

FOR FARMERS AND GARDENERS.

Agricultural Societies are extending their influence in almost every State throughout the Union. The Patent Office report, just published, contains a statistical sketch of the origin, number, condition, etc., of the various State and county organizations in existence throughout the United States, for the promotion of Agriculture; by which we are informed that "The first agricultural association incorporated in this country was the 'Society for the Promotion of Agriculture,' established in South Carolina, in 1785."

A "Society for the Advancement of Agriculture, Arts and Manufactures" was founded in the city of New York, in 1791, which continued in operation some ten years. The "Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture" was incorporated in the year 1792; some of the members of which, residing in that county, subsequently organized the Middlesex Agricultural Society—this being the first county agricultural association formed in the United States. Other county societies were formed, soon afterwards.

The first agricultural fair ever held in the United States was proposed by Elkanah Watson, of Berkshire, Mass., and came off in Aug., 1810. From that time, agricultural societies and enterprises to promote agricultural interests received a new impulse and societies were soon organized in most of the older States.

In 1828, the "American Institute of the city of New York" was incorporated. Four years afterwards, the "New York Agricultural Society"—now in active operation at Albany—commenced its career.

The aggregate number of State and county agricultural societies now in existence in the United States is said to be about eight hundred.

Agricultural education has, until recently, been grossly neglected. In 1855, the citizens of Ovid, Seneca county, N. Y., procured the passage of an act by the Legislature incorporating the "N. Y. State Agricultural College." A farm of six hundred and eighty acres has been selected, buildings are being erected and it is thought the object of the college will be fully realized. The "People's College," a similar institution, was chartered by the New York legislature in 1854, located in Havana, Schuyler county. The farm comprises about two hundred acres, and buildings are also in progress of erection.

Another Agricultural College has, more recently, been established at Lansing, Michigan. Ninety thousand dollars, in all, has been appropriated by the State legislature for this purpose; and the first class of students was admitted in 1857. Seven hundred acres of land are connected with this institution.

In 1855 the "Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania" was incorporated. It is located in Center county and comprises a tract of four hundred acres of land, with buildings in course of erection. This institution has a capital of \$100,000, one half of which was appropriated by the legislature. It will be open for instruction, it is expected, the present year.

An effort is being made in Maryland for the establishment of a kindred institution—a farm of four hundred and twenty-eight acres having been purchased recently, in Prince George's county, upon which to erect the necessary buildings.

Agricultural professorships have been appointed in several of the colleges and literary institutions of the country, and grounds for practical experimenting have been set apart; but these are yet in an embryo state. The incalculable benefit that must arise from a more general adoption of agriculture as a standard department in the collegiate course of our young men, has yet to be developed.

The practical application of chemistry to agriculture is beginning to attract attention, which, when brought more fully into operation, will place the cultivation of the soil upon a scientific basis, which will largely tend to facilitating the work and increasing the wealth of the farmer—the scientific agriculturist.

Scratches on Horses may be effectually cured, according to the *Rural New Yorker*, by washing the legs clean and rubbing dry, twice a day—say morning and night—and applying good vinegar, rubbing it well into the skin. If cracked and sore, apply the vinegar freely, adding a piece of copperas about the size of a hickory nut to a quart of vinegar.

Inverted Posts are recommended by the *Country Gentleman*. "I am not able to give the reason why it is so," remarks the writer, but, "It is nevertheless true that posts or stakes will last longer if inverted than otherwise; though the top end may be smallest, yet it will outlast the other, if inverted." It is worth trying.

Coop Up Your Hens!—A correspondent of the *Rural New Yorker*, who has had long experience with poultry and, having had, like many others, very poor luck in obtaining eggs from a large flock of about fifty hens, allowed to run at large—"killed off all of the old stock, bought twelve Brahms, built a hen-house twelve by twenty feet with an out-door yard." In cold weather he let them out when not too severe. In warm weather, probably, he could allow them free access to the open yard, if it was fenced to a suitable height, so that they could not get out on to the gardens. He fed them some corn, some oats or buckwheat and shorts or bran, wet with warm sour milk, if it was to be had; if not, with warm water, making it quite wet and putting in a large spoonful of black pepper. He gave them all the green grass, cabbage leaves and other greens they wanted.

