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RURAL ECONOMY.

"May your rich soil,
Embracing nature's better blessings pour
G'ne every hand."

SILK PLANT.

The following letter from D. Smith McCauley, esq., our consul at Tripoli, to Francis Markoe, Jr., the Secretary of the National Institute, will be read with much interest. He transmitted with it some seed of the Vegetable Silk, which, in all probability, in our varied and wonderful soil and climate, will become a new article of commerce, and, like our cotton, a new and important source of wealth. Should it succeed, and become a great staple article like cotton, what important consequences may we not expect to follow from its introduction:

U. S. Consulate,
Tripoli, 28 Dec, 1884.

Sir—I herewith transmit to the Institute a small specimen of "vegetable silk," raised from a few seeds that I received from Luca, Italy, which originally came from Syria.

Without any instruction or knowledge of this plant I sowed the seeds in pots in the month of March last. In May and June, they obtained the height of six to eight inches, when I transplanted them into my garden about eight inches apart—much too near as experience proves. In the months of August and September they were in flower, and the pods commenced opening in October, the plants being from six to eight feet high, and though we have had the thermometer frequently as low as 42° Fahrenheit, and the apricot and pomogranate tree, with the vine, have all shed their leaves, yet there remain several pods on the "silk plant" which are perfectly green, and show no signs of suffering or cold. This, with some other proofs of the plant being hardy, induces me to believe and hope that it might be successfully cultivated in all our cotton growing states, and should it become a staple commodity, no doubt the inventive genius of our countrymen would soon discover the means of spinning it without the aid of the cotton fibre, which I am told they use in Syria to assist in spinning, their knowledge of the art not extending beyond the primitive distaff. The only information that I have acquired of this plant, farther than recounted above, is from the mouth of one of the "propaganda" established here, who has seen it growing in Syria, where he tells me it flourishes, and that "the cultivation of a small field gives a support to a family;" that in the second and third years it is extremely productive. The plants grow to the height of ten and fifteen feet, and are generally separated from 8 to 10 feet from each other.

I also forward you by this occasion the small quantity of seed of the plant which the limited number I have raised enables me to spare, with the hope of sending a greater quantity next year, should the climate of our southern states prove favorable to its culture, or should it even be otherwise interesting.

I beg you will distribute these seeds amongst those gentlemen of our "cotton-growing states" who will take an interest in making an experiment of the cultivation.

Very respectfully,

Sir, your most obed't serv't,
D. SMITH MCCAULEY.

To FRANCIS MARCOE, JR., esq.,
Cor. Sec. of the National Institute, Washington.

ARTICHOKE FOR HOGS—Southern Polity.

The Artichoke is one of the most prolific of roots, and can be grown to great advantage as feed for hogs. If an acre of low, rich, moist ground, be planted with it, 3 by 2 feet apart, and tended as corn is, a thousand bushels may be grown thereon, and as to the digging and feeding, the hogs will do that for themselves, if turned into the lot in the fall, and thus save the labor of gathering. They are fully as nutritious as potatoes, thrice as productive—and, we believe, when once planted, will seed the lot of themselves for many successive years.

There are thousands of acres in the South, which do not now bring their owners a great year, that might be converted into Artichoke autumnal pastures for hogs, and we especially commend our Southern friends to look to it. The subject is eminently worthy of their consideration. By fencing in a few acres of such land on each plantation, planting it in artichokes, and turning the hogs in as soon as the seed is ripe in the fall, a plentiful supply of the very best food may be secured to bring them fat to the pens, so that they would only require a sufficiency of corn to harden the flesh. Such a course of provident economy, would enable Southern planters to raise their own bacon, and save to the State in which it might be pursued, thousands and tens of thousands of dollars annually, that are now

sent out of it to purchase pork. We say to our Southern brethren, buy nothing that you can profitably produce yourselves; extend your system of culture; be sure to let that system embrace every thing which enters into the consumption of the plantation, whether it be for the back, or the stomach, and a healthful condition of affairs will inevitably be the consequent result. Enlightened economy, state, and personal pride, all concur in indicating, that no farmer, or planter, should go abroad for supplies of the necessaries and comforts of life, so long as he possesses the ability to produce them himself; for every dollar sent out of a state under such circumstances, is a reckless waste of means, as the necessary consequence is, that to the amount of its value it tends to impoverish its producer, and enrich a third party, who had no agency in its production, and who, from the remoteness of his local position, has no identity of interest in, or affinity of feeling with, the people whom he has rendered tributary to his enrichment.

