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THE NEBRASKA BEE-KEEPER.

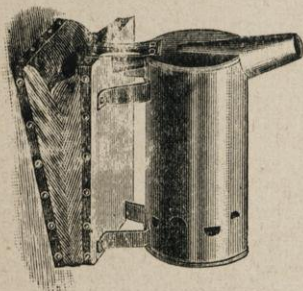
YORK, NEBRASKA.

Vol. 4,

MAY, 1893,

No. 5.

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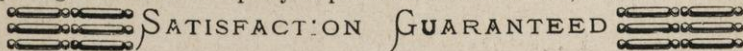


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NEBRASKA BEE-KEEPER.

Vol. 4

May, 1893.

No. 5.

NEBRASKA,

A HONEY PRODUCING STATE.

Her Soil, Climate and Cultivated Flora.
From papers prepared for Farmers' Institutes,
By L. D. Stilson.

NUMBER TWO.

In speaking of Nebraska as a honey producing state, we must of necessity speak of other things which have an important bearing upon the production of honey bearing plants and flowers; and, as much of our honey is now produced from cultivated fruits and grain producing flowers, with the amount annually on the increase. The true situation can best be understood when the soil and climatic conditions are well understood.

The eastern line of the state is the Missouri river, and from this, the land rises in a regular slope to the Rocky mountains. Beginning at Omaha, on the Mo. river going westward the elevation for the first 100 miles is on an average of five and one-half feet per mile. The second 100 miles it increases to seven feet per mile. The third, seven and one-half, and the fourth, to ten and one-half feet to the

mile. The ascent for the last 50 miles is 18 feet to the mile; thus giving to our state one of the grandest drainage systems of any state in the Union.

Our state has about 77,000 sq. miles, or about 50 million acres, or practically twice the size of Ohio, or larger than all New England and 15,000 sq. miles to spare; an empire in extent, but so perfect and complete, is this drainage system, that there is no waste land.

It is watered by streams flowing south-eastward, which furnish excellent water power in many places. It has been truly said that to build manufacturing towns, cheap power must be had. When the water power of this state is fully developed, it is found second only to Niagara, as the water is taken from the beds of the streams, and conducted in canals to the high lands, lower down giving immense power at small cost.

Much of the surface of the land is as the petrified waves of the ocean, rolling, while the soil shows the characteristics of a drained lake. The soil is composed largely of calcareous and silicious materials and very deep. The thickness of this loess is from 2 to 200 feet, with an average of about 100 feet. This soil is like a huge sponge and retains to a wonderful degree the moisture falling upon it, giving it back to growing vegetation as needed. This loess

deposit is rich in vegetable loam, and is the best of soils for the growth of corn of which the state produces large yields per acre, and when the still uncultivated lands of the state are broken up and cultivated, we will be the corn producing state of this Union.

Centrally located as we are, we are at the meeting-place of climatic conditions, neither extreme, however long holding sway. Our winters generally are dry and mild, with days of cold when the mercury will register 20° below zero, changing in a few hours to more temperate, with clear sky and bright sunshine.

Some years since, living in Nebraska, we have plowed every month during the winter. From September to April, we usually have little or no rain. Our rainy season generally begins in April, and lasts until July or August, furnishes an abundance of moisture for all growing crops. We also have heavy dews during the summer. Our rains more frequently fall during the night than in the daylight. This may seem strange to many, but when it is understood that the gathering clouds and storms around the peaks of the Rockies during the day, in their movement eastward reach us during the night.

Our days are generally cloudless, and with our bright sunshine, our crops grow to maturity very fast.

Blessed as we are, with our rich soil and delightful climate, it is no wonder that our crops of grain are heavy, our fruit with its bright coloring, and our flowers so rich in nectar.

In our last paper we gave some of our native, or wild flowers from which our bees gather stores of honey. We will now name some of the cultivated flowers which are rich in nectar, in addition to their value for fruit, grains, and forage.

We do not advocate the planting of any tree, shrub or plant exclusively for the honey it produces, but we do advo-

cate the planting of such plants as combine, to the greatest degree, both the honey, and their value as a farm crop.

