CUTTING MAHOGANY FOR THE MARKET

MAHOGANY LOGS PREPARED FOR MARKET

THE busy saws in the mahogany mill are going day and night at this season of the year. There are seasons during which only one day runs are made, but the strain is on just now, and the machinery never stops. During the 24 hours 60,000 feet of lumber are cut in the mill. Month after month the ships come over, at least 20 cargoes a year coming to anchor beside the gunwale. There is no such thing as bringing the logs in ballast. They compose the ship's entire cargo. A great many ships are devoted to this enterprise, and to them there is no other object in life but to get the logs from the tropical ports and bring them to New Orleans and unload them and go back for more. Ten million feet a year of mahogany comes into New Orleans, and is partly manufactured here.

In Mexico, Honduras and Central America the contractor gives five dollars for a single tree. This is cheap enough. But it is the expense of getting it out that counts, and that makes mahogany an expensive lumber. It stands deep in the forest in the midst of an almost impenetrable jungle. There are no groves of them—the trees are scattered, perhaps not more than two to an acre. It may be that there is no water course at hand on which the logs may be floated to the port. The tree has to be located by the "hunter," whose business it is to roam through the forest in search of mahogany trees and to blaze a way to them, so that they may be found again. Then the workmen must cut their laborious way to the tree, using for the purpose the deadly machete, with which a number of men from this country made unpleasant acquaintance along in 1898. The machete turned into a pruning hook makes a very effective weapon, however, and in the course of time the men get to the tree.

There is no such thing as a forest of mahogany. The pine tree loves its own kind, and never thrives better than when planted by nature or by man, one tree next to the other, over mile after mile of plain or mountain. Other trees are found in groves or clumps, seeming to form little settlements within the woods. The mahogany tree, however, lives by and for itself alone. It stands solitary of its species surrounded by the smaller trees and dense undergrowth of the tropical forest.

Mahogany is a popular name for the timber of several unrelated trees, among which are various species of eucalyptus of Australia, of myrtles, and so-called cedars. There is a valley mahogany and a mountain mahogany in the Rocky mountains, neither of which is the genuine tree. Africa, in addition to the real, exports also a false mahogany, and from East India comes the toona, which often reaches the importer as mahogany, although clearly belonging to another order of plant.

It is a beautiful tree, tall and shapely, with the lowest branches at least sixty feet from the ground. At the bottom is a huge swelling, after the manner of the cypress, and the tree is to be cut above that, six or eight feet from the roots. The first work to be done is to build a platform around the trunk, so that the cutters can stand upon it and wield their axes. In the course of time down comes the great monarch of the tropical forest, crashing through the thick growth around it.

The workmen trim it up, cut it into lengths, and manage to get it hauled and rolled to the nearest creek. There it must lie to await the floods of the rainy season, which will lift it and carry it down stream and on to the ocean port. There the logs are piled on the beach to wait for a vessel, and when it comes are rolled back into the water and rafted and pulled out to the ship's side, always a dangerous undertaking, for the water is rough. Once beside the vessel the derricks are put to work and the logs are lifted over one by one, lowered with much difficulty into the hold, and when enough logs have come aboard the vessel is ready.

It may well be believed that mahogany does not claim the respect in its own land that it does in ours. There has been much comment on the fact that it is used for railroad ties in the

Mahogany Tree in the Forest.

lands across the gulf, and this may well be. An immense amount of it is so far from the coast and from any present means of transportation that it practically is valueless to the owner of the land, so he views the waste of it with comparative indifference.

True mahogany is the only species of the Swietenia mahogani, and is distinctly a native of tropical America, but occasionally small specimens have been found in southern Florida, and a similar tree, never reaching the height of the American relative, however, has been located in India. This swietenia has been planted in southern Florida, southern California and parts of Mexico, but only as an ornamental tree, however, because it is of such slow growth and requires for full maturity such natural surroundings that for commercial purposes it would seem impossible of cultivation. It is a giant among even the giants of a tropical forest. It towers sometimes to a height of 100 feet. The trunk alone is often 50 feet in length and 12 feet in diameter, and it divides into so many huge arms and throws the shade of its shining green leaves over so vast an extent of surface that a more magnificent or more useful object is not to be met with in the vegetable world. The precise period of its growth is not accurately known, but as, when large, it changes little during the life of man the time of its arriving at maturity is probably not less than 200 years. The name "Swietenia" was given to mahogany in honor of the celebrated Baron von Swieten, physician to Maria Theresa. The early Spanish called the tree "Cedrela," a species not unlike the mahogany in many respects, and found also in about the same natural surroundings, but the English mistook that name for cedar, applying it directly to mahogany, the result being that "Spanish cedar" is a term still heard occasionally or read without true understanding in ancient books of travel and discovery along the Spanish Main.

