

## INSECT DYES.

Cochineal is the source of artists' carmine and carmine lake, while, when precipitated with a salt of tin, it also yields a splendid scarlet. The cochineal insect, of which the female, like that of the nearly allied lac insect, alone yields the dye, is originally a native of Mexico, where it is parasitic on the leaves of the prickly pear. The males of the coccus cacti, as the species is called, are minute insects furnished with well-developed wings, feathered antennae and a long pair of hair-like processes at the hinder extremity of the body. On the other hand, the female is a repulsive looking, wingless creature, with very short posterior hairs and nearly double the size of her partner. These insects adhere tightly to the smooth surface of the fleshy leaves of the prickly pear and are not unlike purple wood lice in general appearance.

When the harvest time has arrived the cultivators stretch out on the ground pieces of linen at the foot of the plants, and detach the cochineals from them, brushing the plants with a rather hard brush or scraping them off with a blunt knife. If the season be favorable the operation may be repeated three times in the course of a year on the same plantation. The insects thus collected are killed by dipping into boiling water, by being put into an oven, or by being placed on a plate of hot iron. When withdrawn from the boiling water they are laid on strainers in an airy position, first in the sun and afterward in the shade. In commerce three sets of cochineal are recognized: first, the masticue, of a reddish color, with a more or less abundant glaucous powder; second, the noir, and third the sylvestre, which is smaller and of a reddish color. This last description, which is gathered from wild cacti, is the most highly esteemed of all. Each year there are imported into France 200,000 kilogrammes of cochineal insects, which represent a value of 3,000,000 francs, \$600,000.

The cochineal trade is chiefly in the hands of the Spanish and the French. By the latter Government these insects have been successfully introduced into Algeria, where they yield a large revenue. About the middle of the last century, the Government was accustomed to purchase the entire harvest at the rate of 15 francs the kilogramme. At the still earlier date they were introduced into the Canaries, where they also became well established, but the attempts to acclimatize them in Corsica and the south of France resulted in failure.

The Ontario Button Co., Waterloo, Ont., are moving to larger premises.

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—The Belgian cotton spinners find themselves in the same boat with the British and German cotton spinners, owing to the shortage of raw cotton, and now the policy of growing cotton in the Congo Free State, which is under control of the King of the Belgians, is being advocated as a means of safeguarding their future supply.

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## CHEMICALS AND DYESTUFFS.

The demand for chemicals and dyestuffs during the last month has been very small, which was only natural at this time of the year, owing to stock-taking. Prices remain firm on all lines, and nothing new of interest to report:

Bleaching powder .....	\$ 1 60 to \$ 1 80
Bicarb. soda .....	1 75 to 2 00
Sal. soda .....	0 80 to 1 00
Carbolic acid, 1 lb. bottles .....	0 35 to 0 40
Caustic soda, 60° .....	2 10 to 2 25
Caustic soda, 70° .....	2 35 to 2 50
Chlorate of potash .....	0 09 to 0 10
Alum .....	1 35 to 1 50
Copperas .....	0 65 to 0 75
Sulphur flour .....	1 60 to 1 70
Sulphur rock .....	1 75 to 1 80
Sulphate of copper .....	0 06 to 0 06 1/2
White sugar of lead .....	0 07 to 0 08
Sumac, Sicily, per ton .....	57 50 to 58 00
Bich. potash .....	0 7 1/2 to 0 08 1/2
Soda ash, 48° to 58° .....	1 25 to 1 35
Chip logwood .....	1 50 to 1 75
Castor oil .....	0 07 to 0 08
Cocanut oil .....	0 07 to 0 08

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