

From the United States.

[BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Washington, D.C., Dec. 27, 1879.

One of the most interesting objects to the agriculturist who visits Washington is the "Agricultural Department" of the United States, where samples of various products from every portion of the world, together with information relating to their culture in suitable soil and climate, are gathered and liberally distributed to practical and scientific farmers, planters and gardeners throughout the whole country. The great seed-room is a bee-hive and a curiosity-shop, where wheat from Egypt, oats from Norway, onions from Mexico, potatoes from Peru, and thousands of seeds and nuts not indigenous to this soil are packed and distributed for experimental planting and report of result. Not only are they packing and shipping grains and nuts, but flower seeds of such as bloom from the regions of snow to the flaming tropics, and plants and trees with wood and fruits of great value in commerce. Among the most recent acquisitions to the latter, and which is at present being experimented upon in different latitudes, are several varieties of Japanese bamboo. It is believed that the most hardy of the twelve varieties that grow in Japan will grow in the latitude of Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio, and from the results thus far attained in raising the young bamboo in those latitudes it is not improbable one or two of the varieties might be made to grow successfully in some portions of Canada. The rapidity of growth and the variety of uses to which the bamboo may be put makes it a very valuable acquisition. The first shoots that sprout up from the root in a few weeks are cut and eaten like asparagus. The next growth is allowed to attain a great height, which it does in two or three years. It is then cut down and the wood used for baskets, mats, tables, canes, and many fancy articles of value. In a short time another tree has shot up like magic from the old roots. The Japanese persimmon is another tree just being experimented with by the Department and the fruit-growers throughout the country, to whom the Commissioner has sent and is still sending small trees and roots of the more hardy varieties. The successful propagation of the Japanese persimmon in this country and Canada will bring to our markets a large luscious fruit, and secure to the farmer and orchardist a crop valuable not only for its abundant yield and delicious flavor, but for the many medicinal qualities ascribed to it by many eminent physicians of Japan and Europe.

In the laboratory of the Department may be witnessed some important achievements, which may result in great benefit to the practical farmer who may desire to utilize them. Among the very many which attract attention, none are so important to the latitude of Canada as the manufacture of sugar from common corn-stalks. The samples of sugar, molasses and whiskey manufactured from the green corn-stalks are equal to the finest samples in the various jars in the laboratory made from sorghum, beet or the regular sugar-cane. The report made by the Commissioner to Congress gives the details for the manufacture of sugar and molasses from the corn stalk and sorghum, and it is alleged that its simplicity and the valuable results will lead to its adoption by many farmers, not only for domestic uses, but for commercial purposes.

The museum of the Department is an attractive and instructive place, not only to the practical farmer, but to every man who is a lover of art or has a taste for the curious and the beautiful. In a glass case, extending the full length of the large

museum, are plaster of paris models, colored so nicely by art that it equals nature, of all the fruits and melons and nuts and vegetables from the temperate zone to the tropics. There are 1,000 varieties or models of apples, from the pink-cheeked diminutive crab to the ponderous golden-skinned "Gloria Mundi," weighing 29 ounces. There are quinces, plums, pears, peaches, &c., &c., from the temperate zone and from the tropics; pomegranite, alligator pears, Japan quince, shaddock, sapodilla, fruit of the palm, guava, mango, Japanese persimmon, fruit of passion-vine, and many others. There are models of pumpkins as big as a half-barrel, potatoes, onions and other vegetables of astonishing growth. In the high glass cases ranged on each side are the natural products of the soil. In one case, silk of Japan, China, France and America, showing the worm, the cocoon, the raw silk, the floss, and the silk worked into the most beautiful fabrics. In another, cotton, from the white ball on the stem to the white goods from the spindles of Fall River and Manchester. Then flax and hemp, as it grows in the fields, as beaten, and as manufactured, showing varieties from Portugal, Brazil, Argentine Republic, the United States, and several samples from Canada West. Near them are also samples from Ireland, France and Japan; but the most curious are the samples of Egyptian flax, bleached by a process found by Gastinel Bey, agricultural chemist of Egypt. In the cases for wool there are some beautiful samples of Merino, Cotswold, Southdown, and crosses of these breeds. There are also fine silky fleeces of the Angora goat, the Rocky Mountain goat and the Cashmere goat.