Only the best and biggest logs are exported; the smaller ones and the remnants of the sawed timber are utilized as ordinary lumber on the spot for the construction of houses or the decoration of small vessels, so that in the tropics there can still be seen the solid mahogany furniture which originally made the wood so famous.

London is the mahogany center of the world. Here prices are set and the character of wood decided. Beauty of grain is, of course, the chief characteristic, and that which at once ranks it above other woods either for constructive or decorative purposes; allied to beauty is figure or pattern and when the two are combined, mahogany then becomes supreme. Sheets of mahogany of wonderful thinness can be cut from the parent log, with very little loss.

Selling mahogany logs by auction is still the habit in vogue in the great center—London—of the trade, a custom inherited from generations of buying and selling. To these principal markets in England merchants come from every direction, for the pick of the forests can always be found there. In fact, the best class of logs from tropical America are carried first to England, many of them sold to manufacturers in the United States, to be finally imported through the Atlantic seaboard, thus having traveled twice across the ocean in their journey from the forest to the factory.

It is gratifying to know that there is no wholesale destruction of the mahogany forests. The young timber has to be preserved. At one time it was the law that no tree should be cut which squared less than 18 inches—quite a large tree, as one will notice—but that has become rather a dead letter, and trees smaller than this are cut every day. Still there is some effort to preserve the timber, and even to do an appreciable amount of reforestation. The trees are of very slow growth, many of the large trees, it is said, bearing evidence of being at least 1,000 years old, and when there is carelessness or greed in cutting, it means much to the future of the mahogany business.

His Discovery.

Greening—Meeker used to boast that he had a mind of his own, but he never mentions it any more.

Browning—That's right. Since his marriage he has discovered a flaw in the title."

Talked Himself Out.

Crawford—Isn't it strange your wife hasn't spoken to you since the night you came home late?

Crabshaw—I don't think so. She said enough to me then to last a month.—Smart Set.

PRODUCTIVE QUALITIES OF STANDARD-BRED CHICKENS

Farmer Is Concerned Chiefly With Table and Egg-Laying Capability of Poultry—Get Away From Dunghill Idea and Fancy Breeds.

(By JAMES DRYDEN.)

Poultry breeders have been telling us for years that the pure-bred poultry are the best layers, and this is echoed and re-echoed every day in the year by the poultry papers, and most of us have come to believe it. But has any one ever been able to demonstrate by careful experiments or tests that the pure-breds are better layers than the cross-breds or the ordinary farmyard fowl?

We are apt to tell the farmers every day that they know nothing about poultry; that they ought to study up. We tell about this system and that system, and special poultry farms, and tell them to go and do likewise. But he goes on in his own ignorance and produces $600,000,000 worth of poultry and eggs a year while a certain egg farm produces $6,000 and a certain "system" produces $1,500 in one year on a vacant lot.

The best poultry keeper in the country is the farmer or the farmer's wife. I have been ashamed a hundred times in my chicken career that we who were "educating the farmers" were raising sickly, constitutionally weak chickens, and then to go on to a farm and see running around the barnyard, without apparent attention or care, thrifty, robust, lively chickens. The farmer is the best poultryman in the country. We are the slaves of the dogma of the feather and the standard, and the farmer produces the eggs.

The way to develop the poultry industry—one way—is to stop advocating pure-bred or standard-bred fowls for the farmer. The way for the farmer to increase his profits is to get away from the dunghill idea and to avoid fancy-bred fowls. He should decide on the type of fowl to breed and forget the names of the breeds. Let him decide, bearing in mind the conditions of his markets, whether he wants an egg type or a small fowl; a meat type, a large fowl; or a general-purpose or medium-sized fowl, and then purchase pure-bred males of the proper type and of good vigor, and grade up his flock. The way for the farmer to start in the poultry business is to buy a few cross-bred fowls, or eggs from cross-bred fowls from his neighbor, and then use pure-bred males to grade up his flock.

Feather is all right, pure-bred fowls are all right, but the question is, shall the farmer make feathers and fancy points of primary or secondary importance. It is no use talking to the farmer about fancy points, or about standard or perfection, unless we can show him that there is some connection between the . and productive qualities. He is not concerned about such things. He is concerned about supplying the market with poultry and eggs.

