

# Seedless Apple Fraud

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE DENOUNCES  
SCHEME AS HUMBURG

GUY ELLIOTT MITCHELL

of Uncle Sam's duties, and it is highly important that it should be kept where possible, stopping and fakes and preventing them from being marketed through their "orders" the Postoffice Department prevents millions of dollars every year from being squandered on worthless projects and fake schemes extending through cunning advertise-ments. The vigilance of the Govern-ment against lottery concerns is an instance. So much is done now with clever advertising that officials come to be very chary about giv- ing their indorsement to any scheme which has not been pretty thoroughly tested.

The Spencer "Seedless" Apple. In point was the efforts of the Spencer seedless and coreless apple company, headed by a Mr. Spencer, who attempted last year to secure the

either paper stock or nursery stock, in New York State.

The attractive plan proposed by the parent Spencer company, as learned at the Department of Agriculture, is that these subsidiary or local seedless apple companies may be formed in the various States. The local company is to purchase a cash bonus to the mother company and also issue it 51 per cent. of its stock—a controlling interest. The public is to be let in on the remainder, 49 per cent. To facilitate the sale of this stock Assistant Pomologist W. A. Taylor says that the company some time ago issued a statement to the effect that the retail price of trees will be held up to \$3 each, while the cost to the local company will not exceed 50 cents, and it is estimated that on a local investment of \$5,000, \$50,000 could be quickly rounded up.

"It seems," said Mr. Taylor, who in speaking of the matter appeared to be entirely convinced of the shadiness of

cern which this tremendous advertising is causing our principal competi- tors in the export apple trade. The Tasmanian government, however, has sub- stituted an official inquiry whether this new development is likely to revolution- ize the character of the fruit which we export to Europe, and which is in competition with them, as to ne- cessitate their securing and growing this seedless variety.

Colonel Brackett states that thus far no tree or scion of this alleged remark- able apple has been placed in the hands of any disinterested experimenter, and it is significant that there are not as yet any trees or scions for sale, al- though it is stated that several million



PHOTOGRAPH OF "SEEDLESS" APPLES SOLD TO MESSRS. SHEARN FOR 30 SHILLINGS APIECE.

trees are being grown in New York, Iowa, Utah and Colorado.

It is questionable whether the Fraud Order Office of the Postoffice Depart- ment will be able to bar the use of the mails to the company owing to the skillful preparation of its literature, though such action, it is stated, would be as- tained by all reputable fruit men and nurserymen.

The wonder of the whole story is that in the face of such lamentable failures where the promoters have con- sented to exhibit their apples the work still goes forward of successfully fool- ing the people. It is not denied that there is an apple which may be called seedless and with an imperfectly de- veloped core; but it is a freak and worthless, and, moreover, is thousands of years old. Wherever the Spencer apple has been exhibited it has been a fizzle. One claim made by the company is because the apple is bloomless it offers no opportunity for the codling moth to lay its eggs, that, therefore, the apple cannot be wormy. One of the apples reluctantly submitted by the Spencer people to Colonel Brackett, the Pomologist of the Department, con- tained, when cut, a good, fat codling moth worm, while all the apples sub-



THE "SEEDLESS" APPLE PRESENTED TO KING EDWARD.

mitted to the Department and to the St. Louis Exposition apple judges con- tained either seeds or cores. The apples were, moreover, small and in- ferior; but the newspaper account of these events tell a different tale.

## Farm Bulletins.

The great demand upon the Depart- ment of Agriculture for some of the Farmers' Bulletins, which are distribut- ed free, has necessitated the reprint- ing of quite a list of these valuable lit- tle pamphlets. Among others of gen- eral interest which are available are:

- (No. 41) Poultry: Their Care and Feeding.
- (No. 44) Commercial Fertilizers; Their Composition and Use.
- (No. 63) Care of Milk on the Farm.
- (No. 64) Ducks and Geese; Standard Breeds and Management.
- (No. 113) The Apple and How to Grow It.

- (No. 121) Beans, Peas and Other Legumes as Food.
- (No. 133) Birds and Eggs.
- (No. 154) The Home Fruit Garden; Preparation and Care.
- (No. 33) Peach Growing for Market.
- (No. 34) Meats; Composition and Cooking.
- (No. 132) Barnyard Manure.
- (No. 200) Turkeys; Standard Vari- eties and Management.
- (No. 214) Beneficial Bacteria for Leguminous Crops.

