

rare plants to me. These birds build in the state, and are found in it during all seasons. I have eight, some of which are in beautiful plumage."

AGRICULTURE, &c.

HISTORY OF SILK IN THE UNITED STATES.—The culture of silk first commenced in Virginia. Upon the settlement of that colony, it was deemed an object of the first importance; and the attention of the settlers was strongly directed to it by the British Government, by which silk-worm eggs, white mulberry trees, and printed instructions, were sent over and distributed. King James the First, in the 20th year of his reign, having doubtless, seen the defeat of his plan to encourage the silk culture at home, was induced to attempt it in Virginia; and "having understood that the soil naturally yieldeth store of excellent mulberries," gave instructions to the Earl of Southampton, to urge the cultivation of silk in the colony, in preference to tobacco, "which brings with it many disorders and inconveniences." In obedience to the command, the Earl wrote an express letter on the subject, to the Governor and Council, in which he desired them to compel the colonists to plant mulberry trees, and also vines. Accordingly, "as early as the year 1623, the colonial assembly directed the planting of mulberry trees; and in 1656, another act was passed, in which the culture of silk is described as the most profitable commodity for the country; and a penalty of ten pounds of tobacco is imposed upon every planter who should fail to plant, at least, ten mulberry trees for every hundred acres of land in his possession. In the same year a premium of 4,000 pounds of tobacco was given to a person as an inducement to remain in the country, and prosecute the trade in silk; and, in the next year, a premium of 10,000 pounds of tobacco was offered to any one who should export 200*l.* worth of the raw material of silk. About the same time, 5,000 pounds of the same article was promised "to any one who should produce 1,000 pounds of wound silk in one year." The act of 1656, coercing the planting of the mulberry trees, was repealed, in the year 1658, but was revived two years after; and the system of rewards and penalties was steadily pursued until the year 1666, when it was determined that all statutory provisions were thereafter unnecessary, as the success of divers persons in the growth of silk and other manufactures, "evidently demonstrated how beneficial the same would prove." Three years after, legislative encouragements were revived; but subsequently to the year 1669, the interference of Government seems entirely to have ceased. *b* The renewal of the premiums after the act of the year 1658, was, doubtless, owing to the recommendation of Charles II.; for in the year 1661, among the instructions given to Sir William Berkeley, upon his re-appointment as Governor, and while in England on a visit, the King recommended the cultivation of silk, and mentioned, as an inducement to the colonists to attend to his advice, "that he had formerly worn some of the silk of Virginia, which he found not inferior to that raised in other countries." This remark is probably the ground of the tradition mentioned by Beverly, that the King had worn a robe of Virginia silk at his coronation.

The revived encouragement given by the Colonial Legislature to the culture of silk, had the desired effect. Mulberry trees were generally planted, and the rearing of silk-worms formed a part of the regular business of many of the farmers. Major Walker, a member of the Legislature, produced satisfactory evidence of his having 70,000 trees growing in the year 1664, and claimed the premium. Other claims of a like tenor were presented the same session. The eastern part of the State abounds at present with white mulberry trees; and it is to be hoped, the people will see their interest in renewing the culture of silk.

Upon the settlement of Georgia, in 1732, the culture of silk was also contemplated as a principal object of attention, and lands were granted to settlers upon condition that they planted one hundred white mulberry trees on every ten acres, when cleared; and ten years were allowed for their cultivation. Trees, seed, and the eggs of silk-worms, were sent over by the trustees, to whom the management of the colony was committed: An Episcopal clergyman and a native of Piedmont were engaged to instruct the people in the art of rearing the worms and winding the silk. In order to keep alive the idea of the silk culture, and of the views of the Government respecting it, on one side of the public seal was a representation of silk-worms in their va-

rious stages, with this appropriate motto, "non sibi sed aliis." By a manuscript volume of proceedings and accounts of the trustees, to which the writer has had access, it appears that the first parcel of silk which was received by the trustees, was in the year 1735, when eight pounds of raw silk were exported from Savannah to England. It was made into a piece and presented to the queen. *c*

From this time, until the year 1750, there are entries of large parcels of raw silk received from Georgia, the produce of cocoons raised by the inhabitants, and bought from them, at established prices, by the agents of the trustees, who had it reeled off under their direction. In the year 1751, a public filature was erected, by order of the trustees. "The exports of silk, from the year 1750 to 1754, inclusive, amounted to \$8,880. In the year 1757, one thousand and fifty pounds of raw silk were received at the filature. In the year 1758, this building was consumed by fire, with a quantity of silk, and 7,040 pounds cocoons; but another was erected. In the year 1759, the colony exported upwards of 10,000 weight of raw silk, which sold two or three shillings higher per pound than that of any other country." According to an official statement of Wm. Brown, Controller of the Customs of Savannah, 8,829 lbs. of raw silk were exported between the years 1755 and 1772, inclusive. *d* The last parcel brought for sale to Savannah, was in the year 1790, when upwards of two hundred weight were purchased for exportation, at 18*s.* and 26*s.* per pound.