There are cases devoted to stuffed birds, animals and fishes; cases of medicinal herbs and barks from Iceland to Cape Horn; tobacco in the leaf from Cuba, China, United States, &c.; jars of flour from wheat, rye, rice, arrow-root, &c.; samples of curious "Indian foods," and huge cases of wheat, oats, rye, corn, barley, beans, peas, and many grass seeds, in jars and on the stalk. These samples of grains and seeds are from all portions of the globe where they will grow, and present to the intelligent farmer an instructive lesson in the results of climate, soil and cultivation upon the various grains and seeds before him. Side by side are the many varieties of wheat from France, Germany, England, Canada, Russia, Egypt and the United States. The largest oats, although not the best, are the big black oats from Norway and Poland. Of corn there is a splendid display, shelled, in the ear and on the stalk. The most curious is the Pueblo corn, raised by the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, the kernels of which are round and black. There are jars of beans and peas of every conceivable form and color, coming from the most savage tribes and the most civilized society of man. The most beautiful collections are those from France, being their contribution to the Centennial Exposition, and the most curious those from Chili.

We will now leave the Agricultural Department, and in the interest of the agriculturist skip over to the State Department. We find a dispatch from Buenos Ayres, showing the agricultural condition of the Argentine Republic. The sheep business is an example. In 1852 there were five and a half millions of sheep in that country; in 1879 there are fifty-six millions. To improve the stock, breeding sheep are imported from foreign lands, at from \$90 to \$300 per head. The number of horned cattle is estimated at fourteen millions. Immigration has increased from 5,000 in 1860 to 36,000 in 1878. About 80 per cent. are farmers, who come with their families to settle on the public lands. They use the various labor-saving implements, including steam threshing machines made in the United States. Of American products wanted in Buenos Ayres, the Consul names cheese, hams and paper. LOTUS.

This communication from Washington came to hand too late for insertion in the January number.

On the Wing.

Having heard Whitby Township spoken of as being the "Garden of Canada," and that much fine stock was raised in that locality; also, as Mr. Wm. Hodgson, of Myrtle, Ont., had advertised a sale of Cotswolds, we deemed this a good time to visit that section. The principal stockmen in the neighborhood attended the sale; some were there from distant parts of Canada, and two or three from the States. Mr. Hodgson's stock has gained a very high reputation, he having carried off the highest honors at the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia, and at different State Shows; he has also been awarded high honors in Canada. The sheep sold averaged \$35 per head.

Mr. Hodgson kindly invited us to his residence the following day, and also an American gentleman named J. H. Swales, of Logan, Indiana. We were furnished with a horse and cutter to drive round and see the fine stock in the neighborhood. We first drove to Mr. H. H. Spencer's, near Brooklyn. Mr. Spencer's name is known to all breeders of pure Southdown sheep. It gave us great pleasure to see his flock of really prime animals, all so well attended and such fine specimens. Mr. S. is also raising a flock of Shropshire Downs. This class of sheep drew our particular attention when last in England, and we look on them as the coming sheep for America. Mr. Spencer coincides with our view. They are not yet sufficiently known on this continent. They are fine, hardy, black-faced sheep, having a larger carcass than the Southdown, and much finer quality of mutton than the Lincolns or Cotswolds; they carry a fine heavy, compact fleece of good wool. Mr. Spencer has some fine specimens of this class. He has tried the crossing of this breed with the Cotswold; as a result he has a lamb beautifully and clearly blotched and spotted with distinct marks of black and white on its face and legs. This lamb we think the prettiest (if we may use that term) we have ever seen. We hope Mr. S. will have it at the Exhibitions next year; if he does go and see it. We should like to have a flock of such sheep.

BEAUTIFY YOUR FARMS.

We then drove to the farm of J. Dryden, M.P.P. for S. Ontario. As we rode along Maple Street we observed the farms to be well tilled. Fine crops and stock are raised in this locality; this is the head-centre or hub from which is disseminated the largest number of farm animals to improve the stock of this continent. Many thousands of sheep, horses and cattle are taken from this and the surrounding country to the States annually to improve the stock of that country. Americans are continually coming and going.

We are not surprised that this should be called the "Garden of Canada." The immense quantities of turnips, mangolds and carrots raised—the fine stock and well cultivated fields contrast greatly with the farms in many sections. Our American companion frequently expressed his admiration of the country, and particularly of the continuous rows of maple trees that have been planted along the road-sides, now grown to be fine, handsome trees. He gave us one good hint that we hope our readers may profit by; while he admired the substantial barns and houses, he complained greatly about the dirty, careless, neglected appearance they presented in comparison to the farm buildings in Indiana. He informed us that the farmers in that State made a practice of going over their buildings at house-cleaning time; while the ladies would be arranging the inside the men would take their whitewash brushes and go over the outside of the houses, barns and outbuildings, and give them a coat. They would put a little coloring round the doors, windows and corners of