## Proper Seasoning of Farm Imple- ments.

It is full time that all mowing ma- chines, harvesters, and other horse implements should be left out in the field to obtain the benefit of the fall weather. Plows and harrows will, of course, be needed yet, and these will be kept under cover for awhile, but can be left out later after the fall plowing. This practice of fall weather- ing of implements is quite general in many farming sections and is encour- aged from year to year by a large class of farmers. It insures thorough weathering of the wood and produces in the metal parts of the machinery



a fine brown color. The practice is an entirely satisfactory one to the implement sellers as a class.

## Pickles and Babies.

An exchange made an unfortunate error in its "Answers to Correspond- ents" recently. "Fond Mother" wrote in to find out what she should do for her children who had the whooping cough. In the make up the compositor got some items transposed and the answer read: "If not too young, skin them thoroughly; immerse in scalding water, sprinkle plentifully with salt, and leave for a week in strong brine." Horrors! He misread the an- swer to "Anxious Housekeeper's" query for a pickled onion recipe.

## Everything Was the Same.

A young Oxford student one day re- ceived an unexpected visit from his pretty sister, and was very indignant that she came without a chaperon. "Look here," said the young man, "I will not have any of the fellows see you in my rooms, so if anyone knocks at the door you just get behind that screen."

In a few minutes a knock was heard, and the girl ran behind the screen as her brother went to open the door. An old gentleman stood on the threshold, who, after profusely apolo- gizing for his intrusion, said: "I am just home from Australia, and many years ago I occupied these rooms; would you allow me, sir, to look at them once again?" "Certainly," said the student, "come in." "Ah," ex- claimed the old man, "everything is just the same. Same old table, same old fireplace, same old screen." Then, catching sight of the girl; "By jove, same old dodge." "Sir," exclaimed the student, "that is my sister." "God, sir," was the rejoinder, "same old story."

## A Few Afterthoughts.

The Chinese women are being wean- ed from the old custom of binding their feet, and it is stated that the practice now obtains only among the American women.

There is no authority for the state- ment that the railroad companies would seriously object if Congress spends the entire session discussing the tariff and reciprocity.

"I reflect with sorrow over the justification of the claim you make of having lent me your constant sup- port," says Lord Curzon, the viceroy of India, recently deposed at the instance of Premier Balfour. If the Premier understood just what Lord Curzon indicated, and had the nerve, he probably called back, "you'r another."

The customs officials are alarmed at the apparent fact that there are more Havana cigars in the country than is warranted by the imports of Havana tobacco. They have prob- ably omitted to calculate to include the hickory and cabbage-leaf crop.

The King of Spain is again touring the European courts, looking for some- body who will accept him.

The idea that the scarcity of ser- vant girls is due to their all having become writers of novels, is probably suggested by the quality of current fiction.

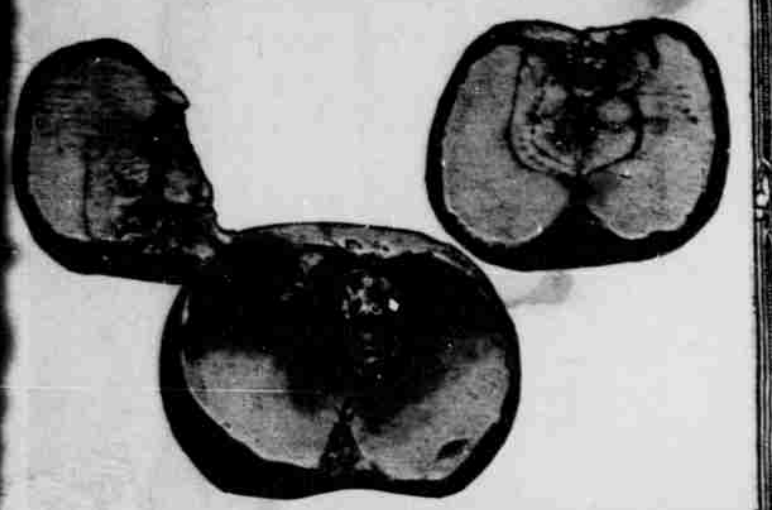
Germany and France have reached an agreement over Morocco that is "entirely satisfactory to both parties." How about the feelings of the third party?

Helen Bertram has been up before a New York magistrate for failure to pay her debts. At the same time, her husband is playing in "The Prodigal Son."

## A Trial by Telephone.

Robert Willard, a farmer living near Elkhart, in Logan county, Illinois, up- on being arrested by Constable Pettit on a charge of intoxication and disor- derly conduct, pleaded guilty by tele- phone. When he was informed of the \$14 fine by the justice in Lincoln, he agreed to send the amount by mail. The case is unique in central Illinois jurisprudence.

