

Drury), feeds solely on the leaf of the Palma Christi, and produces remarkably soft cocoons, the silk of which is so delicate and glossy that it is impracticable to wind it off like other silk from the cocoons; it is therefore spun like cotton, and the thread thus manufactured is woven into a coarse kind of white cloth of loose texture, but of still more incredible durability than the other, the lifetime of one person being seldom sufficient to wear out a garment made of it. It is used not only for clothing, but for packing fine



cloths. Some manufacturers in England to whom the silk was shown, seemed to think that it could there be made into shawls equal to any received from India.

These remarks are equally applicable to the quality of the Canadian silkworms' produce; and the objection which has stood in the way to its more general culture, the difficulty of unwinding or carding the silk from the cocoon, can be overcome without any particular difficulty. I found that one-third part of the common corrosive potash used in soap-making, added to two thirds of warm soft water, was sufficient to dissolve the gummy substance which attaches to the cocoons and renders them stiff and parchment like, without injury to the silk, which could then be unwound or carded with perfect ease. After allowing the cocoons to remain in the solution a few minutes, they should be gently rinsed in clean, warm soft water, in which they may be suffered to remain during the process of unwinding the silk.

In a future article I shall give a few practical instructions for the guidance of those who may wish to give the culture of silk from the Canadian insects a trial, with some particulars connected with their habits not mentioned in "the books;" and it now only remains to add that "a subscriber" or others interested can see at the office of the CANADA FARMER specimens of the silk of these caterpillars unwound from the cocoon and clear of gum, as well as specimens of the moths of each.

Engravings are given with the present article of the cocoons of cecropia, promethia and polyphemus; that of the luna is so similar to the last named, as to render an illustration unnecessary. E. H. C.

Abnormal growth of Potatoes.

(To the Editor of the CANADA FARMER.)

SIR:—I have the pleasure to enclose, with this communication, some sketches of a very extraordinary "sport" occurring in a potato-patch in our county; and I think I may with some confidence hazard the opinion that from the first description of this admirable esculent by Caspar Bauhin in 1590, or, if you prefer the popular opinion, its first transplantation into Ireland from Virginia by Sir Walter Raleigh up to the present moment, no more singular tuberous eccentricity has been developed.

On Saturday, the 29th day of August, a farmer named John O'Neill, residing in the 10th concession of the township of Smith, brought into Peterboro', and deposited in the shop of Mr. Kempt, chemist, where they were seen by myself and many others, the produce of one hill of potatoes. He had gathered them—I cannot say dug them, for a reason that will appear hereafter—but a few hours previously, and they were consequently perfectly fresh. In all there were nearly forty tubers, every one of which was more or less eccentric in habit. The largest of those I sketched weighed nearly half a pound, and bore a

striking resemblance to an ape. My sketch is a faithful and accurate representation, without the slightest exaggeration, and, as will be observed, has arms, with hands and nails, the latter quite white, partially developed legs, and a pot-belly precisely similar to that of the *simia satyrus*; there is also a small spherical excrescence which may pass for a head.

Another peculiarity of these potatoes is, that from many of them leaves are sprouting, as shown in the smaller drawing, the leaves, when I saw them, being quite fresh and unwilted.

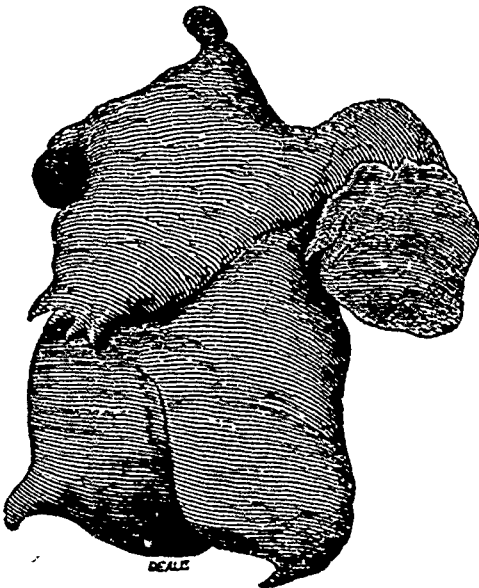
Still another singular circumstance connected with them is that, with the exception of two or three, they all grew upon the halms of the plant, and not beneath the surface of the ground.

