

## CRUSH OUT THE PEST.

## ADVICE TO FARMERS REGARDING THE RUSSIAN THISTLE.

Ugly Weed That Threatens to Choke the Grain Industry in the Northwest—It Rolls Like a Ball, Scattering Millions of Hardy Seeds.

## How to Exterminate It.

A few years ago, entered the incoming door of Castle Garden, followed the trail of home-seekers half way across a continent, took possession of government land in Bonhomme county, South Dakota, and opening the Old World grain sacks, let loose a nest that now threatens the agricultural prosperity of the prairie region of the United States. They brought the Russian thistle. Its seed was mixed up with that of flax, from which they were unable to separate it. Bonhomme County is nearly in the center of the enormous agricultural territory em-



RUSSIAN THISTLE IN NORTH DAKOTA.

bracing the Dakotas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and Eastern Colorado; it is one of the southern tier of counties being separated from Nebraska by the Missouri River, and the third tier west from the Big Sioux River, the boundary line between South Dakota and Minnesota. The land in this section is rather hilly; corn is the chief crop raised, consequently owing to the wooded ravines and standing corn stalks the thistle was at first somewhat slow in spreading. In five years it had taken root in the counties north, east, and west of Bonhomme; by 1888 it had infested the southern tier of counties in North Dakota, had entered Minnesota, and proceeded west to the Missouri River. In 1880 it spread south across the wide stretch of the Missouri and the following year traversed the fields of Northeastern Nebraska, sowing desolation in its path. Since that time the weed has been steadily spreading until now all of the counties from South Dakota east of the Missouri River, twenty counties in North Dakota, two counties in Western

thorn-covered branches are so dense that it is impossible to pass the hand to the center of the plant. It resembles the tumble weed in appearance, but is much larger and not as compactly knit together. The color is a dark green approaching blue, striped with red, giving the entire thistle a crimson hue. A single small, broad, depressed flower grows in a cup-shaped depression formed by the bases of the leaves. The leaves are small, but each of the numerous branches bears a multitude of them and each one of the multitude is pointed with a sharp, stinging barb. A single plant of average size and weighing two or three pounds at maturity, when dry, is estimated to bear from 20,000 to 30,000 seeds. Single plants have been found six feet in diameter, weighing about twenty pounds when thoroughly dry and estimated to bear 200,000 seeds. At maturity the heaviest and strongest parts of the plant are the seed-bearing twigs. The inner branches receive little of the wear incident to tumbling about and are only sufficiently strong to hold the plant together.

With the first touches of autumn frost the plant, all except the seed, dies and breaks off from the root. The bare round mass of fiber, seed, and barbs starts to roll, whirling, leaping, jumping and tumbling like a senseless and maddened creature, and unless held captive in some cornfield or fence-corner infests each rod of earth with which it comes in contact with its prolific germ. The seed is inclosed in a paper-like sheath, and together with this is loosely held in place with numerous twisted hairs, so that it is not readily shaken loose from the plant. The thistle may consequently roll about all winter and still retain some of its seed until the following spring.

The railroads are one of the most prominent factors in the transportation of the seeds over long distances. The Government authorities claim there is every evidence that they are often carried to uninhabited regions in the bedding of litter of stock cars. These cars are sent to the stock yards of Minneapolis, Chicago, Omaha, Sioux City, but after unloading they are seldom cleaned at these places. They are sent with the litter and seeds to various shipping points, where they are cleaned if the amount of the dirt or the nature of the cargo demands it. Rolling plants are sometimes blown into the trucks under the cars and into crevices in machinery, and are carried about the country.

## Grows in Any Soil.

The Russian thistle grows best on high, dry soil, but it does not despise a foothold in the earth of any character. It is seldom seen in sloughs or lowlands, but they grow on sand banks in the Missouri River, where the land is so often submerged that other weeds do not flourish. In fact, the character of the soil appears to be a matter of indifference to the thistle; it grows equally well in the alkali districts or in the soil free from alkali. It does not take root on the wild prairie, but the seed lies in ambush in the grass; when the farmer turns over the ground in his fall breaking the unsuspecting enemy obtains a footing, the following spring it prospers and an abundant crop of the weed crowds every thing else from the field.