Since he has adopted this course, he says he has "plenty of nice, fresh eggs from twenty hens." Even in the coldest weather—he has from ten to fifteen eggs daily.

Every fall he kills off the old hens, saves the earliest chickens, and changes his rooster every spring.

The hen-house should be white-washed once a year, to keep it free from lice.

In regard to feeding hens, he remarks that "many labor under a mistake—they feed too much. To keep hens through the winter, give, say six ears corn and two quarts oats or buckwheat per day about twice a week," besides a little shorts or bran, prepared as above.

Grafting may be done, by those who have secured their scions, during the present month—and budding, while the bark will peel readily. Grafts should be put only into healthy, vigorous branches. An experienced and sagacious cultivator in Dutchess county, N. Y., writes:—

"By removing too many branches from a tree injury may be done. Careful attention should be given to this point in lopping the branches preparatory to grafting, in order that the sap may pass into the remaining branches and keep the tree healthy and growing. I give you these ideas, knowing that fruit trees are often injured by those who go about the country making it their business to set grafts in April and May, setting as many scions as they can, and getting pay for those that live, thus doing great damage to the trees."

This writer also corrects a mistaken idea prevalent that it is of little consequence when apple trees are pruned. He says, "The first or second week in June is the only fit season for pruning the apple tree. Then," he argues, "the sap is in full flow, and the wound made by cutting off a bough begins to heal and grow over immediately."

Where pruning is necessary, the above is quite logical; but, on the other hand, a healthy limb should not be cut from a healthy tree, for the sole purpose of conforming to the natural law prescribing the time for pruning. Keep your trees clear of all dead wood and, now and then, it may be advisable to remove a cross-branch; but use the pruning-shears with care.

Preserving Butter.—The farmers of Unda, Aberdeen county, Scotland, adopt the following method for curing their butter, which has obtained for it great superiority:

"Take two quarts of the best common salt, one ounce of sugar, and one ounce of saltpetre; take one ounce of this composition for one pound of butter; work it well into the mass, and close it up for use."

Cured in this way, the butter acquires a rich and marrowy consistence, never attains a brittle hardness nor tastes salty; but it should stand three weeks or a month before it is used. Dr. Anderson says, "I have ate butter cured with the above composition, that had been kept three years, and it was as sweet as at first."

Pork is objected to by certain people, because its use was prohibited by Moses; but a writer in the *Homestead* has discovered that Moses did not refer to the grain-fed hogs of America, in this prohibition, but to the flesh of the loathsome swine of Syria, which fed on offal and dead carcases.

The Benefit of offering premiums for crops has been fully tested in Massachusetts. Thus while inciting a heavier average yield per acre and larger profits, when men contend for a premium, they are well repaid for any extra exertion, whether the award is in their favor or not.

Lice on Cattle or colts may be remedied, says the *North Western Farmer*, by washing the back and sides of the animal with a strong decoction of white oak tan liquid, boiled. "In twenty four hours the lice will be completely tanned."

Hay may be measured in the following manner when desired: "Multiply the length, breadth and height into each other." If the hay is somewhat solid, ten cubic or solid yards make a ton.

Cracked Heels may be cured in horses by applying "Zinc ointment, mixed with one-eighth part of ointment of nitrate of mercury, and keep the heels very dry."

Agricultural Department at Washington.

WHAT IT MIGHT BE, OUGHT TO BE, BUT IS NOT.

We commend to our readers the perusal of the accompanying truthful article, from the *American Agriculturist*.

