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Account of an Agricultural Excursion into St. John's, Berkeley, by the Editor of the Southern Cabinet.

No. 1.

We do not believe that we shall be able to render a more acceptable service to the Agricultural community, than by visiting the different sections of the Southern States, examining the soils and the improvements made, the modes of culture, economy and police, and reporting on them, as well as on such other matters as may fall under our observation. By pursuing this plan steadily for a few years, many districts will be examined, embracing every variety of soil and culture, in all the various ways now practised among us. The practices of some districts will, no doubt, be found to be superior to that of others, and some neighbourhoods, will surpass those adjoining in the culture of particular crops, or in their domestic arrangements. If these be carefully collected and reported, the planters of different sections will not only become better informed of the course of culture adopted elsewhere, but will also be able to compare it with their own, and make such alterations as may render desirable.

While editing the Southern Agriculturist, we gave an account of the Management of Poochee, and of the Agriculture of Middle and Upper St. John's, Berkeley. We now propose revisiting this section of country to ascertain what improvements had taken place, and what alterations made. Accordingly we left Charleston on the 26th of December last, and, as we supposed, allotted ample time, and so planned our excursion as to attain our object. But unfortunately we were not able to accomplish all we desired and intended. Nearly the whole time we were in the country, it was so cold and rainy as to render it, if not impossible, yet highly unpleasant, to venture out, even to ride from one plantation to another. We, therefore, visited but few, and our account both of the culture, product and economy of this section of country, is far less full and satisfactory than we hoped to have made it. We have had the pleasure, however, of seeing many of the planters, (some since our return to town) and from them we have added to our stock of information. But there are many things connected with the police and economy of plantations which we wished to have noticed, and others would have suggested themselves to us more readily while rambling about, than while seated by the fireside, or at the table of our friends. We wished also to have been more careful in our examination of the various soils cultivated, and more minute in our investigations. Causes, however, beyond our control, as we have just stated, prevented us from carrying into full effect our plans.

The parish of St. John's, Berkeley, is long and narrow, extending from the branch of Cooper River to a short distance above the Eutaw spring, a distance of near 50 miles. Its Eastern boundary is the Santee, and its Western, the parish of St. James, Goosecreek, embracing the Western branch of Cooper River. The lower section of this parish includes some of the finest Rice plantations in the State. But of these it is not our intention, at present, to give any account, and we shall therefore, confine our remarks to middle and upper St. John's. The soil of this parish embraces almost every variety, with perhaps the exception that the stiff clay preponderates, so far as to form what may be termed a clayey loam. In the upper part, the sand predominates, forming a very light soil. In this classification, we of course confine ourselves to the high lands under cultivation. Throughout the whole parish, pine barrens abound, and along the Santee, and in other places, portions of the swamps are reclaimed.

The crops cultivated are cotton, corn, peas, potatoes, groundnuts, (in small quantities,) and rice in sufficient quantities to supply the demand for family use. Cotton, of course, is the principal crop intended for market while the others are generally planted only to meet the demand of the plantation; though we were happy to find that on some plantations, corn was also one of the crops raised for sale, and that it was profitable.

We were sorry to find, that no rotation is adopted, but that usually, the fields supposed best adapted to the culture of particular crops, were selected for these crops, and under such were kept with little variation. Yet to such an extent do they now carry the manuring system, that these fields, with the exception of those cultivated in potatoes, have actually so improved as, in some instances, to yield from 50 to 100 per cent. more than formerly. This has been brought about, as we have already stated, by manu-