The most serious damage done by the thistles is among the small grains, by the thistles is among the small grains,

be able to control it, although they acknowledge it brings certain ruin to a careless one.

There is at present no organized effort to wipe the pest out of existence. Farmers who succeed in keeping them from their fields permit them to grow at will, and the fields of plowed land and the roads. They fill up the fresh breaking, the fence corners, and the fire-breaks. Along the railroad grades they are encroaching with a rapidity that implies full possession for the thistles and a neglect of the weed law by the railroad corporations. Both North and South Dakota have enacted laws to prevent the spread of the Russian thistle, but it appears to belong to the class of evils that cannot be legislated out of existence. When a landowner fails to destroy the weed on his property the overseer of highways is instructed to have the task performed and to levy a tax upon the land to reimburse the county. The only effective manner in which to oppose the thistle seems to be to hoe it down after it matures. To plow it under after it has ripened is worse than useless, as the farm only perpetuates the curse in his own soil. If raked with a harrow or cut by a mower some seed will be left to continue the work. Even burning over the soil does not effect a complete eradication. Farmers are advised to kill the pest on sight, and keep up the good work without ceasing.

## HE HATES FOREIGNERS.

Chang Chitung, a Chinese Millionaire, Who Has Ideas of His Own.

Chang Chitung, Viceroy of Wu Chang, a city of nearly a million people, is one of the greatest men in China. He hates foreigners, and is building railroads because he wants to defend China against foreigners. He has already spent \$10,000,000 on his railroad experiment. It was his gun factory that was burned down a short time ago, and it may be that his immense blast furnaces will be turned to the making of instruments of war. These furnaces are 100 feet high, and they are of the latest European make. He has connected them with shops which cover forty or fifty acres, and there are twenty-five acres of machinery under one roof. About forty Belgian engineers are now in the employ of the Viceroy, and if the government would assist, one of the greatest trunk lines of the world could be built. It would go for 1,500 miles through the most thickly populated parts of the Chinese empire.

CHANG CHITUNG.

Near London is Fisher's oak, the trunk of which is over four fathoms in compass. When King James made a journey in that neighborhood, the schoolmaster and all his pupils came out of this tree and entertained the King with an oration. In Sherwood Forest and in other places are historical oak trees dating back to an early period in the life of England.

In the burial ground of Allonville, France, there is an oak tree measuring thirty-five feet in circumference near the base. The lower part of the hollow trunk has been transformed into a chapel six or seven feet in diameter, carefully wainscoted and paved, and with an iron gate to guard the humble sanctuary. Above and close to the chapel is a small chamber containing a bed, and leading to it there is a staircase, which twists round the trunk of the tree. At certain seasons of the year divine service is performed at this chapel. The summit has been broken off many years, but there is a surface at the top of the trunk of the diameter of a very large tree, and from it rises a pointed roof covered with slates, in the form of a steeple, which is surmounted by an iron cross that raises

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Generally a Trying Client.

It is in dealing with her own lawyer that the daughter of Eve comes into her most vivid colors, says the San Francisco Argonaut. When a woman has a lawsuit she, as a rule, mentally selects a lawyer to conduct her case. If, on applying to him, she finds that he is often does that he is not hankering after female clients, and he observes that he is really so overwhelmed with work that he is taking no new cases, she becomes more convinced than ever that he is the only lawyer to whom she can confide her interests, and she half suspects that his reluctance to act for her is part of a conspiracy against her rights. She insists, implores, beseeches, entreats, with tears and sobs, and, in the end, the lawyer yields and takes the case. From that hour his peace of mind is at an end. She is at his office daily and hourly. She insists on confiding to him matters which have no bearing on the case. She puts hypothetical questions to him which drive him out of his wits. She overwhelms him with suggestions and objections to the course he proposes to pursue. She interferes with him in court and almost takes the case out of his hands. At last the case is tried and is either won or lost. If it is won she believes that it is won on its intrinsic merits, in spite of his blundering. If it is lost it is lost through his mismanagement. Whichever happens, she is in no mind to pay him his fee. It is only by threatening her with legal proceedings that he can collect his cost and honorarium.