A few copies of the Public Documents—or 'House Docs,' as they are familiarly termed by those who have received them—have reached this isolated locality—among them the 'Patent Office Report' 'Mechanical' and 'Agricultural.' We have examined those documents to discover, if possible, the object of so vast an annual expenditure of public money as is required to gather and prepare the copy, print, bind and distribute the works; thinking that all this amount of capital could not have been disbursed by the General Government without a hope, and even an assurance of securing some great benefit to the people. But, after patient research, we confess that, in our expectations, we were most signally disappointed. The contents were about as pertinent to the practical agriculturist of Utah as were the somber labyrinth of tables comprising the 'Commerce and Navigation' statistics, also emanating from the National Capital, or as logarithms would be to the novice in arithmetic. But, aside from the indifferent character of the general information furnished in the report 'Agricultural,' the uninteresting manner in which it is presented, consummates the climax and renders the work, so far as practical utility is concerned, most effectually worthless.

Who ever thinks of looking into a Patent Office 'Agricultural' Report, for reliable information? Three hundred thousand dollars, from the public treasury, should furnish the country with a vast amount of practical, reliable information on the all-important subject of agriculture. With the *Agriculturist*, we trust this department will be what it should be—or be entirely abolished. But hear the *Agriculturist*:—

"After sending our last number to press we spent ten days on a visit to our National Capital, partly to gain health and vigor by release from business cares, and partly to witness the congressional proceedings during the last week of the Session. Another object in view was to look into the operations of the so-called Agricultural Department, connected with the Patent Office, and supported by the Public Treasury. To prevent any embarrassment, or interference with our investigations, we purposely avoided direct contact with the chief 'agricultural clerk,' who, though not nominally, yet really holds under his exclusive surveillance, control, and direction, the entire operations of the agricultural department. We passed much time, however, with sundry gentlemen in Washington, who are well informed as to the way things are managed, including sundry members of Congress, members of the Congressional Committee on Agriculture, etc.; and we also had a lengthy personal interview with Commissioner Holt, who is (or was then) the nominal head of the Agricultural Department. From the information thus gained, in addition to what we had previously known, and from several sources of future intelligence opened up to us, we purpose from time to time to set before the public the defects and wants of the department, with the hope of enlightening our readers, and so far as may be, contributing to improvement in the management of one of the most important departments connected with our General Government.

As now managed, the agricultural operations at Washington are a sham—a shame to us as an agricultural people. Our government might well, and ought to spend at least a million dollars annually in promoting the agricultural and horticultural improvement of the country, but without a change in the present organization it would be far better to save the sixty or seventy thousand dollars spent in salaries, in seeds, and in getting up the Annual Reports, and also the hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand dollars more for printing, binding, and distributing these 'Reports' (See next page for notes on the last published Report) This view is already taken of the subject by many members of Congress.—This year the appropriation is cut down to the pittance of forty thousand dollars, and several members stated to us that even this sum would have been withheld, had it not been for the hurried legislation of the closing hours, when it passed, without discussion, as an appendage to the general appropriation bill. We were in the gallery of the House at the time, and noted that it received but a small vote, though enough to constitute a majority of those present, giving attention and voting when this particular appropriation chance to be passed along with many others.—As a member of the House remarked to us, 'several Representatives who give no attention to the matter of agriculture and know little or nothing on the subject, were afraid to vote against any measure of this kind, lest it should be construed by their constituents in the 'Rural Districts' as an evidence of want of sympathy and interest in the 'bone and sinew.' We were assured by members of the next Congress, that the entire agricultural department would be abolished next Winter unless a decided change be made in its organization, efficiency and usefulness. Appended to the appropriation was this significant clause:

"Provided, That no part of the appropriation shall be used or expended in defraying the expenses of a body of men or delegates assembled in Washington or elsewhere, as an agricultural college or 'advisory board of agricul-

ture,' convened under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, or any other person, under any name, for any object whatever."

This was designed as a direct censure upon the recent enterprise of the 'agricultural clerk,' (noticed by us in February, p. 33) viz: the secret calling together of a selected paid coterie of persons to whitewash the doings of the department. [In this connection we would inquire why the report of that 'Advisory Board of Agriculturists' has never been permitted to see the light, though called for by Congress. Rumor says, the 'agricultural clerk' caught a Tartar in the report itself, as prepared by them. We call for its publication as originally made by the committee of that body.]