GRASSES FOR THE SOUTH.

Editor of the Cultivator—Your correspondents frequently inquire respecting the grasses suitable to the South. If each would communicate what he has observed, it would be a sufficient answer to such inquiries, and might prove the most important benefit to the agriculture of the South. During this winter I have seen bundles of northern hay brought to the stables of my neighbor, which had paid for carriage many hundred miles round the capes of Florida, through the Gulf of Mexico, and five hundred miles (by the course of the river) into the interior. This is a standing reproach to the agriculture of the south.

Lucerne—This is found to grow well here. Sow it in drills, in the early part of the fall, 24 to 27 inches apart; it flourishes, yields four to five cuttings in the course of the year; and on soil which would bring 20 bushels of corn to the acre, grows one foot and a half high. This season, some was cut on the 15th of March, for soiling; and was then from a foot to knee high. The most of it has been cut twice over, since the first cutting, to this day, May 13. Cattle and horses eat it greedily; a cow fed on it chiefly, is yielding at this time between five and six gallons of milk daily; when as yet there is no grass in the woods or on the common, sufficient to change the poverty stricken appearance of the cattle.

I have made no hay from it; but have no doubt it will make good hay. Guinea Grass.—The root is similar to that of the cane or reed, and it is perennial. The stem and blade are like those of the Egyptian Millet. On rich soil it is very luxuriant, yielding many cuttings in the course of the year. It is good for soiling—horses and cattle eat it readily, and if cut when in flower, it makes a hay most abundantly, of which cattle feed greedily in winter. Horses do not seem to like the hay. It is most rapidly propagated by the root. A small root, two inches long, with one or more joints to it, will vegetate; and if the ground is made loose by plowing once or twice during the season after planting, roots placed in checks of four feet will take complete possession of the soil the first season; so that the next spring it will start up evenly over the soil every where. Hogs root after them with great eagerness; and as the tendency of this plant is to fill the ground with roots in so thick a mat that the grass does not grow tall in consequence, the idea suggests itself of pasturing cattle on this grass in the spring and summer, and giving the hogs the benefit of the roots in the winter. They cannot destroy it; the smallest fibre left in the ground will grow. It might be a great pest in a garden, but if land is to be used for stock it will take and maintain entire possession to the exclusion of any competitor which we have in middle Alabama.

Clover and Herd's Grass.—I have now a beautiful lot of these grasses in conjunction on high land; the whole about knee high, and the Clover in flower. Mr. Kirby, one of my neighbors, cut the wood from a piece of low pipe clay, crawfish land, last winter; and when the brush, &c., lying on the ground became sufficiently dry, he set fire to it and burnt it off; thus giving it a top dressing of ashes. He then sowed Herd's grass on the top of the ground, without plow, harrow, or any thing of the kind. He now has a most rich and beautiful crop of this grass growing. If desired, your readers may obtain further particulars of this crop.

Leersia Orizoides, (rice grass).—This plant so much resembles rice that only a practiced eye can distinguish them. The negroes on the rice plantations in Carolina call it "the rice's cousin." It will grow wherever rice will—in the water or in any damp situation. It is found in all the southern country; grows tall, seeds in a panicle not unlike a head of oats, and will yield two crops a year of choice hay. Roots perennial. B. M.

Tuscaloosa, Ala. May 13, 1885.

MOWED LANDS.—These should not be grazed till about September. Stock harden the land too much immediately after mowing, and the ground should not be kept bare, on account of the burning rays of the sun. If good and pure hay is desired for the next season, mowing the second crop is best.

THE TEXAS ENIGMA.

BY MRS. HOUSTON.