GOOD NEWS FOR DISHWASHERS.

A New Idea That Is Claimed to Be Adaptable in Any Kitchen.

One of the newest ideas pertaining to the kitchen is a rack for drying crockery, as shown in the illustration. Wiping is entirely unnecessary. As a rule, only plates have been dried by merely draining, but this rack allows a complete tea or dinner set to be so dried. It is stated that over

itself in a very picturesque manner from the middle of the leaves, like an antique hermitage, above the surrounding wood. The chapel was erected in 1696 by the Abbe du Detroit, curé of Allonville. The age of this tree is nearly 1,000 years.

POULTRY RAISING MORTGAGES.

A Maine woman tells how she lifted a \$500 mortgage from her home by gardening and poultry raising.

She had common chickens, and sold eggs and market poultry. She had five \$100 notes to meet, paying off one note each year with interest.

At the end of five years she had her home cleared and money in the bank. Besides she had made

various improvements during this time, schooled and clothed her children, paid taxes and insurance, etc.

She said she made up her mind to succeed, and she did, although her friends advised her at the start to let her go for what she could get for it, as she would never be able to pay off that big mortgage.

This is but one of many instances where fowls have proved themselves mortgage lifters. Of course this woman had the advantage of a garden; besides, she did sewing and other work. But it goes to show that poultry culture, rightly understood and followed, is a great help in replenishing one's purse in time of need. What this woman did can be done by anybody who has the will.

Mostly a Native.

Are you a native of this parish? asked a Scotch Sheriff of a witness who was summoned to testify in a case of illicit distilling.

"Mostly, yer honor," was the reply.

"I mean were you born in the parish?"

"Na, I wasna born in this parish, but I'm maist a native for a' that."

"You came here when you were a child, I suppose you mean?" said the Sheriff.

"Na, sir, I'm here about six years."

"Then how do you come to be nearly a native of the parish?"

"Wee, ye see when I cam here six years sin' I just weighed eight stane, an' I'm seenienteen stane noo, sae ye see that about nine stane o'me be belongs to this parish an' the other eight comes from Camlockie."

NO HOPE FOR THEM.

Dr. Paul Garnier, of Paris, has

made a special study of those

children that are the offspring of

habitual drunkards.

He says: "There is a flaw in the very nature of these

young wretches that the psychologist

sees clearly and notes with apprehension—the absence of affectionate

emotions, and where they did not be-

come lunatics they show insensibility

and pitilessness."

COCOANUT BUTTER.

There are several factories in India

and one, at least, in Europe, that at

Mannheim, Germany, where butter is

made from cocoanuts.

WHO MADE THE TENT?

The Mohammedans teach that

Adam and Eve once lived in a tent

on what is now the site of the tem-

ple at Mecca.

OVER TWO MILES.

The deepest place in the Medi-

terranean Sea is midway between Malta

and Candia, where the soundings

show a depth of 13,556 feet.

## ANCIENT OAKS.

Trees that Date Back to the Earliest Period.

There is nothing in the vegetable world that excites more curiosity than grand old trees dating back to a time when man was in the infancy of civilization. And in forest annals no tree affords so many fond memorials as the oak. Unfortunately the woodsman's ax has laid low many of these



THE GREAT SALCEY OAK.

noble memorials of the past, but a few still remain, venerable in their age and sublimity in their growth.

The largest and one of the oldest trees in England, a country that possesses many historical trees, is the great Salcey oak near Northampton. Its circumference at its base, where there are no projecting spurs, is 46 feet 10 inches. One yard from the ground it is 39 feet 10 inches, and at three yards it is 35 feet. The trunk is hollow, and near the ground the circumference of the cavity is 29 feet. Naturalists believe the tree is 1,600 years old.

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