

TOBACCO CULTURE.

How to Cultivate and Cure the Plant.

PLANT BEDS AND THEIR TREATMENT.

The growth and forwardness of the plant depends greatly upon the location of the bed. The location should be of a Southern exposure, the soil moist, with sweet gum and post-oak growth principally, and near a small branch if possible.

BURNING AND MANURING.

The bed should be cleared nicely of all shrubbery and litter before burning. Plant land should never be burned when wet, but when the land is in good order, we prefer to burn from the first of January to the first of March, though the time extends from November 15th to April 1st. The manuring is one point to be well looked after. The manure for the bed should never be of a burning nature, as that is apt to retard the growth of the plants in dry weather. We use fine stable manure, which should be applied evenly over the bed after the coal and ashes are raked off; then, with grubbing hoes, hoe up three or four inches deep, not turning up the soil more than can be helped. If the bed is new, rake off the roots and apply from 35 to 50 pounds per 100 yards, of the standard tobacco fertilizer, (Durham Bull is used a great deal through our section,) then, with weeding hoe, chop the bed thoroughly and rake with a fine rake, taking off all coarse obstacles. When the bed is ready for the seed, which should be sown one tablespoonful to the 100 square yards, mixed well, with about one gallon of dry ashes or fertilizer; sow as evenly as possible; when sown, tread nicely, to prevent the beds "spewing" in extreme cold weather; drain well and put on canvas, which can be removed as soon as the plants are safe from the fly and frost, which is about the 10th or 15th of April. It is very important to keep the weeds and grass pulled, as they are very injurious to the plants.

KIND OF LAND AND ITS PREPARATION.

The lands most preferred with us are of a moderate, coarse, sandy soil, with a deep yellowish subsoil. In selecting lots for the yellow leaf, always select land free from wet, spouty places. Remember, that tobacco, of all crops, requires a thorough preparation of the soil, and the very best cultivation is absolutely essential to success. If you have bottom land fallow in the fall with a two-horse plow, one that will not turn up the subsoil too much. If fresh lands, break early in the spring with single plow; if there is much vegetation, use a turning plow as deep as the nature of the case will admit; if clean land, use a small plow, and plow as deep as possible. Should there be a drought of a few weeks, repeat the following as often as necessary until the land is in good condition. If new ground, clean off all litter and break with a small cultivator plow to prevent turning up the under-soil too much; plow across the first plowing and harrow well to loosen the turf; with pitchfork and rake pile up all the turf and roots and let them dry a few days and then burn them, then with grubbing hoe and axe cut and take up all roots near enough the top to come in contact with the plow. When ready for bedding plow and harrow again to get up all the roots that appear. The rows should be from 3 feet 3 inches to 3 feet 6 inches apart, the latter only on very strong land. Barnyard manure should be kept dry and piled up until it is fine and will drill regularly. We use our manure altogether in the drill, and will give the manner in which we usually apply our manure and fertilizers. We lay off the rows before carrying the manures and fertilizer to the field. We never let more than one load of manure be exposed to the sun at one time. It is a very good plan to haul and drill the manure (one load at a time) and then drill the fertilizer at the rate of 100 pounds to the 1,000 hills, on the average lands we cultivate; thinner lands require more. The kind of fertilizer depends greatly upon the condition of the land. We use and our neighbors generally are using the Durham Bull, as it is the best fertilizer for the price we have ever used; it produces a vigorous growth, and stands a drought well, it grows tobacco with a beautiful texture and "fires" the plant as little as any fertilizer. When the fertilizer is drilled it should be covered immediately by turning two furrows together, running the plow very shallow in order to keep the hills low, then throw out the middle in the same manner, take a sweep made of a scantling 4 inches square, 7 feet long, and cut the beds down as low as possible to prevent the tobacco drowning. Then with hoes put the hills 3 feet apart, and you are ready for planting.

PLANTING TOBACCO.

