

DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Tuesday, June 8, 1899.

CORRESPONDENCE ON SERICULTURE.

The following communication is a new evidence that the silk business is destined to attract more and more of the public attention in this country.

SPRINGVILLE, May 13, 1899.

Louis A. Bertrand, Esq.

Dear Brother,—I think of starting the business of sericulture on a small scale. My entire stock of information consists of your articles published in the DESERET NEWS. I am the owner of two city lots in Springville. Would it pay to cultivate one acre in mulberries, and conduct the business of sericulture on so small a scale? What would be the probable cost of a cocoonery large enough to feed an acre of leaves? How large should it be? How many persons would be required to feed an acre of leaves? What would be the probable profits of an acre, all expenses paid? By answering the foregoing interrogatories, you will confer a favor upon Yours truly,

CHAS. D. EVANS.
Ed. Evening News.—Sir, I have penned the following in answer to the above communication, and think its insertion in the EVENING NEWS might be interesting and profitable to many of your readers.

PRESIDENT YOUNG'S COCOONERY, May 27, 1899.

Dear Brother,—Your note came duly to hand yesterday. In my belief that many gentlemen in Utah desire more information on sericulture before starting this most important business in their localities, I beg leave to answer your interrogatories in the NEWS, in order that my humble counsels may benefit the public in general.

1. "Would it pay to cultivate one acre in mulberries, and conduct the business of sericulture on so small a scale?"

By simply observing the following directions I answer most emphatically, yes: Do not plant cuttings of any variety of mulberries existing in Utah, because the celebrated *Mulberry* (white mulberry) cannot be found here now, in their genuine type. Thousands of hybrids approaching more or less the former, and a larger quantity of wild white mulberries flourish in our plantations. True, these trees are certainly well adapted to produce a good article of silk, but being mere seedlings they will always remain in their present condition, unless they are grafted on a superior stock. Now no race, no species, no variety whatever, except one, of the genus *Mulberry* is susceptible of reproducing itself by seed without degenerating, that one is the *Morus Moratti* *Elata*. This particular species was originated forty years ago by Doctor Moratti, a celebrated Italian silk grower. The leaves of the Moratti are larger, more perfect than any variety of white mulberries now cultivated in Europe, and being a very hardy tree it is, in every respect, well worthy of cultivation in our mountain home, especially in our northern counties.

Therefore, plant, next spring, of your lot three or four ounces of seed of the Moratti and as many ounces of the white mulberry. In so doing, you will start a small, but nice, nursery stocked with from 70 to 80,000 beautiful mulberries, a sufficient quantity to feed, when three years old, about 60,000 silk worms. According to Mr. Boltoart, one of the best French writers on sericulture, an ounce of pure mulberry seed will produce sixteen thousand trees.

It is of much importance to remember that the mulberry seed retains its vitality only one year. That is the reason why I shall import annually from France a certain quantity of seed of the above varieties, which will be gathered expressly for me. Any gentleman desiring to receive reliable mulberry seed in that way for next spring would do well to let me know it as soon as convenient.

12. "What would be the probable cost of a cocoonery large enough to feed an acre of leaves?"

If you have a barn on the place which can be devoted to this use in the summer season, you have already a cocoonery. All you want to do is to put up right standards, to which, at about two and a half feet apart, fasten cross pieces and lay on loose boards for shelves, and your cocoonery is made. In France and Italy nearly every farm-house is devoted to the purpose of a cocoonery during the feeding season, and in many cases this same practice may be adopted here, especially where the house is large and the number of worms is small.

3. "How many persons would be required to feed an acre of leaves?"

Such is the simplicity of the silk culture adopted in Utah, that an intelligent person aged sixty years, and a boy twelve years old to pick up the leaves, will be sufficient to attend about 50,000 worms.

4. "What would be the probable profit of an acre, all expenses paid?"

This is hard to tell, as it depends on a great many circumstances: First, on the quality of the soil. Second, on the amount of care given to the trees. Third, on the age of the trees, etc. So it is very difficult to make an exact estimate, therefore we have to come to a general one, and make it as near as possible. The *California Silk Growers' Manual*, by my excellent friend Monsieur Louis Prevost, offers some hints on that subject which, in my estimation, are fully applicable to Utah.

An acre will produce from forty to four hundred pounds of silk, at a cost of not exceeding two dollars per pound, ready for market. The value of the raw silk is from six to eight dollars per pound, according to quality. The quantity must be determined by the circumstances above mentioned.

A silk factory will soon be started here. Numbers of our silk growers, not prepared to reel their own silk, will sell their cocoons as they are, to the manufacturer, or will sell them for exportation. In so doing they will have pretty much the same profits.

Each cultivator may make a calculation to suit his own soil and locality, by taking one hundred pounds of leaves for one pound of reeled silk. Forty thousand worms, well fed, will give fifteen pounds of silk; so an acre of trees, in good situation and good soil, will certainly yield, here, at four years of age, from fifty to sixty thousand pounds of leaves, and probably more, which, at one hundred pounds per one pound of silk, will be five hundred pounds.

Supposing an average of five thousand pounds of leaves to the acre, and trees four years old, this would, consequently, at one hundred pounds for each pound of silk, give five hundred and fifty pounds of silk which, at seven dollars per pound, would realize \$3,850 per acre. Now, on account of our system of polygamy being particularly favorable to the silk business, and especially with our simplified method of culture, I value the amount of the expenses at \$850, which will leave a net profit of three thousand dollars per acre.

Planters and farmers to give a mighty start to the silk industry, we want from eight to ten millions of mulberry trees in Utah.

Yours truly,

L. A. BERTRAND.

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