No settler in the new country should enter upon his vocation without having on hand an immense stock of perseverance. Patience, under sickness and distress, is also another invaluable quality, the exercise of which will be offsetted for in the life of an emigrant. Few men expect that his bed in the wilderness will be one of roses; the charms of this wild life will, on the contrary, be varied by contrivances and hardships of every description.

I was much interested by an account I heard of a young emigrant, who, at the outset of his career, afforded a pot of the truth of my remarks.

This settler was a young Scotchman, who, having saved a few hundred pounds, and seeing no "opening" in his own country, decided upon trying his fortune on the plains and prairies of Texas. His knowledge consisted of some practical instructions on agricultural subjects, and the price of stock in England, and, in short, of farming details which apply exclusively to practice in the "Old Country."

M'Leod, for so I will call him, had married a pretty Irish girl, of sensible connections and good education. She possessed, withal, a light heart and happy temper—no trifling recommendations for domestic life in the wilderness, and, as I have elsewhere observed, is, in all respects, the best of all things. The Scotchman easily made a purchase of a considerable tract; and he and his young wife with a little helpless child, travelled by slow degrees, but cheerfully and full of hope, towards the rolling country above Washington. They had not been long in their new abode, when they discovered that the location was ill chosen. They had built their log house in a hollow, instead of on rising ground, which is everywhere at something less than a mile distant from the river; it was, therefore, damp and unwholesome. In short, the M'Leods, like many other settlers, had rashly followed their own ideas, and neglected to ask the advice of experienced dwellers in the country. The consequences of this imprudence soon made themselves apparent; and in a short time M'Leod was stretched upon his bed with a low lingering fever. Nora's helpfulness was now of essential service. Strong in

genuine Irish spirit of good-humor and trustfulness, she nursed her sick husband, milked the cows, minded the house, and took care of the baby. Fortunately, in this rich soil and land of prolific produce, the means of existence were easily produced, at least for a season. Nora's stock of poultry was not easily exhausted; for the domestic fowls breed and rear their young much more frequently than in most other countries. Of the pigs and other animals, the same may be safely asserted; and thus Nora and her little family continued to live on. But M'Leod's week was not a temporary malady; week after week sped by, and he lay there still, a useless, powerless man. The nature of his complaint affected his spirits, and he seemed fast sinking into a state of helpless dependency. In vain did Nora, with her bright face and cheerful voice, slightly indicative of heribernian origin, endeavor to console him. When the sick man indulged in sad prophecies of the poverty which he insisted would ere long come upon them, Nora would gaily repeat to him the Irish proverb, "Cheer up, my darling, there's a silver lining to every cloud." But they could not live upon smiles and cheering words; and, as the week after week passed, and their live-stock diminished; some strayed, others were shot by some wandering ruffians, a few fell sick, and a tribe of Indians, who were encamped near, did not scruple to lay their hands upon such as came within their reach. Happily for Nora, these Indians belonged to a friendly tribe, otherwise her fear of them would have been still greater than it was. She could not accustom herself to their wild and savage appearance; and the dread seemed mutual, for the Indians seldom approached the abode of the white men. M'Leod had sunk a considerable portion of his little fortune in the purchase of land, stock, &c., trusting to his own industry and exertions for the future support of his family. After a time, then, the destitution which the sick imagination of the poor Scotchman had so long anticipated, stared them in the face. The wife, notwithstanding her hopeful spirit, began to despond; and her husband's health grew daily worse. The feelings of sadness and gloom was a new and unaccustomed one to Nora; so new, that at first the unwelcome tenants could find no abiding-place in her heart. She was determined, however, to hope, though she saw her husband's face grow paler and thinner, day by day; and she would obstinately look forward for better times, though their empty, even of daily food, was fast dwindling away, and though she saw no present means of relief from their present distresses. Nora ceased not to exert herself for the support of those she loved.—Night and day, she toiled; the garden was dug, and, in anticipation of future wants, was sown and planted by her hand. Neigh-

bors she had none; she was alone in her troubles—not a friend to assist, or to advise. Notwithstanding all this, Nora still talked hopefully, still boasted of the "silver lining" which was to shine out of the dark cloud that hovered over their destinies; but her heart was heavy within her, and her bright eyes were often dimmed with tears.