It is a matter of the utmost importance, and should by all means have strict attention, for if the plants are not well planted the growth will be irregular—to do this be careful not to bruise while driving, or break while packing in basket, and never plant one that is injured. It is an all important matter to see that the planters do not make the holes for the plants deeper than the plants are long, and when the plants are inserted be sure the dirt is well put to the roots, but not packed too hard, as the growth will be retarded should there be a drought of a week or two after planting.

THE CULTIVATION OF TOBACCO.

After the tobacco has taken hold so that there is no danger of killing by working, we take a small plow and bar off the rows, leaving a ridge of 12 or 14 inches, running the plow deep enough to loosen the soil beneath the plants, so the roots will have a sufficient amount of loose earth to grow in. We then take the hoe and work the ridge thoroughly from hill to hill, being careful not to work too deep near the plants. After the first working let lay six or eight days, if there is no rain and the land is not too foul when the first working is done, then with the Climax cotton plow, run two furrows to the row, putting a small quantity of dirt to the tobacco, and with a sweep run one time in a row, which can be followed with the hoe if desired and stirred between the hills; do this as often as necessary to keep the tobacco from being checked for the want of work. Never work tobacco deep after the first working begin to come in top. If a heavy crop is desired we advise a light working after the tobacco is about all topped. This is done by running a sweep one time in a row, very shallow, and scraping the row light with hoes.

PRUNING TOBACCO.

As soon as the stalk gets large

enough to be pruned without injury, the bottom leaves should be taken off, which if promptly done will supply the upper leaves with more plant food, and produce a more vigorous growth; this should be kept up until you have your tobacco pruned high enough to keep the bottom leaves off of the ground; when they get their full growth by this treatment you will have less trashy tobacco at the bottom of the plant.

TOPPING TOBACCO.

There has been more good tobacco ruined by "topping" too high, than from almost any other cause. If the plant is "topped" too high, the bottom of it will, in most cases, burn up before the top matures, and the consequence is, you cut your tobacco with the top green—the bottom fired—and the middle of the plant very poor tobacco. We seldom ever top over ten leaves, unless it is a plant of unusual growth, which we top twelve leaves. Our motto is Prune high and Top low.

"SUCKERING" TOBACCO.

This part of tobacco culture is looked after with too little interest by a great many farmers. If you let the suckers grow till they are six inches or a foot long, the plant is sure to be injured, as the suckers become tough and when broken out, they often bring the leaf with them, or break it loose from the stalk and it dies before the plant is cut. Suckers should never be allowed to grow longer than three inches, if it can possibly be avoided.

WORMING TOBACCO.

Tobacco cut by worms will not bring a good price. We have several kinds of worms to contend with, but our greatest enemies are the cut worm early in the season, and bud worm as the tobacco nears the top; and last, but not least, the horn worm. The small worms can be found almost any time during the day, but the large ones, which do the most damage, generally go in the ground, or where the sun will not trouble them, about 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning, and remain until 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when they crawl out and do their mischief. The afternoon is decidedly the best time to catch the large worms. We advise you to worm tobacco two or three times a week until it is cut, if the worms are plentiful.

CUTTING AND HANDLING TOBACCO.—CAUTIONS ABOUT HANDLING GREEN TOBACCO.

1st. The cutter should be careful, and not break, off any more leaves than he can help, as the broken leaves are apt to get bruised and cause them to black in curing. 2d. That he does not allow his stick holder to job holes in the leaves while hanging on the stick, and that the stick holder does not lay a stick of tobacco on anything that will tear or injure it. No pains should be spared in handling tobacco while green, as the least bruise will cause a black spot when cured. The frames we use are long enough to haul three bunks on; they are made of two poles squared well; mortice four holes 12 inches in each pole dividing the distance, commencing twelve inches from each end; and put in slats of some tough timber. We then bore six holes in top of each pole to put in standards two feet long to put the bunks from slipping. To get the right distance for the standards, take a tobacco stick and measure, letting each end of the stick pass the standard about four inches, and leave a space of six inches between the sticks; put a plank in the bottom and you have a good body to haul the weed while green. It is very important to have tobacco hoisted regular in the barn, in order to make a uniform cure, place the sticks about ten inches apart.