ring, and in nothing were we more pleased than to find how universally this practice has been adopted, and how strenuously all are engaged in this laudable work. When we first visited St. John's, so little was the system of manuring appreciated, that the few who had commenced the practice systematically, were actually laughed at by their neighbors as visionaries—not that manuring was wholly unattended to, but because they thought it impossible to manure the whole of their crops. Little attention, therefore, was paid to the subject. What little manure was made, was placed in meagre quantities around the corn, or some crop near the homestead, and the clearing of new land was relied on to supply the places of those fields which were worn out by constant culture. In this respect, we were happy to find there had been a great change of opinion and consequently of practice. On every plantation we visited, (and we have understood, on all or nearly all) the collecting, preparing and applying of manures, is considered of primary importance, and is now conducted systematically. The manure most used, is what is here called "compost." It consists of quantities of leaves, gathered in the woods and carried into the stables, cattle, sheep and hog pens, and from thence into the fields. A specific number of hands and carts are set apart for his work, and on no account (on most plantations) are they diverted to any other. Dr. Ravenel has one cart and mule, with the driver, and two young negroes, (a girl and boy, who could not be employed advantageously in the fields,) constantly engaged in hauling in "trash," consisting principally of pine and oak leaves raked up in the woods adjoining. The distance is not great, and with this one, thus employed throughout the whole year, and the use of two ox carts, for five or six weeks in summer, he manages to keep every thing well littered, and to make about 15,000 ox cart loads of manure, each load averaging about 50 bushel baskets. On this he pens about 60 head of cattle during the winter, (all of which he regularly feeds) and about 150 to 160 during summer, about a dozen or more horses, a tolerable large flock of sheep, and a number of hogs.

Major Porcher and Mr. Joseph Palmer, keep four carts constantly at work, but the distance they have to cart is greater. We did not ascertain the number of animals penned by either of those gentlemen. At Major Porcher's, we saw a quadrangular pile of manure, taken from the stables alone, the base of which would measure from 80 to 100 feet, and which was from 5 to 6 feet high. That from the cowpen we did not see. We regret we had it not in our power to visit the plantations of Messrs. Joseph Palmer, Jas. Gilliard and Thos. W. Porcher, all residing in the upper part of St. John's, and all actively engaged in manuring their lands and improving their crops. We had, however, the pleasure of meeting these gentlemen after our return, in this city, and from them we gathered a few particulars, relative to these.

From the vast amount of new vegetable matter (and that not of a kind easily decomposed,) carried into the pens, the relative quantity of animal manure cannot be large, as may easily be supposed.—On some plantations, all of the cotton seed, which can be spared, is spread in one of the pens and this manure is then used for the crop to which the cotton seed is usually applied. This plan, however, is very little adopted, the cotton seed being more generally applied alone. Others scatter over the pen, a short time before carting out, a quantity of salt; whilst others again previous to the hauling it away, throw their manure into heaps, scattering between each layer, a quantity of salt, sufficient to be diffused throughout the whole mass. This manure is highly prized and its effects have been very gratifying. We shall have occasion to refer to this manure when we come to speak of the crops.

Lime, marl and ashes, are also getting into use, and some small experiments have been highly satisfactory. In some few instances, the leaves taken out of the woods have been at once carted into the fields, and used with benefit to the succeeding crop. These fields are of a clayey nature, and of course the best adapted for such crude manure. It was truly gratifying to us to find how much attention is paid now in this parish to manuring. Many things, which not a few years ago were permitted to lie neglected, and were rather considered nuisances, but not of such quantities as to require abatement, by being carried off, are now assiduously sought after, collected, and carted off to the fields at the proper periods, where they fulfil their destiny, by a dung materially to their fertility. In such just estimation is manuring now held, and so striking have been the effects, that planters are no longer anxious to clear new fields, unless forced to do so by the want of room. The attention of most of them is turned to the renovating of their old fields, and what a few years ago would have been deemed a hopeless task, is now actually in progress, and fields which were deemed at most unfit for culture of any kind, are now restored to their pristine fertility. In fact, experiments have been stated to us, going to show, that old fields constantly manured, (and in what would be considered but moderate quantities elsewhere) have become more productive, than fields recently cleared. We select an instance furnished us by Mr. Thomas W. Porcher, Walworth. Among the fields cultivated by him the last year, were three. The first, which we shall designate as No. 1, was

considered as nearly worn out when he first took possession of this plantation, ten years ago. Nos. 2 & 3 were newly cleared, and the last year, were the second and third of their culture. No. 1 had been regularly planted every year for the last ten, but had also been constantly manured. Nos. 2 & 3 were not manured, for the second and third years, are deemed the most productive. With the exception of one or two years, when potatoes were cultivated, no ton had been grown on No. 1, every year; Nos. 2 & 3 had also been cultivated in cotton since they had been cleared. The product of the old field (No. 1) was an average of 170 lbs., that of the new fields (Nos. 2 & 3) 135 and 160 lbs. We find also from referring to our notes, that at Mexico, a field which had been cultivated without rest since 1801, and nearly the whole of that time in cotton, produced 176 lbs. per acre, while the new fields only two years under culture, yielded 77 and 109 lbs. per acre.