It was winter, and heavy rains had deluged the country. The log house of the M'Leods was surrounded by mud and wet grass; and when, one cold, bleak morning Nora opened her door, and gazed for a moment abroad, the gloomy prospect struck a chill into her heart. A keen northerly wind was blowing fierce and strong; it came howling through the trees, and scattering the fallen leaves into her face. Nora had not been in bed during the previous night; alarm for her husband, and the care which his illness momentarily required had afforded ample employment both for mind and body. On a sudden she heard his voice calling her name. It appeared to her that he spoke in a stronger tone, and she hastened to his bedside full of hope. Alas! for her. She saw his eyes lighted up by delirious fever, and to her terror, perceived that reason had deserted its throne!

With the strength lent by the fierce fever that raged within his veins, he raised himself from his bed, and with difficulty restrained from rushing towards the door. His actions were violent, and he heaped bitter imprecations upon her and upon his child.

At this moment a sound full of horror struck upon the mother's ear. There was a sudden shriek, and then the fearful shouts of fifty savage voices burst loudly and suddenly forth, startling the echoes for miles around. At well did Nora recognize the feeble cry she heard. It was the voice of her little Jamie, who had been playing in the garden, in unconscious glee. Quicker than thought, she sprang to the door, and gazed distractedly on the scene before her. Her darling was in the hands of the Indians, of Indians, too, whose aspect was totally unknown to her. In a moment she guessed the truth, and that the dreaded Camanches were upon them! In vain she struggled to free him; in vain did the child hold up his little hands, and implore help from her, who never yet had been deaf to his prayers.

As if the stunning sounds of the terrible war whoop, the peevish child was held before his mother's eyes, and while she was forcibly held back, the scalping knife did its revolting office! The bright sunny curls were hung at the belt of the savage who performed the deed, while the boy was flung palpitating, and barely possessed of life, at the feet of his parent.

It was now Nora's turn to suffer, and another of these relentless savages speedily seized hold of his now unresisting victim. Another moment would have decided her fate, when the arm of her enemy was arrested by the appearance of a new actor on the scene; a gaunt form, who, (without any previous warning,) approached the group, and attracted the attention of all.

It was M'Leod, whose wild ravings could not be restrained, and who, with delirious unconsciousness of his danger, stalked amongst them. His wild actions and strange gestures, sufficiently attested the wandering of his mind, and the Indians stood appalled. Tall warriors in their fierce war-paint bent their heads reverently before him; and impressed with the notion of his being inspired, and acting under the especial protection of the Great Spirit, these untamed and revengeful children of the forest shrank awe-struck from his presence.

Slowly and in silence they retreated, and ere another minute had elapsed, Nora was left alone with the husband who had so unconsciously saved her.

On the ground, on the very spot where he had so lately played in childish glee, lay the bleeding body of the dying child. Who can describe the feelings of the mother, as lifting him in her arms, she tried to hope that the outrage he had undergone would not prove a mortal injury. Gently and tenderly she laid him on his little bed, and then, and not till then, did she return to her painful task of soothing and quieting the invalid. With gentle words she persuaded him to return to his bed, but even then she could not leave him for a moment.

At intervals she heard the faint and feeble moan of her suffering child, but though the mother's heart was torn within her, she could not desert her post. Towards the evening the sick man became more composed, his ravings suddenly ceased, his eyes closed, and a deathlike calm spread over his features. Nora listened, but in vain for his breathing; she felt that he was dead, and that she was alone; she did not weep, however, but sat in a state of stupid insensibility. She was roused from this trance of despair, by a sound, small and low; but

* I fear such instances of savage atrocity were not rare among the earlier settlers, on the Mexican frontier especially, and on the northern settlements, where the cruel tribe of the Camanches have so much power, such horrid events are matter of history. Cases have been known or recovered after scalping; I myself saw a young man at Galveston, who did not appear at all the worse for the operation.