The production of honey then, is simply a saving of that which would otherwise be lost. A net clear gain of nearly the whole amount to the producer.

In naming the cultivated flora of our state we may not name all those found here in localities, but will try to give those which we know thrive and can be grown with success generally over the state; among these, we place the clovers at the head of the list, as it is a profitable crop wherever cultivated and produces large quantities of nectar.

First in season of the clover family, comes the small white clover, creeping into the corners and waste places as well as the pastures and meadows, an immense seeder it holds its own wherever it once gets started, following closely after fruit bloom and with our genial climate and timely rains, it lasts from five to eight weeks in full bloom, giving nectar in abundance the greater share of the time.

Closely allied to the White Clover, is Alsike Clover, the heads and stalks as well as the trailing habit all very nearly like the White except the color of bloom, and length of stalk, growing sufficiently long to make valuable hay, and when seeded with timothy, by which it is supported; it is a valuable acquisition to Nebraska, both for grazing and curing for hay as well as being very rich in nectar, which, when stored by our bees can only be detected from the nicest white clover honey by comparing the color, as it is a more amber hue, and cannot be detected by taste or smell.

The common red clover grows luxuriantly on all our prairie lands, both bottom and upland. This, as is well known, yields honey, but the heads growing so large, and the corollas so long, cover

ing the honey so deep that our common black bees could not reach it; but with our improved races of bees, which have been bred with an especial reference to the length of tongue, we now have bees that work on the first crop of red clover, and it is often found that the first crop yields sufficient seed to make it profitable to thresh for seed, and disproving the old saying that the second crop only, yielded seed.

These clovers are perfectly hardy here and seem to have struck a congenial soil and climate in being transplanted to Nebraska, as they thrive well wherever sown, after subduing the wild sod, and often taking root and growing in the native sod, yielding large crops of forage, and at the same time furnishing our bees pasturage for fully three and often four months, where they are all sown, so that the farmer or stock raiser who has bees can possibly make no mistake in sowing them largely.

Alfalfa has been sown to some extent and thrives well in parts of the state where sown, but has not yet been sown extensively, and we cannot recommend it as well as the other clovers, owing to lack of trials over the whole state.

Coming first in the spring, are the cultivated fruits, which furnish food for our bees to build up on, ready for the larger honey flow later.

The orchard interests of Nebraska are increasing very rapidly, and the dependence of the apiculturist and horticulturist are each year being more clearly demonstrated. This source of honey continues two or three weeks, from which some seasons large quantities of honey are stored, which is of a very fine quality, but generally used by the inmates of the hives.

Perhaps the fruit and clovers are the most general throughout the state. In localities there may be certain flowers which have not been tried elsewhere.

In the vicinities of market gardens

at times bees gather large quantities of honey from melon and cucumber blossoms, and where sweet corn is raised for canning factories and snapped off, the juice from the stalk is eagerly sucked up and stored, also pollen is gathered from the blossoms.

Correspondence.

BLUE SPRINGS, Neb., April 10.—Bees all right. On the 13th of December, I put 48 colonies in the cellar. On the 30th of March, I took out the same number all in splendid condition. The same day that they were put out they began gathering pollen from the elms.

I weighed the hives when they were put in the cellar; the heaviest one weighed 79 lbs.; the lightest one, 50 lbs. When they were taken out they were weighed again; the heaviest one weighed 69 lbs., and the lightest one 42 lbs.

This shows that there was a shrinkage of 8 to 10 lbs. per hive. I measured and weighed the dead bees that were taken out of the cellar during the winter. They were taken out three times and at each time a bushel basket full. The dead bees in each basket weighed 16 lbs., making 48 lbs. of dead bees in all. Remember that the dead bees were dried and shrunken considerable; so much so that by a test that I made, it took 6500 of them to make a pound. It is estimated that 5000 live bees weigh a pound. I found that 4000 dead bees when first thrown from the hive weighed a pound. This difference can be easily accounted for; the dead bees had not had a cleansing flight for a long time.