It may be said, that the season of 1839 was more favorable to the growth of cotton in old fields than in new. It may have been,—still, however, we do not think that such a difference could have been produced wholly by the season. Those who advocate the clearing of new fields for the culture of cotton, in preference to manuring the old, suggest that the experiments now trying ought not to be relied on, because the best lands were cleared long since, and those which are now being brought under culture for the first time, are what were considered inferior at the time that settlements were made, and fields located, while that which is now undergoing a renovation, as old and worn out fields, were originally the very choicest of the land, and therefore are easily restored, while the new fields, being of inferior quality, are soon exhausted,—consequently, that a true estimate of the advantages or disadvantages of clearing new lands, or manuring old, cannot be made, unless the new lands be also of the best quality. Allowing all that is asked, we cannot but think that if they will take a series of years, (say 10, 15 or 20, the longer the better) they will find that the balance will be greatly in favor of the old land manured; for while the new land is losing its fertility every year, and producing less, the old will be gradually improving until it surpasses even what it was originally.—But again, if the choicest of the lands have been cleared already in this parish, is it not then far preferable to manure the old fields, rather than to clear new, which will last but for a few seasons, and then be worthless. We recollect making a few years ago, a calculation, in the company of a gentleman of this parish, (an excellent planter, and an advocate for clearing new fields) whether it was most advantageous, taking every thing into consideration, to clear new fields or manure the old. We took for data, the actual improvements made on fields with which he was well acquainted, by manuring, and on the other hand, the actual expenditure of time and labor bestowed on clearing and working new ground, as furnished by himself, and the products usually obtained from such fields, for a number of years.—The precise period we do not recollect, nor did we note the calculation at the time. All that we recollect is that the difference was in favor of the old fields, he being judge.—We forget also what reason he assigned for not following out, or at least experimenting, with a view to ascertain how far what appeared so well on paper, was correct in fact. We had not the pleasure of seeing him when last in St. John's, but understood, that he was a most strenuous advocate, for manuring, and carried it to great extent. We do not know what changes have taken place in his opinion, if any, for this calculation did not occur to us at the time, and consequently we made no inquiries on the subject.

[The facts and reasoning of the following article with a few variations that will suggest themselves to every reader will apply as well to the Carolinas as to Tennessee.]

TO THE FARMERS OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE

"How is it that the farmers of Maury are so in debt?" is a question which was asked a few days since in the presence of the writer. This was a poser to the whole crowd present. It could only be answered that the fact is so, not only with the farmers of Maury, but of all Middle Tennessee, to a greater or less extent. No doubt the farmers are about as well off as any other class of citizens in these disjointed times—but they should be, of all men, the most completely independent and unembarrassed.—The great body of them are embarrassed, and have been for the last ten years annually dependent on the mercies of a prompt cotton market. How few can wait even six months for a sale of their cotton? What scores of them are compelled to anticipate their cotton crops to keep off the sheriff? I would arouse my countrymen, if possible, from the lethargy under which they have been slumbering.

One good field hand can cultivate and pick out about ten acres of cotton. Now what is the product of his labor worth? On an average, Middle Tennessee lands will not produce more than 800 lbs. to the acre of seed cotton, or two hundred pounds of clean cotton, worth (at 2 cents, which is a fair average) \$18. Multiply this by the number of acres, and you have the value of that hand's annual labor—\$180. Now compare this with other agricultural products, and you will at once see the question of the embarrassments of Middle Tennessee cotton planters.

The few gentlemen who cultivate Grasses in this County assure me that they make average crops of 2000 lbs. hay to the acre. It is safely computed that the labor bestowed upon 50 acres of grass does not exceed the labor of one good field hand in the year. Hay never sells lower here than 75 cts. per hundred—more frequently \$1 per hundred. But let us take the lowest price, and see what the labor of a hand will yield in the grass culture. The product of one acre of hay (2000 lbs.), at 75 cts. per hundred, is \$150. Multiply this by the number of acres in the crop, and you have the enormous product of the labor of one hand, \$750. If this is so, is it not surprising that the great body of our farmers are still making cotton, which only pays \$180 to the hand? Let any man who doubts it, look at the sorry condition of the few shrewd farmers among us, who are raising grasses; most of them are amassing fortunes!—Let any man who doubts it look at the grass and stock growers of Kentucky, who are annually buying land at \$80 and \$100 an acre! whilst our cotton planters rarely ever catch up with their more bills.