The constable found Willard busily engaged in a cornfield and read the warrant to him. Willard agreed that it was all right, but pointed to the work that he was doing and declared that he could not possibly lose a day or two by driving to Lincoln and wait- ing for trial. He suggested the use of the telephone, and when the constable somewhat dubiously acquiesced, the two repaired to the farmhouse. Fi- nally they got connection with Justice Rudolph, in Lincoln, and over the wire the unique trial was held. The justice received a letter later with the fine



PHOTOGRAPHS OF "SEEDLESS AND CORELESS" APPLES FURNISHED THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE BY THE SPENCER COMPANY.

Department of the Fruit Division of the Department of Agriculture. The men of the Department were ex- ceedingly doubtful of the claims made by Mr. Spencer that he had evolved a seedless apple which would revolution- ize the apple industry of the coun- try and they were wise in refusing to indorsement. Colonel Brackett, Pomologist of the Department, states that the seedless and core- less apple propaganda is apparently one of the most carefully considered and intelligently worked out schemes for duping and defrauding the public which has ever been attempted along horticultural lines. Taking advantage of the remarkable results of fruit and plant improvement made by Luther Burbank and other wizards of plant science, the statement was sprung upon an unsuspecting newspaper press and public that a wonderful seedless and coreless apple had been discovered. Hundreds of columns of newspaper de- scriptions of this fruit have since ap- peared in not only the daily and weekly

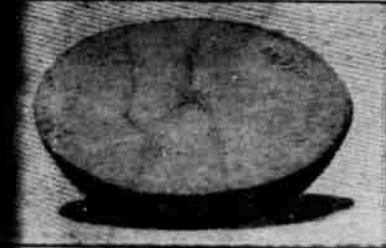
## Reckless Statements.

The company appears to be well or- ganized and has apparently engaged excellent legal talent. "The statements in all the literature issued by the company are very skillfully worded," said Mr. Taylor, "the statements made through the public press, for which the company cannot be held accountable, and which are influencing the people, have been recklessly misleading and untrue." The shrewd method by which this apple was advertised in England and again readvertised in the United States shows that a master brain is engineering the promotion of the scheme. Having prepared the British public through numerous articles, for something startling, a specimen of the seedless apple was sent to King Edward, inclosed in a plush-lined jewelry box. The English papers commented widely upon the occurrence and several additional apples were sold at public auc- tion for enormous prices, and the pro- ducially well written encomium on this happening and on the value of the apple was innocently transmitted by the American Consul to our Depart- ment of Commerce and through its ad- vance consular sheets distributed to every newspaper in the United States.

A feature of this incident was the ceremony connected with the cutting of two apples which brought the largest price—namely, \$15. A number of distinguished British horticulturists were present, the apples were taken from cold storage cases, and everything was proceeding beautifully until the knife was applied, then it was found that the apples were neither seedless nor core- less, and the indignant purchasers, Messrs. Shearn, demanded their money back.

## Must Make the Fakirs Smile.

A somewhat amusing feature, as re- lated by Colonel Brackett, is the con-



CROSS SECTION OF SPENCER SEEDLESS APPLE, REPRODUCED FROM SPENCER CATALOGUE.

papers, but in magazines and scientific journals.

## Plans for Sinking Money.

It now turns out that the Spencer seedless apple, so far as its being a new and valuable production is con- cerned, is an entire fake, and it would appear that the plan is more of a stock and bond selling proposition than a nursery stock raising one. The seed- less and coreless apple is almost as old as history. Pliny, the Roman naturalist, described it two thousand years ago. Hundreds of references appear in the books of horticulturists about this freak, the whole story having been de- scribed by Professor Bailey of Cornell about fifteen years ago. The bad faith of the Spencer apple people is shown in their circulating a partial quotation from Professor Bailey written about the seedless apple years ago, and hav- ing no reference to the so-called Spencer seedless apple.

The reason now appears for the care- ful educational work done among the newspapers last year. The Spencer seedless Apple Company of New York has been organized with alleged nur- series in Niagara County, has issued a magnificent catalogue with a full col- ored lithograph of the "Spencer seed- less apple," and also showing cross sec- tions of the apple with no semblance of core or seed.

## Newspapers Which Bit.

This catalogue contains numerous ex- tracts from papers all over the country lauding the Spencer seedless apple al- most to the skies. The truth is, that some of the most conservative papers were successfully roped in and uncon- sciously published articles specially written for them by the propagandists themselves, and these very papers are now quoted in the catalogues distribut- ed by the company. Such eminent names appear as the New York Times, the Buffalo Inquirer, both of which had enthusiastic editorials, the Ameri- can Inventor, the New York Farmer, the Scientific American, the Buffalo Commercial, the New York Herald, the National Nurseryman, the Denver Times and a score of others.

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