Some attention was also paid, in early times, to the culture of silk in South Carolina; and the writer has been informed, that, during a certain period, it was a fashionable occupation. The ladies sent the raw silk produced by them to England, and had it manufactured. "In the year 1755, Mrs. Pinckney, the same lady who, about ten years before, had introduced the indigo plant into South Carolina, took with her to England a quantity of excellent silk, which she had raised and spun in the vicinity of Charleston, sufficient to make three complete dresses: one of them was presented to the princess dowager of Wales, and another to Lord Chesterfield. They were allowed to be equal to any silk ever imported. The third dress, now (1809) in Charleston, in the possession of her daughter Mrs. Horry, is remarkable for its beauty, firmness, and strength." The quantity of raw silk exported as merchandise was small; for, during six years, only 251 lbs. were entered at the custom-house. *e* The quality of it was excellent: according to the certificate of Sir Thomas Lombe, the eminent silk manufacturer, it had as much strength and beauty as the silk of Italy. *f* At New Bordeaux, a French settlement, 70 miles above Augusta, the people supplied much of the high country with sewing silk, during the war of the Revolution. *g*

In the year 1771 the culture of silk began in Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, and continued with spirit for several years. The subject had been frequently mentioned in the American Philosophical Society, as one of those useful designs which it was proper for them to promote; but they were induced to enter into a final resolution on it, in consequence of a letter being laid before them on the 5th January, 1770, from Doctor Franklin, who was then in London as Agent of the Colony, and in answer to one which had been written to him on the same subject by the late Doctor Cadwallader Evans. In this letter from Doctor Franklin, he recommended the culture of silk to his countrymen, and advised the establishment of a public filature in Philadelphia, for winding the cocoons. He also sent to the Society a copy of the work by the Abbe Sauvage, on the rearing of silkworms. A committee having been appointed by the Society to frame a plan for promoting the culture of silk, and to prepare an address to the Legislature, praying for public encouragement of the design, they proposed to raise a fund, by subscription for the purchase of cocoons, to establish a filature, and to offer for public sale all the silk purchased and wound off at the filature; the produce thereof to be duly accounted for, and to remain in the stock for carrying on the design. A subscription among the citizens was immediately set on foot, and the sum of £875 14*s.* obtained the first year *h*; eggs and white mulberry trees were imported, and a digest of instructions composed, published, and distributed. Until the white mulberry trees were fit to allow of their leaves being plucked, the worms were fed upon the leaves from the native trees, and were found to agree perfectly well with them, and to yield excellent silk. It is believed that all the silk produced during the continuance of the Society, was from food furnished by native trees. A spirit for the silk culture was excited among the ci-

tizens, and many garments are still possessed by families which were made from silk raised by their forefathers. The war of the Revolution put an end to the patriotic association, and suspended in a great measure the silk culture—there being no longer a sale for cocoons; but many persons continued their attention to it, and others resumed it after the termination of the war.

The knowledge of the proper mode of rearing silkworms, and of winding the silk, was greatly promoted by the publication of a paper on those subjects, in the second volume of Transactions of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, which the late Doctor John Morgan procured from Italy, thro' a silk mercantile house in London. *i* During the last three years a spirit has been revived and diffused on the subject, and promises to increase; and there can be no hesitation in saying, that a ready sale for cocoons is alone wanting to establish the silk culture as a regular employment in several States of the Union. It was the want of this market which defeated, in a great degree, the patriotic attempt of Mr. Nathaniel Aspinwall, of Connecticut, about the year 1790, to revive the silk culture in Pennsylvania, New-York, and New-Jersey. But his memory deserves to be held in everlasting and grateful remembrance, for the thousands of white mulberry trees which he planted in those States, and for the commendable zeal he exhibited in the cause.

In Connecticut, attention to the culture of silk commenced about the year 1760, by the introduction of the white mulberry tree, and eggs of the silkworms, into the county of Windham, and town of Mansfield, from Long Island, New-York, by Mr. N. Aspinwall, who had there planted a large nursery. He also planted an extensive nursery of the trees in New-Haven, and was active in obtaining of the Legislature of Connecticut an act granting a bounty for planting trees: a measure in which he was warmly supported by the patriotic and learned Dr. Ezra Styles. The premium was ten shillings for every hundred trees which should be planted and preserved in a thrifty condition for three years; and three pence per ounce for all raw silk, which the owners of trees should produce from cocoons of their own raising within the State. After the public encouragement for raising trees was found unnecessary, a small bounty on raw silk manufactured within the State was continued some time longer. A statute continues in force, requiring sewing silk to consist of twenty threads, each two yards long. *j*

It would be an act of injustice to omit noticing the generous encouragement to the cultivation of silk in the American Colonies, which was given by the patriotic Society in London, for "the Promotion of Arts," &c. From the year 1755 to 1772, several hundred pounds sterling were paid to various persons in Georgia, South Carolina, and Connecticut, in consequence of premiums offered by the Society for planting mulberry trees, and for cocoons and raw silk. *k*

After the war of the Revolution the business was renewed, and gradually extended; and it is recorded that, in the year 1789, two hundred pounds weight of raw silk were made in the single town of Mansfield, in Windham, Connecticut. *l* In the year 1810 the value of the sewing silk and raw silk, made in the three counties of New London, Windham, and Tolland, was estimated by the United States' Marshal at 28,503 dollars *m*; but the value of the domestic fabrics made from the refuse silk, and worn in those counties, was not taken into consideration. They may be fairly estimated at half of the above sum. In the year 1825 inquiries were made by the writer, in Windham county, as to the increased attention to the silk culture there, and it was found that the value of the silk, and of the domestic fabrics, manufactured in that county, was double that of the year 1810. It was also found that sewing silk was part of the circulating medium, and that it was readily exchanged at the stores for other articles, upon terms which were satisfactory to both parties, and that the balance of the account, when in favor of the seller, was paid in silver. The only machines for making the sewing silk are the common domestic small and large wheels, but practice supplies the defects of these imperfect implements; with better machinery, sewing silk of a superior quality would be made. At present, "three-fourths of the families in Mansfield are engaged in raising silk, and make annually from 5 to 10, 20, and 50 pounds in a family, and one or two have made, each, 100 pounds in a season. It is believed that there are annually made in Mansfield and the vicinity from three to four tons." *n*

The farmers consider the amount received for their sewing silk as so much clear gain, as the busi-