The man in whose field these monstrosities were produced offers no explanation respecting their appearance. In the last week of April he sowed Early Rose seed, and the result, with the exception of the above-named "hill," was a crop of potatoes of that best of all our known varieties. Neither have I any theory to suggest. "Freaks of nature" are not very unfrequent, but the one now pictured and described



is the most singular that has been presented to my notice in the vegetable world.

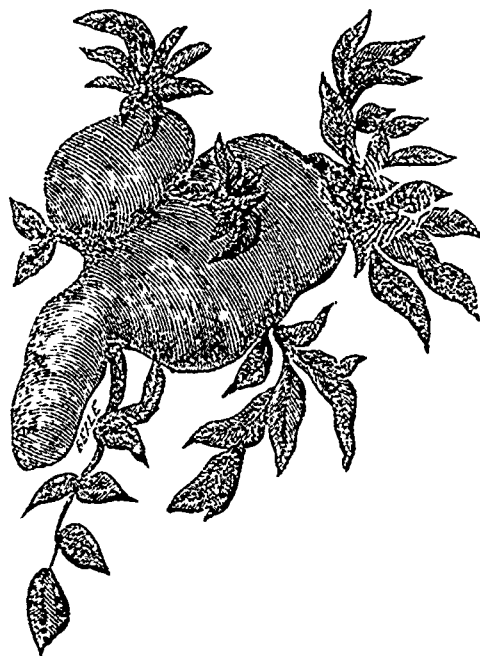
I wish, with all my heart, that Darwin could obtain a sight of these potatoes. They might add



another to his "Theories of Development." His traces man ("fearfully and wonderfully made" indeed!) back to the "lowly organized lancelet," thus assigning him "a pedigree of prodigious length, but not, it may be said (and truly), of noble quality."

With these specimens of the *solanum tuberosum*

before his eyes, who knows but that he might extend the pedigree into another and even less "noble" kingdom. He can scarcely make "smaller potatoes" of us than he has already done.



I will only add that the drawings of the larger potato are, to suit the dimensions of the pages of your journal, reduced in size about one-third.—I am, &c.,

VINCENT CLEMENTI, B.A.
Peterboro', September 1, 1874.

Three-Thorned Acacia for Hedges.

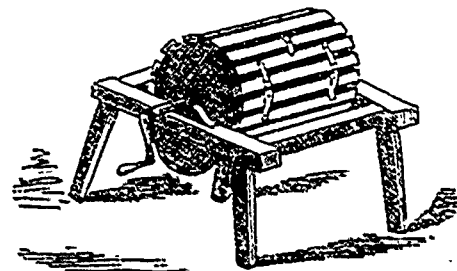
(To the Editor of the CANADA FARMER.)

SIR:—I have in one or two instances seen a recently planted hedge of three-thorned acacia which the planters expected would be successful; but although I have travelled over a good deal of south-western Canada, where this tree grows to a considerable size, I have never seen an actual hedge of it. Could you or any of your readers inform me where such a hedge has been a success in Canada, and what its merits and demerits? It is certainly well supplied with thorns, and does not seem so much inclined to sprout as other acacias. The tree grows to a large size, and seems to endure this climate. Will it form a close hedge? Is it liable to diseases and insects? Will it sprout if ground contiguous be ploughed? Will not its roots take possession of a wide space? These are questions which I hope some of our friends can answer. Perhaps some one who has seen it tested in the United States can best answer these questions.—I am, &c.,

E. M.
Duart, August 31st, 1874.

Root Cleaner.

"A Perth correspondent" asks about a simple root-cleaner. The annexed figure illustrates one of the most simple and effective appliances for the purpose that we know of. The cylinder is two feet in diameter, and three feet long; the head made of two



inch plank, and the slats one inch thick, two inches wide and three-fourths of an inch apart. The door is put on with a pair of strap hinges as represented. Roots may be completely washed by revolving the lower part of the machine in water.