Counting 5,000 live bees to a pound, my colonies lost about $1\frac{1}{3}$ lbs. of bees per colony and consumed $8\frac{2}{3}$ lbs. of honey per colony. Now I want to ask the readers of the Nebraska Bee-Keeper, if they can winter a strong colony of bees on the summer stands on $8\frac{2}{3}$ lbs. of honey.

At some future time I will tell the

readers of the N. B. K. how I have my bee cellar constructed. I have examined the white clover and find it all dead.

S. A. Smith.

♦ ♦ ♦
Timely Jottings.
By Theodore Bender.

"Fifty pounds of honey are annually produced by a hive of 5,000 bees. In five years the bees will have increased to 50,000." The above was taken out of a paper under the head of "Facts Worth Knowing." It is "worth knowing" what absurd statements some people do make about bees. Bees in the U. S. increase from 5,000 to 50,000 from April 1, to June 10 in this latitude, still it is a hard job to get 50 lbs. of honey in a year from the 50,000 bees.

Where queens are kept in nuclei, it is easy and safe to introduce them to full colonies by simply uniting the nucleus with the colony.

Beginners in bee-keeping should start with but one or two colonies; then increase their small apiary a limited number each season, until the desired number is reached. The owner will gain experience and practice as the apiary increases.

A few days ago a small nucleus was chilled for us so that the bees and queen were apparently dead. To experiment, they were taken into a room where they were thawed out and united with a queenless colony. The queen is now laying eggs again as fast as ever. I have seen reports of such queens before; some claiming that they lay nothing but drone eggs, others say they are good as ever. I agree with the latter.

Old combs should not be left lying about the apiary it gives the moth a brood nest and may cause robbing if they contain any honey. Melt them up into wax thus receiving a benefit instead of a detriment.

During fruit bloom is a good time to transfer bees from old box hives, log gums etc. to movable comb hives.

To begin the job, get the necessary tools ready: you will need a long knife one with a thin blade is best to cut and loosen combs with, a chisel or hatchet to pry off one side of the hive, taking the side nearest parallel with the combs, a board or table to do the work on, and some strings of the right length for tying the combs in the frames. Now proceed with the work as follows: Smoke the bees enough to quiet them; invert the hive, pry off the side and begin the transferring in earnest. Cut out the combs a few at a time and fit them into the frames; straighten the crooked ones as good as you can. When a frame is full tie several cords around it and hang it carefully in the new hive. Do the rest in the same way till all are transferred. If the bees are smoked occasionally and the hive jarred, most of the bees will cluster on the outside of the hive. The queen will quite often be found about the last comb cut out, which should be cut out carefully. The new hive should occupy exactly the same place as the old one did. No drone comb should be transferred. The above method is not new.

The weather has been unusually warm this month and bees are breeding nicely.

Apr. 14.

Canton, O.

♦ ♦ ♦
Looking Over the Bees.
A. T. McKibben.

To-day, April 3rd., I looked through my bees, as it was a calm warm day, and a good day to work with bees, as far as the warmth was concerned, but they are terribly disposed to rob, at this season of the year, so I had to be very careful, and then sometimes I was very near the point of giving up and letting them go without overhauling, the robbers troubled so much; then I thought perchance I had better push ahead and get it done for I might not get a better time to do it. So I pushed ahead in the face of stings, robbers, and a perfect up-roar of bees all day. I took out

most of the drone comb. I thought I would take them out of the brood chamber, and save them for extractor combs, and then it gives room to handle the frames in the brood chamber when one spreads the brood, and then after awhile I will fill in with wired frames of foundation, till the brood chamber is filled up, and thus get rid of the long end of the drone brood, and have some good tough extractor comes to use after awhile, or use them for feeding, if needed. I spread the brood in most of the colonies, or rather commenced to spread; take a frame from the outside of the brood nest and place it in the center, then in a few days I'll put a frame of foundation in the center, if I think it will pay to do so, which I doubt very much if it will. I never tried spreading brood before, and I must say that I am not favorably impressed with it since I commenced.

I found one colony queenless, one with a drone laying queen, and one more took French leave to-day.

