the tropical fruit garden for the United States. It is not far from New York, and the shipping facilities will grow better and better. One of the fruits which we are introducing into Porto Rico is the mango. We are scouring the world for the best varieties and are planting them in various parts of Porto Rico. I don't know that you realize that there is as much difference in mangoes as there is in peaches and apples. I have seen some in East Africa as large as a small cantaloupe, finely flavored and delicious. There is a mango with very thin seeds grown in the Philippines, and there are other mangoes with different flavors in other parts of the tropics. A few years ago bananas were more common in the United States than they are now in Germany. Mangoes will some day be eaten all over this country. It is not true, as has been stated, that the fruit has so much juice that the only place one can eat it is in the bath tub."

"Another fruit which we are setting out in Porto Rico is the mangosteen, which grows in the East Indies, and which is the delight of all travelers. We shall have a large quantity of trees planted and hope that the arrangements will be such that the fruit can

be exported to the American cities. I have kept mangosteens three weeks on a steamer, and in cold storage chambers they could be preserved fresh for a month. It is only about four days from San Juan to New York, and there is no reason why the fruit could not be shipped from one place to the other."

SALTED ALMONDS.

"Are we doing anything in nut culture?"

"Yes," said Mr. Fairchild. "I spent some time a year or so ago looking for almonds that might be successfully grown in California and similar regions. I found that the Jordan almond was the best variety for the salted or burnt almonds which are served on our dinner tables. We are now spending a million and one-half dollars annually for such almonds, and the demand is rapidly increasing. This Jordan almond grows in the mountainous regions of southeastern Spain. I visited that country and brought back a great lot of almonds bearing trees. These were sent by the agricultural department to California and used to bud and graft thousands of young trees there. Some of the trees are already producing, and the probability is that we shall grow all we need. These Jordan almonds have hard shells. The women and children of the Spanish mountain villages crack the nuts and take out the kernels for shipment. When they are thoroughly introduced here cracking machines will do this work."

"Another nut which we are introducing," said Mr. Fairchild, "is the cashew nut, which grows in different

parts of Africa and elsewhere. It is served roasted and will some day be far more liked than the peanut is now. I think the cashew tree can be grown in Porto Rico."

BAMBOO TREES FOR UNCLE SAM.

"One of the most important projects in this line," continued Mr. Fairchild, "is the introduction of the Japanese bamboo for the gulf states, Florida and southern Texas. We have imported thousands of bamboos and have placed them in the hands of a few selected men, who, it is thought, will be capable of handling them. We hope that commercial groves of bamboo timber can be grown throughout the south, and they will be as profitable there as they are in Japan."

"Give me some idea of the bamboos of Japan and the money in them?" I asked.

"It would take a book to tell the story," said Mr. Fairchild. "There are many varieties, used for all sorts of purposes. The bamboo, you know, is a giant grass, which grows not only in the tropics, but also in the upper regions of the Andes and Himalayas, which are covered with deep snow in the winter. The plant is found almost everywhere in the Philippines, and the different varieties may be introduced into Porto Rico and Hawaii. Some of the bamboos have edible shoots, which look like giant asparagus sprouts, and may be cooked and eaten in the same way. They are a delicious vegetable and will some day have a place in the American market. Other bamboos are grown entirely for the timber and for use in manufacturing. I think the timber species can be grown along the Yazoo river in Mississippi, and that they would be a very valuable crop."

"Are bamboos cultivated?" I asked.

"Yes, the Japanese treat them with all the care of other field crops. They set them out in orchards or groves, taking a harvest of poles in August or later. Of some varieties there are four or five thousand to the acre, and more than a thousand culms or stalks can be marketed from them every year. The plants are usually set out about 12 feet apart, and the first stalks cut when the grove is about four years old."

"Give me some idea of the profits of bamboo raising."

"They should be greater here than in Japan," said Mr. Fairchild, "and as far as I could learn the business pays very well there. Dr. Shiga of the Japanese bureau of forestry told me that the bamboo was one of the best crops of the country, often yielding \$50 gold per acre. Of this 20 per cent came from the edible shoots. Another Japanese who raised bamboo timber told me he was annually making about \$40 per acre out of his land, and near Kiota I heard of men who were making as much as \$60 per acre. Prices rise and fall from year to year. About five years ago some of the planters who were raising groves of black bamboo were realizing \$200 per acre. They are now netting about \$50."

"The bamboo," continued Mr. Fairchild, "is the most indispensable of all trees in the far east. It is used for everything under the sun. It forms the building material, the furniture wood, the kitchen utensils, the water pipes, and in some places the floors and rafters of the houses. It is used to make ropes and mats, fans and umbrellas. It largely takes the place of iron and wire, and of many other things. Here it is used chiefly for fishing poles, of which we import millions every year. It

AN ILLINOIS POSSIBILITY.



Marshall Field, the multi-millionaire drygoods man, is mentioned as the possible vice presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket. Mr. Field has announced that he does not want the nomination. But they all do that.

would indeed be a valuable addition to our timber crop."

JAPAN'S WONDERFUL PAPER PLANT.

The conversation here turned to the Japanese paper plants which are now being brought to the United States. The Japanese make the finest papers in the world. They have some which look like silk, so strong that a large sheet will support the weight of the average man. They have the finest of tissue papers, some of which are imported by opticians for wiping lenses and glasses, and the dentists all over the country dry out the cavities in teeth preparatory to filling them with gold with a porous paper made in Japan. Mr. Fairchild showed me samples of some of these papers, and, among other things, what looked like a leather portfolio which would, I suppose, cost at least \$3 at any notion store in this country. It was made of paper instead of leather, and I was told it had cost just 18 cents.

"The Japanese papers," said Mr. Fairchild, "come from different sources, but chiefly from the mitsumata plant, which covers the hillsides and is also grown between the rice fields throughout central Japan. It is a perennial shrub with long, lance-shaped leaves and yellow flowers. Its bark has long,

delicate fibers, and it is secured by cutting the plant and stripping off the bark, which is then macerated and made into paper.

This plant could be grown in the United States, and it might be harvested by machinery. The plants are grown from the seed and afterwards set out and cultivated. They are cut off from year to year, other sprouts coming up for another crop.

The Japanese make their napkins, umbrellas and lanterns out of such paper. It takes the place of glass in the walls of the people's houses and as oil paper serves as rubber blankets and rubber coats. I see no reason why such plants should not be raised here and why, with out modern machinery, they might not form an important part of the paper industry. I understand that from 600 to 2,000 pounds of bark can be annually produced on one acre, and that this when made into pulp is worth in Japan from 15 to 16 cents in gold, per pound. This would make a profit, I should say, of \$100 or upward per acre."

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