If we want to increase poultry production and at the same time help the farmer to increase his profits, it seems to me that that is the way to begin. The country wants eggs and poultry, and we cannot get these by building on a foundation of feathers or fancy points. Let the foundation be of eggs and poultry meat. We can then build a superstructure with feather trimmings. If we want eggs let us first get a hen that lays, no matter what her color or shape. Let us

Columbian Wyandotte Pullet.

study her external characters, and when we find that certain characters or points indicate the good layer, let us breed for those characters regardless of everything else. Then, after we have developed an egg type and have got a sufficiently large flock we may, if we wish, give some attention to feathers; but let us adhere strictly to the egg type and breed for eggs.

We will make slow improvement in breeding without an egg record for each hen in the flock. This record can be obtained only by the use of the trap nest, which is about the best thing we have yet discovered in the poultry business. It has opened our eys and pointed out a clear line of distinction between the so-called standard-bred poultry and practical poultry.

Feeding Meat Bones.

If you have a lot of meat bones on hand and have no bone mill to grind them, put them in the stove and burn them till they can be broken easily with a hatchet and feed to the hens. They will be delighted with them and they will do in place of meat as well as being very healthy and take the place of charcoal.

LIKE CROSSING THE RED SEA

Seemingly Miraculous Occurrence Saves a Blind Latter Day Israelite From a Bad Ducking.

The hosts of Israel crossing the Red Sea encountered no greater miracle than that which saved a representative of their race a ducking in Broadway the other day. The latter day Israelite was blind. With a stick he walked slowly past Grace church. Inside Huntington Close a large sized hose that was for the moment unattended had wriggled itself around nozzle end toward the street and was playing a stream of water shoulder high clear across the sidewalk.

To avoid a shower bath in their good clothes pedestrians had taken to the middle of the street and when they finally noticed the blind man's approach to the waterspout they were too far away to stop him. Three steps away, two steps, one step, then the miraculous intercession occurred. For a moment the water ceased to flow, the blind man passed on, then the stream shot out with renewed force. The bystanders caught their breath. Huntington Close was still deserted, there was no visible agency responsible for the interruption.

"Must have got clogged up for a minute somehow," said on practical soul.

"Must have," the others murmured but they went away looking very serious indeed.—New York Times.

The Fatal "Y."

Out of loyalty to his own sex the manager of the woman's suit department discharged the young woman stenographer and hired a man. The first batch of letters dictated to the man were written to about a hundred old customers, whom he invited to examine privately a lot of exclusive garments before they were placed on sale. The day after the letters were mailed the women flocked into the store, but the fire that burned in their eyes was the fire of the avenger rather than of the bargain hunter. One word which each woman had underlined in her letter explained their wrath. The garments, so the manager had meant to say, had been designed for women of stock figure such as they possessed, but the male stenographer had drawn on the alphabet and had written it "stocky."

"No woman on earth would have been guilty of such a mistake," growled the manager.

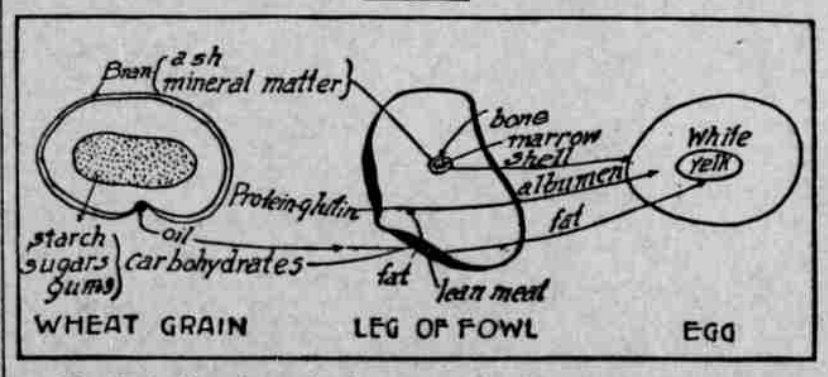
The next week the girl stenographer had her job back.

Bird Steals Fishermen's Catch.

A party of ice fishermen here had a most unusual experience with a fish hawk the other day. They had caught several pickerel which were laid out on the ice.

One of the party noticed the great bird circling overhead, and suddenly it swooped down upon the pile of fish. The bird devoured half a pickerel in a flash and was eating ravenously at the rest of it when the fishermen rushed to save their catch. The bird was shooed into the air only to come down again and take another fish and make way with it. It is the first instance reported in years where the fishermen had to combat with birds in saving their catch.—Lakeville Correspondence of Boston Globe.

CONSTITUENTS OF GOOD FOOD



The illustration shows the close connection between the constituents of the food and of the body. Mineral matter or ash is contained in the bran of wheat and goes to make up bone and shel. Protein is transformed largely into lean meat or the white of the eggs. Carbohydrates and fats supply heat and fat to the animal body.