As a further indication of the feeling in Congress, we may add that the Senate refused to print the usual copies of the Agricultural Report. The House, at first, also refused to print them, but after the loss of the bill to abolish the franking privilege, several members, who wish to have a supply of electioneering documents, to frank as a 'sop' or compliment to their 'rural constituents,' contrived to get a hasty vote in the House for printing 210,000 copies of some kind of an Agricultural Report—they knew not what, for they only voted upon the title page, and for aught they or we know, it will be as poor a thing as its immediate predecessor.

HOW THE AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT IS ORGANIZED.

As every one, perhaps, understands, the executive government is divided into 'Departments,' as the Department of the Interior, the Department of War, of the Navy, of the Treasury, and of the Post Office. The head or chief officer of each Department is called the Secretary of that Department, except the P. O. Secretary, who is called Post Master General. These several chief officers are appointed by the President, and they together form his Cabinet.

The Secretary of the Interior has charge of several sub-Departments, such as the Patent Office, Indian Affairs, etc. Under him, is the Commissioner of Patents, who employs a so-called 'Agricultural Clerk.' All business matters done, and documents issued relating to agriculture, are in the name of the Commissioner of Patents, who is himself a secondary officer. His attention is, however, mostly given to subjects connected with Patents, and his agricultural clerk really manages and controls all matters connected with agriculture.

Mr. Thompson is the present Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Holt was, until recently, the Commissioner of Patents, but he has just been appointed P. M. General, and the office of Com. of Patents is vacant at the time of this writing.

This tacking agriculture as a sub-department on to still another sub-department, is not only placing it below its proper position in point of importance, but this very fact so depreciates its dignity, that little attention is given to placing at its head a man of acknowledged superior abilities. This is abundantly proved by the fact, that for ten years past, the really important station of 'agricultural clerk,' or chief manager of agricultural affairs, has been occupied by a man of only ordinary ability (D. Jay Browne, who is the present incumbent of the office).

When we say 'ordinary ability,' we only repeat what is the general opinion of the great mass of intelligent men in the country, that is, of those who take interest in the subject of agriculture. In all agricultural transactions connected with the Patent Office while, under his control, there has been shown a lack of system, of valuable research, and of broad, comprehensive views, which has brought the department to its present low standard in the estimation of the people at large.

Said Commissioner Holt to us: 'I do not understand this apparent opposition, or at least this want of sympathy with a department so deserving of the cordial support of all classes as that of Agriculture.' The real cause of it we endeavored to set forth to him, viz., the want of an efficient man at its head to conduct and guide its affairs in such a manner as to command the respect and confidence of the country.

We found that the commissioner has himself known very little of the criticisms of at least three-fourths of the agricultural press, and of the more influential agricultural individuals and societies. His information in this respect has come to him through his agricultural clerk, and of course he has been permitted to know only the favorable side.

[We suggest to our agricultural cotemporaries, that hereafter when they have occasion to censure the agricultural operations at Washington, they send a marked copy sealed up and directed personally to the commissioner of patents.]

So far as we could learn, whenever anything unfavorable to the agricultural clerk has chanced to come to the commissioner's notice, it has been promptly attributed by his clerk to the influence of interested seedsmen, or to personal aspirations, or personal enmity of editors. While at Washington, we heard for the first time that the last named motive had been attributed to this journal. We beg to say to the commissioner and to Mr. Browne himself, that there is not the slightest ground for this supposition. We heard (at Washington) for the first time, and at only second hand from Mr. Browne himself, that he had, at some former period, a personal difficulty with one of the former publishers of this journal. With that we have nothing to do—and care nothing. Until he published his famous 'autobiography' and sent it over the country under the government frank, we did not even know that he had so much as set foot in the office of this paper.

The truth is, we do not know Mr. Browne personally; but from the day we read his Book on Manure; and his Book on Trees, we set him down as a man of very moderate ability, native or acquired, and when we heard of him as 'agricultural clerk' at Washington, we could not but regret that that important station had not been better filled. Still we hoped for the best, and did