Al, but says, one it requires a capital to start on, and a man should be out of debt and have money to lay out in stock, before he turns his cotton field into a stock farm, and few of us are able to do that.

My dear sir, what better evidences do you want of the ruinous efforts to make cotton on our lands and in our climate. You have been planting cotton ten or twenty years, and are not yet able to purchase stock to begin on! I would advise you at once, to sell some property, which you can best spare, and sever forever the chains that bind you. Renounce, at once and forever, a product which keeps you enslaved to your creditors, and will not permit you as a freeman to turn your labor into a more profitable channel.

The objection has sometimes been made, too, that we cannot sell stock when we raise them—that we have no market. It is sufficient I trust to remark in reply to this objection, that we are two hundred miles nearer the great market of the south, than our neighbors of Kentucky, who have grown rich, and are continuing to pile up wealth by means of this unmarketable commodity. Hemp is a crop on which a few knowing farmers have for the last few years been amassing piles of money with small labor; whilst the great mass of their neighbors have been content to make corn and cotton with great labor and remain impoverished. One of these farmers tells me that his hemp lands average him 800 lbs. to the acre—that a careful calculation satisfies him that (taking the year round) the labor upon an acre of hemp is not greater than that upon an acre of corn—and that he will this year realize \$3 a hundred for his hemp. One good hand can cultivate 20 acres of corn, which, (as our lands generally do not average more than 7 barrels to the acre, which is worth not more than an average of \$1 25 per barrel) is worth about \$175. Twenty acres of hemp, at 800 lbs. to the acre, and \$3 per hundred, is worth \$960! For the last ten years, it is known that Hemp averaged \$5 per hundred. At that price the crop is worth \$600. What a contrast between this and the value of the corn crop, or the crop of cotton.

I only throw out these suggestions for the benefit of such of my neighbors as never take the pains to make these simple calculations for themselves. It is wonderful, but no less true, that whole communities go on from year to year wasting the sweat of their brows on unprofitable work, without ever lifting their eyes to see, or turning their thoughts to reflect upon, the riches the top of Cores so invitingly presents in other and convenient forms of labor. I can point to more than one dozen frugal, industrious, corn and cotton planters in this county, who have toiled hard for ten years; and who in that time have not made one cent by farming. On the other hand, I can point to another dozen farmers, not a whit more industrious or economical, who by cultivating grass or hemp, or roots, or paying attention to their orchards, or raising stock; have in ten years, bought land and negroes to the value of half what they are now worth. Do these facts not speak volumes? I have others of equal or greater force, which for the present I will reserve for another moment of leisure, when I will again advert to this subject. Middle Tennessee is all wrong headed in its farming. Southern Cultivator.

From the Tennessee Agriculturist.
THE JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE.
Clinton College, Nov 20, 1839.

Messrs Editors—For the satisfaction of all who may feel an interest in the culture of the Jerusalem Artichoke, I am disposed to give them, through your paper, so much of its history and mode of culture as I have learned. Having about twenty acres of this valuable product myself, I am often interrogated as to its nature, value and culture.

Its botanic name is *Helianthus Tuberosus*, and it is supposed to have been originally discovered first on the borders of the Gulf of Mexico; whence it has been carried and cultivated in Europe for the table and for food for hogs. But it does not appear to be so productive in England, where it has been cultivated to advantage, as it is here. There 500 bushels to the acre is considered a large crop, but here I am satisfied that one acre of common soil, the second year after planting it, will yield at least 1000 bushels, and many acres will overgo that amount. So that its native country is best adapted to its production. The race which I have discovered