CURING.

The curing process is a part most dreaded by those who never had the opportunity of curing a barn of the weed. It is a mystery, and yet a very simple feature in raising a crop after all when learned by personal experience. No man can tell his neighbor how to cure his tobacco, for the same treatment will not work well on tobacco raised on different farms. We can give the rules we are generally governed by, which will be beneficial to some who are just starting out as tobacco farmers. It is very important that the fires when first raised are not too hot, as the tobacco at the bottom will coddle and cure black. If tobacco is well yellowed and ripe when cut, we generally raise the heat to 100 degrees in eight or ten hours, and let it remain for twelve or fourteen hours; then raise to 105 degrees or more if the tobacco does not begin to dry at the bottom of the leaves; there let it remain until nearly yellow as desired; then raise it five degrees per hour, to 130 degrees, or faster if the tobacco will stand the heat without mottling, there remain till leaf is cured on the bottom rows, then raise to 135 or 140 degrees and remain until leaf is cured in top of barn, then raise gradually to 175 or 180 degrees—10 or 15 degrees per hour, and remain until stalks and stems are well cured; it will do no harm if the heat goes to 190 or 200 degrees, if it does not remain too long during the last few hours firing. If the tobacco should get to swelling while yellowing, give it ventilation at bottom of the barn, that will drive away all sweaty, spongy appearance and keep the tobacco in a drying condition. These are a few of the most important rules for curing, but unless a full supply of self reliance and self judgment is used in connection, they will be of but little use to any one.

FLUES FOR BARN.

There are so many kinds of flues in use that we will only mention the kind we use. The furnace is built of rocks or bricks, eleven feet long, projecting out of the barn one foot; the width is 18 inches at the bottom of the furnace and 16 inches at top, 15 inches high with rock or brick filling. We use 10 inch pipes with double return pipes. The flues should have about 10 inch elevation from mouth of furnace to where the return pipes come out of the barn; the pipe should be raised to the top of the furnace where it starts, to prevent the coals getting in the pipe and keeping back the heat.

HANDLING TOBACCO AFTER IT IS CURED.

It is frequently the case, that tobacco has to be handled when very dry, from the fact that few of our farmers have enough barns, and storage room. It is a great mistake to plant more tobacco than can be housed without being damaged, by having to put it in houses unfit for keeping cured tobacco. It is very important that you should have your tobacco in as good order as possible when it is carried from the curing barn to the storage room. If the tobacco is in order en-

ough, to keep the stems from breaking, we bulk as we move out, and if there is plenty hanging room, let lay four or six days and hang it up, as close together as possible, to keep it from getting in too high order when the damp weather comes. But if there is not room to hang up, we let it lay long enough to settle, and then bulk in order to get the tobacco in less space.

STRIPPING TOBACCO.

This is something every farmer has to learn by experience. There is a great deal to be learned by visiting the markets, and giving strict attention to the different ways in which farmers handle their tobacco, and who realizes the highest prices for the weed. It is very important that the tobacco should be well assorted, making two classes of the lugs and six classes of the leaf. When stripping a good lot of tobacco, it can be matched with less grades than when stripping a common lot. Never allow more than six leaves of good sized tobacco to be tied in a bundle, unless it is common lugs. Smaller tobacco can have more leaves and look as well. The bundle should be drawn through the hand and laid straight, and never allowed to be thrown about like shucks. It is then hung on sticks, well dressed, to keep from tearing when taken off. The number of bundles to a stick 4 1/2 feet long is 30 or 35. When bulked, put four sticks in a layer with an empty stick on each side of the bulk, to every layer, to keep the bundles on the ends of the sticks in position and prevent drying. If tobacco is in too high order to keep, laying down, bulk it and let it lay 24 hours, and then hang it up to dry; if it lays too long, when bulked in high order, it will stick together, and be difficult to dry the middle of the bundle. Never carry tobacco to market in high order unless it is absolutely necessary, and then, if possible, let the weather be drying. If you wish to realize the highest prices for your tobacco carry it to market with the leaf in good order, and the stem dry enough to break half way down, and if you have bulked nicely, and assorted well, you are very apt to get a fair price.