one which heard, can never be forgotten—the last sound of parting breath! It was small and low, for it was the breath of a little child—the signal that its pure and innocent spirit was about to meet its God! In a moment Nora was by his side, on her knees, imploring with wild eagerness for his young life, and covering its little hands and face with kisses. The struggle was brief, and when the mother saw that it was dead, she fell senseless. She recovered, she knew not how, and it seemed as though a fearful dream had passed over her. Oh that sad and terrible awakening after affliction! The doubt—the fear of the reality—and then the gradual and overwhelming belief in the worst! Poor Nora felt all this, as gradually she roused herself into sense and life. It was all true—her child, her first, her only one was taken from her. She could not weep, here was a hard, tearless grief. On a sudden, however, the thought of her husband crossed her mind, and a dim recollection of his last sad moment caused her to shudder, as though body and soul were parting asunder. Mechanically she rose, and approaching his bed, leaned over what she imagined the senseless clay of him she loved. Her head rested on his breast, when she thought—could it be fancy! that she shuddered slightly and feebly. Breathlessly she listened. It was no delusion—she was alive!—Death had not claimed his prey, and he might yet recover. Poor Nora! The eyes which were dry when heavy affliction struck her, were now flooded in salutary drops under the sudden influence of joy. Her first impulse was one of deep and overpowering gratitude; but her thankfulness was, like her grief, silent and subdued. She sat down beside the bed, and patiently awaited till he should awake. For several hours did she watch by her husband's side, and morning was again stealing over the sky when he awoke, and in feeble accents whispered her name; his reason was restored, and Nora felt that all present danger was over. Hours sped by—hours spent by the grateful wife in ministering to his recovery.—He was weak as an infant, and she dared not tell him of their loss, and that their child lay near them a lifeless corpse.

The next day, after Nora had as usual been addressing words of encouragement to her patient, and carefully concealing from him her own deep distresses, she was startled by hearing her husband's footsteps approaching their abode. In a few minutes, a man on horseback stopped at the door, and without ceremony entered the house. Nora did not rise, for the hand of her sleeping husband was clasped in hers, while silent tears chased each other down her pale cheeks. Her baby lay buried near, and for her feeble husband, where was she to find the means of recruiting his exhausted strength? She had but little food for many days, and how could she seek for more?

She hardly raised her head when the stranger entered, so absorbed was she with these melancholy reflections. The traveller, unconscious of her sorrows, addressed her with a cheerful, hearty voice, "Good morning, marm—how's your man? Ill, I don't doubt—these here diggins ar'n't wholesome any how—I reckon."—Saying this, the stranger, who was a portly man of respectable appearance, seated himself without ceremony in the chimney-corner. Shelter is never refused in the prairie, and to that he was welcome; gladly would Nora have set food in plenty before her guest. She gave him, however, of that which she had, and the stranger soon learned the almost destitute condition of his young hostess.

The traveller possessed a kind and friendly heart, and a well-filled purse withal. Liking the appearance of the young settlers, and admiring the cleanliness of the cottage, he pitied their misfortunes, and hastened to procure necessaries and comforts for the desolate inhabitants of the watery prairie. Having then cheered the sufferers with words of hope, and seen the remains of the dead infant interred, he left them, promising to return. Two more weeks sped by—M'Leod had left his bed, and sat weak and trembling by the fire, while Nora, though her thoughts often wandered to the grave of her child, looked at him with eyes full of gratitude and happiness. Their talk was of the kind stranger, and of their hopes that he would soon return. And when, soon after this, they again saw his benevolent countenance, and heard his loud, hearty greeting, what joy was theirs. The stranger was a rich land-holder and cotton-grower, and being in want of an overseer on a hom he could depend, he fixed upon M'Leod to fill the office. He gave his protegee a pretty house, located in a healthy clearing not many miles distant from their own property. M'Leod was to be a man having authority, and they had wherewithal to live in comfort and content. When Nora entered her new habitation, leaning on her husband's arm, she looked up in his face, "Ah, now, Jamie," she said, "and didn't I tell you there was a silver lining to every cloud!"