about seven years ago, in Jackson county of this State, by Mr. Samuel Young, and from its correspondence with the description of the Jerusalem Artichoke, I unhesitatingly pronounced it the same. Before discovering the Jerusalem Artichoke, Mr. Young had cultivated for his hogs the common white (*Cinara Colymus*) and finding no profit in them had abandoned their culture. During last spring, about one-eighth of an acre of the Jerusalem Artichoke was discovered on the farm of Harris Tuggle of Wilson county. Mr. T. had seen them in his field for several years, and regarding them as noxious weeds, had tried to exterminate them without success. But when he found by comparing them with mine, that they were Artichokes, he set a different estimate on them. From the farm of Mr. Young various persons have obtained and cultivated them as food for hogs, all of whom unite in their praise. And the accounts given of their productiveness and value in feeding hogs, are almost incredible. Yet the statements are made by men of unquestionable veracity, and the accounts of all who have tried them correspond, so that we can hardly disbelieve. In the spring of 1838, a neighbor of mine, who is incredulous to any report which has the appearance of extravagance, having heard of the products of the Artichoke, remarked that he thought it looked like "too many squirrels up one tree." But when he came last spring to dig some for seed out of my patch, he recalled what he had formerly said, and gave it as his opinion that it was equal to its representation. The great advantage of the Artichoke is, that it contradicts the assertion, that "there is no royal road to wealth," for it will yield considerable profits almost without labor. You have to plough the ground well in January, February or March, (the earlier the better,) and immediately check off 4 1/2 feet each way, and dropping one Artichoke in each check, cover them with the plough. About the time they come up, plough them like Irish potatoes, and then again cross plough them one foot high, and you are done cultivating them forever. The first year they will make from 400 to 700 bushels per acre, and afterwards they will improve for two or three years, till they will yield about double the product of the first year. I now speak from experience. The hogs being allowed to root them all the winter, is an advantage to them, because they root up and soften the soil to a great depth, and the Artichokes will fill the soil as far down as it is pulverized. This they improve for several years, enough always being left by the hogs to set the ground completely. And lest some one should object, that they might freeze if planted in the winter, I remark that this Artichoke will freeze and thaw all the winter, and still be as good in the spring as if it had been in a cellar. The only way in which it may be injured, is by exposure to the air long enough to let it get dry, when it withers up to a hard stick. Hence in transporting them, we have to keep them moist, in order to preserve them.

Your hogs should not go on them till about the first of November, when the trouble of feeding them is over till spring, for each hog "roots" for his living.

Sows with sucking pigs should not go on them, for the Artichokes injure the quality of the milk, so as to make the pigs dwindle. But as soon as pigs are weaned, they will do finely by rooting for their living. Heretofore, I have given Artichokes to all who desired them, and still give to my neighbors who will dig them; but being often called on by persons at a distance, I propose to accommodate them in a manner that will take care of number one. Wherever persons will unite and take a wagon load, I will send a load. I can deliver them at Guilford, Nashville, Franklin, Columbia, Murfreesborough, or McMinnville for \$2 per bushel, 5 bushels being enough to plant an acre.

I am decidedly of the opinion that this Artichoke will form a valuable accession to the husbandry of the western country; because every farmer may keep his hogs through the winter, without labor, by devoting rugged parts of his farm, or some thin woodland, to Artichokes.

FRANCIS H. GORDON.

COMPARATIVE VALUE OF ROOTS.

Mr. HOLMES.—In answer to your old Farmer's queries, which he wished answered in No. 8, vol. 8, of the Farmer, respecting the worth of roots compared with good English hay, corn, &c. &c. I would say that I consider 50 bushels of Ruta Baga turnips for stock, in the hands of a farmer who knows a thing or two about feeding, as your correspondent expresses it, equal to a ton of hay, when fed with a ton of the latter;—and that six hundred bushels well cleaned is an average crop of turnips on an acre of soil when well dressed, not forgetting to use ash freely as a top dressing,—which, calling 64 pounds a bushel, is 36,400 lbs.; which sum, divided by 2,000, the number of pounds in a ton, is 18 tons 400 lbs. to the acre. 3,100 lbs. of turnips is equal to a ton of hay, which is nearly equal to 12 tons, on an acre. Of course they are equal to 120 bushels of corn, calling ten bushels of corn equal to a ton of hay, but I suppose 8 bushels are equal to a ton.

From this data an old Farmer may make his calculations as to Barley, Wheat, &c. I have considered Ruta Baga of about an average worth among other roots for stock; some thick potatoes are worth more per bushel—carrots and sugar beets no doubt are—Flat or round turnips less.