The above method is followed by the leading farmers in the Dutchville Tobacco belt, and is given by us at the request of the Durham Fertilizer Co. to aid planters all over the State, who are not acquainted with the cultivation and curing of tobacco, that they may know how it is done in what is considered the finest tobacco section in the United States.

Any further information wanted by new beginners in the cultivation of tobacco will be given by private correspondence with either of us.

NATHANIEL H. FLEMING, ALEXANDER G. FLEMING, Dutchville, Granville Co., N. C.

OUR SCHOOLS.

Editor Messenger:—Our County Superintendent of Public Instruction, E. A. Wright Esq., made his annual visit to the Ebenezer Public School, (district No. 4, white) a few days ago. Although publicity was made of his coming, the very inclement weather prevented a great many patrons of the school from attending; however, after the services of the day were closed, he made a well-timed and practical lecture to the parents and children present, which was listened to with marked attention. He dwelt upon the great interest of parents supplying their children with uniform text books, such as the State Board of Education advises, and pronounced the school at Ebenezer under the management of Mrs. Z. Ophelia Crawford, well taught, well advanced, and about the best conducted public school he had visited. The committee regret very much that more of the people were not out to hear his address, and show that they felt an interest in the advancement of their children. I fear this county will never be sufficiently aroused to the great importance of educating their children at public schools, which at present, is the only means we have of lifting the masses from illiteracy, and it is to be hoped if the Blair bill ever passes Congress, it will be the means of infusing new life in the whole South, and the people will take on new resolves and new energy, and press forward to the attainment of a higher degree of knowledge than at present characterizes our people. But I am digressing. Please publish the above in your valuable paper, and oblige,

A PATRON.