The divine sanction of Human Government. Bishop Doane delivered the annual oration on the 4th ult. before the Society of Cincinnati, of New Jersey and Trenton. The Cincinnati, never published, and

therefore we shall not probably see this address in print, which we the more regret, as we hear it warmly commended. Its main subject was one which seems lately to have forced itself upon the minds, and to have found assurance from the lives or pens of some of our most thinking and considerate men in various parts of the country, viz—the connection between government and God. We have gone on reflecting so much and so often in this country, that all power is in and from the people—and that the will of the majority is the infallible rule and measure, not only of authority, but of right—that too many have lost sight of the more ancient fundamental truth, old as the creation and to last while it lasts—that man, with all that he inherits, or devises, or compasses, is but a creature, the instrument of an Omnipotent giver and judge; and that however, "dressed in a little brief authority," he may "sometimes fret and strut his hour on the stage,"—there is One mightier than he, who "shapes his ends." It is probably from the manifestations, frequent and formidable now-a-days, of the irresponsible spirit and irresponsible acts produced by the most mischievous dogmas of the uncontrolled and uncontrollable majorities of popular majorities—of the practical adoption of the most false of axioms, as too often understood and applied, that the voice of the people is the voice of God—that thinking men have found it necessary to recur to and recall the absolute truth—that government must derive its sanction from Heaven—and that man is but an agent of an all-wise, and all good, and all-powerful principal.

To Professor Taylor Lewis, of the University, belongs the credit of having first in recent days and with great force put forth this truly sound and conservative doctrine, in an address, delivered some year or two ago, on the true idea of a state. He then invoked the testimony of his favorite Plato to witness what higher authority, that of revelation, confirms—that the rulers and the ruled, are alike held to act in obedience to the will of God, and that government is something higher and holier, than a mere human contrivance for merely temporary ends. Within a few weeks, Mr. Barnard, of Albany, in an address before the University in this city—Mr. Ghosts, of Mass., in an address at a celebration of the Dane law school at Cambridge, and Bishop Doane at Trenton, have enforced, each in his own admirable manner, the same general and wholesome truth—truths upon the observance of which we can alone hope to perpetuate freedom with knowledge and religion—the only freedom worth possessing or worth preserving. N. Y. Courier.

The Observer of Brussels states that on Saturday last in the afternoon a great crowd was assembled round a remarkably light and low two-wheeled carriage, to which were harnessed eighteen small Scotch terriers, six abreast, stationed on the Boulevard de France. While the people were wondering at this extraordinary equipage, four gentlemen arrived in a handsome carriage and alighted: After a short conference and comparing their watches, one of them (a gentleman, says the Observer) took his seat in the dog-carriage, and, with whip and reins in his hands, started off at full speed, followed by all the fashionable and sporting men of Brussels on horse back. It was to decide a bet made by the driver that he would with this strange vehicle and team make the tour of the whole boulevards in thirty-five minutes; and at the end of thirty-three minutes he had completely accomplished his undertaking by turning to the spot from which he had set out. The charioteer then coolly released his cattle, wrapped each of them in a small blanket, and carefully laid them in his own carriage, into which one of his groom's also entered and returned to his lordship's residence, while he himself walked coolly away, having by the stakes and the bet he had made gained £600 sterling.

A most reprehensible joke was perpetrated by a young clergyman and some very foolish young men and women on board the steamboat Delaware a few days since. The victims of this serious hoax are a young gentleman and lady, scarcely at all acquainted with each other, who were married in fun during the pleasure excursion, but found out on getting ashore that the voyage upon which they had embarked promised to be longer than they had intended—being for life and death. The gentleman behaves very gallantly on the subject, and leaves the matter entirely at the choice of the lady; if she chooses to consider herself a bride, he will accept in earnest the hand he took in sport. The lady, however, we believe, is much mortified and chagrined at the affair. The young clergyman who could behave so thoughtlessly ought to travel to Jericho and "carry till his beard be grown." N. Y. Tribune.

The King of Denmark has sold his possessions in the East Indies, held by the crown more than 200 years, to the British Government for 1,125,000 rix dollars.