My experience shows that no kind of turnips do well on wet land, nor very dry,

nor in time of drouth, nor will any other kind of roots, not even potatoes. I am aware that many farmers suppose that Ruta Baga properly fed by an experienced farmer, with hay and straw, are worth as much as a pound for pound, as English hay, but I doubt this; therefore I have made my calculation as above. I hope others will give their views on this subject.

Maine Farmer.

MANURE IN THE STATE OF MAINE.

If it were well when I were done
'T were well 'twere done quickly.
SHAKESPEARE.

Mr. HOLMES.—Manure is the foundation of agriculture. If I hear the name of a farmer who professes to be skilful in his occupation; I ask myself the question, does he increase his manure by every possible means? Does he read what the best writers say on the subject of manures, and does he practice accordingly? I have heard many farmers speak to the praise of manure who never in their whole life hauled a single cart load of loam, mud, dirt or other material either to the compost heap or to the barn yard. Now this is what I shall call, wisdom. We have a host of farmers who are subject to that terrible malady, lip wisdom, or wisdom in words only. There is no better remedy for this sore disease than resolution. Let the farmer who has been only praising manure for years yoke his oxen—no! the frost binds the earth in Maine but six or seven months of the year, but notwithstanding this the farmer may haul materials for manure; I say let the farmer yoke his oxen; but perhaps he may thus soliloquize to himself. Indeed I have other work which must soon be done, but I have been talking more than five years of hauling mud, turf, &c. into my barn yard, and I am certain that it is not from lack of time but from lack of resolution that it has not been performed. I say go forward Buck and Bright, I will have one load if it is the last act of my life. It is only necessary for the farmer to acquire the resolution, and the demon of procrastination instantly vanishes.

Rumford, Dec. 1839. R.

Maine Farmer.

SWAMP MUD FOR MANURE.

Swamp mud applied on an upland loam, gravel, or sandy soil, will pay the expense of labor in removing it, two for one the first year, as the statement of facts hereafter annexed fully proves.

Best soil for corn is a mixture of several loads of muck to a knoll of loam, and put it into one heap. In the spring, prior to planting corn, the muck was spread and ploughed under. The crop of corn, where the muck was spread, was large; I thought larger than where barn yard manure was put. A neighboring farmer has made use of muck for several years. The first year he thought it equal to barn yard manure and its effects were perceptible a much longer time. The soil on which the muck was put, was a warm gravelly loam. The muck was used by another neighboring farmer, for manuring corn in the hill, which was used in the following manner: A row of each alternately, one of muck one of barn yard manure and one of hog manure. He assured me the corn manured with the muck was the best. The soil, a sandy loam.

A farmer in New York had four acres of gravelly loam, of equal quality, which he planted with corn. Prior to planting the corn, he applied fifty loads of muck per acre, on two acres; these two acres produced him one hundred and twenty bushels; the other two yielded him only sixty bushels. The next spring these four acres were sowed with oats and grass seed. The oats were more than twice as large on the two acres dressed with muck, as they were on other two. The grass for the four succeeding years produced in much the same ratio. Many other similar improvements might be related. It is presumed that every intelligent and industrious farmer will be satisfied of the utility of muck as manure. Those farms which are interspersed with swamps of muck and uplands either of loam, sand or gravel, may be made at an expense of from five to ten dollars per acre, capable of paying an interest, annually, of one hundred dollars per acre. It is thought that ten dollars expended with economy, will in more circumstances, be sufficient to cart and spread one hundred loads of swamp manure on an acre.

Those who own farms, situated as just stated, now valued at twenty-five dollars per acre, have only to say the word, and go forward, for one or two years, to convince themselves and their neighbors that they have farms intrinsically worth one hundred dollars per acre.

Why so? it may be asked. Because they will pay a net profit over and above an expense, amounting to the interest of one hundred dollars.

Look for a moment at the statement of the New York Farmer above. He tells you he applied fifty loads of muck per acre, the spring (though the fall is a better time) and the muck is better to be laid on lands (the fall) which cost him five dollars. This acre he had an increase of corn of this bushels; at fifty cents per bushel which would leave ten dollars nearly enough to pay the interest of one hundred and fifty dollars, at seven per cent., and this only the first year. It is worthy of consideration that by taking the muck from the low land ditches may be made or improved, so that low lands will produce a bountiful crop of mothy and red top, &c. It is desirable