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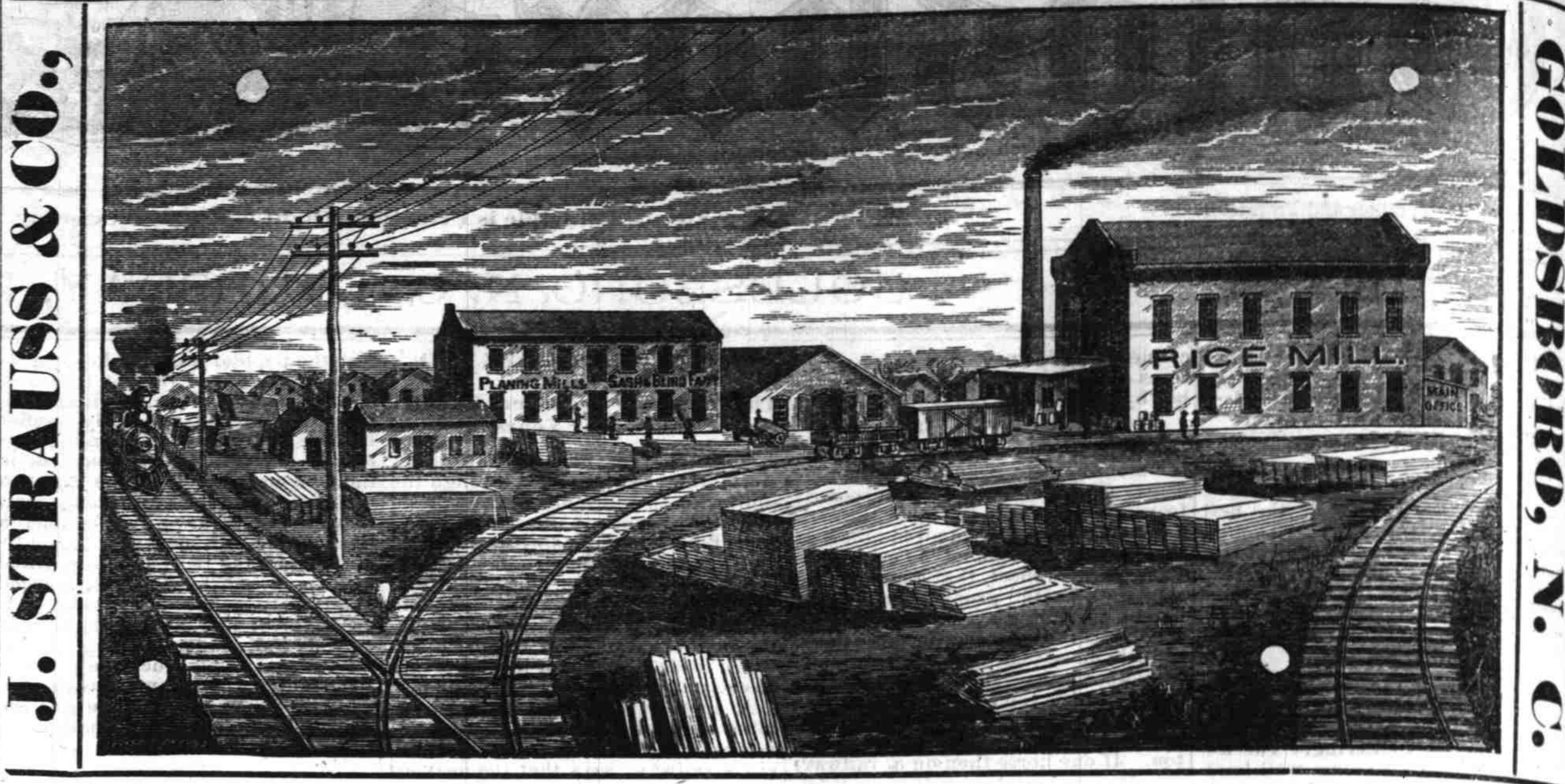
A Remarkable Distribution.

The 18th Grand Monthly Drawing of The Louisiana Lottery occurred as usual at noon on Tuesday, January 12th. The First Prize of \$75,000 was won by No. 34,945, sold in fifth at \$1.00 each—two held by M. Mitchell, care of M. Gross, No. 3 Chambers st., New York City; one to J. F. Benson, care of J. A. Bach, No. 27 Main st., Kansas City, Mo.; one to Isidor Schwartz of Kansas City, Mo.; paid through the Bank of Commerce there. The Second Prize of \$25,000 was won by No. 84,374, also sold in fifth at \$1.00 each—held by E. A. Burdette, Cincinnati, O., paid through Southern Express Co., who paid another fifth to Joseph Wittenkeller of Chicago, Ill.; one to A. R. Simmons, 526 Elm st., Manchester, N. H.; etc., etc. No. 70,659 drew the Third Prize (\$10,000), also sold in fifth at \$1.00 each—held by W. J. Turner, No. 10 Third st., one to J. B. Martin, No. 98 Howard st., San Francisco, Cal.; also paid through Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express, one held by G. Broctman of Houston, Texas; one held by C. E. Stephens, of St. Louis, Mo., who holds another dollar's worth, one fifth (\$2,000), held by J. V. Barnes of the Windsor Hotel, Kansas City, Mo.; paid through the Bank of Commerce there. No. 20,550, held in San Francisco, Cal., drew the other Fourth Prize, \$4,000, etc. The Extraordinary Grand Quarterly Drawing will be managed by Gen'l G. T. Beauregard of La., and Jubal A. Early of Va., on Tuesday, March 16th, when \$25,000 will be distributed by the laws of chance.

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