

ADVERTISEMENTS.

FACTS ABOUT BANANAS.

WHERE THE LUSCIOUS FRUIT COMES FROM.

There is one foreign product that is not affected by the McKinly bill and tariff reforms of both political parties are content to leave it on the free list. It is the banana, and more of this luscious fruit is consumed in the United States than in any country in the world. Washingtonians are great lovers of bananas and it is said that more of them are sold in Washington than in New York. Bananas come mostly from Baracoa, a small seaport town in Cuba, which claims the distinction of being the center of the large fruit trade with the United States. They also come from Aspinwall, Jamaica, and other tropical cities. Twenty years ago bananas were very little known in this country.

The first big cargo that came to the United States landed at New York in March, 1870, and previous to that time the bananas which found their way into our markets came along with other fruit. But the demand became so great that it was determined to send over a ship laden exclusively with bananas. The first shipment, while yielding a fair profit, was disastrous. Over 50 per cent. rotted on the long journey. The growers began to look about for a better way to transport the fruit, as it was evident that if the business was expected to pay a shorter journey was absolutely necessary. A Spaniard took the initiative and chartered a fast American merchant vessel, which he loaded with bananas and dispatched to New York. When it came to be unloaded it was found that not more than 5 per cent. of the fruit had spoiled. This was the beginning of a big business. More and faster ships were secured and farmers in the tropics and capitalists in this country turned their attention and money to the systematic culture of the banana.

There are two varieties shipped to this country. The long yellow plantain and the short red stumpy species. The former, however, is by far the more popular, for in addition to being cheaper, it is easier to raise and ripens much sooner than the other. Bananas are shipped all the year round, but are at their best during the early spring, and from March to June may be said to be the season for the best fruit.

One of the peculiar facts about the banana is that but one bunch grows on a tree. The fruit is cut when green and then the trees are cut down to the ground. They sprout almost immediately, and in a short time bear again. All of the bananas which come to this country are shipped in a green state. They are transported from the farms to the coast on the backs of little pack donkeys. One donkey can carry from one to six bunches, according to the size of the bunches and the distance it has to travel.—Washington Star.

THE ORANGE.

The value of oranges as an article of food is well known. "I buy them by the box," says a mother, "and let my children eat them constantly in lieu of candy or other prized children's dainties. I consider that I save money by it." At some of the inebriate asylums oranges have proved an efficient substitute for alcohol, patients sucking the juice of them abundantly every time the thirst for liquor comes upon them. This fact is so well recognized that often at temperance coffee stands piles of luscious oranges are also kept.

And now another benefit is alleged for them. Some famous French beauties of former days, it is asserted, secured and preserved their marvelous complexions by a free diet of oranges. One in particular lived almost entirely upon the fruit. A dozen each at breakfast and luncheon made up these repasts; at dinner a dozen more with a crust of bread and one glass of Burgundy. Doubtless an orange fad is threatening, for the pursuit of a complexion is a very absorbing one to women.

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