April 11. Since writing the above, two more queens have disappeared. I put into winter quarters with 38 colonies; at present writing I have 36 in pretty good order. I looked at them again yesterday, spreading the brood putting in frames of foundation in the center of the brood nest of the strongest colonies and taking frames of brood from the strongest, to build up the weaker. Plenty of bloom for the bees to work on, but it is so cool and wet now the bees can't leave home to gather the precious sweets.

Flag Springs, Ky.

◆◆◆ Bee Fallacies,

The bee literature of the day has its humors and its peculiarities if not its curiosities. There can be no doubt that some if not many "bee" writers have had no actual experience in bee-keeping, and have not studied some of its simplest problems.

An article on "Italian Bees" by Helen

Wharburden is simply extraordinary. I do not refer to the article merely for the sake of doing so, but because such statements are found in the article confuse if not lead astray those who are looking for light, for information, and help. Helen Wharburden says:

"Italian bees are larger than the common native bees."

I have kept the natives side by side with the Italians and never discovered that one was larger than the other. It is said by the scientist that all insects of the same race differ as mankind does, but the difference in bees is so slight that the naked eye of man cannot see it.

"The Italian bees carry larger loads of honey from the flowers to the hive."

They cannot and do not.

"They (the Italians) are indefatigable workers, starting for the flowers early in the morning and continuing their labors until late in the afternoon."

It might be inferred from this that some bees do not start early in the morning. All bees start before dawn; one kind does not start any earlier than another and all bees work not only till late in the afternoon, but often (always if the harvest be good) till after sunset, and some stay out so late that they remain out all night under a leaf until morning.

"A colony of pure Italian bees will collect twice as much honey in a given time as the common black bees."

This is a great mistake, due, it must be to lack of experience and observation. I have had Italians that gathered more honey than the natives and I have had natives that gathered more than the Italians. The average does not vary enough to be considered.

"And the honey will prove to be of superior quality to that of the native stock."

Never. This is impossible from the nature of the case, as every bee has the same chance. The bee does not make

honey, but merely gathers what it finds, and the common bee can find the same kind of honey as the Italian. The peasant may gather as fine berries in the field as the king; the berries are no better because the king gathers them.

"This (collection of superior honey) is probably due to the fact that the tongues of the Italians are longer than the tongues of the common bees."

If the Italians did collect more honey than the common bees, it would not be due to this "fact." It is not a fact. The tongues of Italians are no longer than those of the natives.

"A swarm of black bees could never dislodge the Italian bees from their hive but the latter could easily drive the former from their home." This shows great lack of knowledge of the characteristics of bees. The inference to be drawn from this might be that bees as cattle drive each other by superiority of strength and numbers. Bees never do that. A colony of natives and a colony of Italians may live side by side for years, their hives touching, and have no more to do with each other than if they lived miles apart, no more to do with each other than people in New York who live next door to each other.

It is not a part of bees nature or instinct to live by conquest of other bees. Bees do not molest each other as a colony, each colony is a separate unit intent only on its own affairs. Bees do not drive, and are not driven, and bees do not fight except in self defence. If a black bee or an Italian bee enters a hive where he does not belong his life pays the penalty. Sometimes a weak colony is unable to defend the entrance from robber bees who come singly; they enter and take the honey, bring others to help them; take all the honey and the weak colony, robbed of its stores, join the robbers and go home with them and become a part of the colony that robbed it.

But suppose that bees did drive each

other as Helen W. suggests. There never was a colony of black bees that could be driven by a colony of Italian bees of the same numerical strength. I had a colony of blacks, really a double colony in a double hive (the Italians were doubled, too) black and shiny as ebony, ugly, peppery, fierce as any swarthy Moors, and at least 60,000 strong, strong indeed, and if it had been the nature of bees to drive each other, I believe those blacks might have driven all the colonies in the apiary; dispersed them to the woods, and more than half were strong Italians with three bands.

That is the only objection to black bees, their apparent fierceness and pugnacity, while the Italians are recommended for their gentleness.

At the beginning of Helen W.'s article she says: "The common American bees are valuable bees to form the main part of the colony of any hive." If they be so inferior as she claims, why should they form a part, the main part of any colony? If an Italian queen be introduced to a black colony in July, the bees will be all Italians in six or eight weeks.—Julia Allyn, in *Wis. Agriculturist*.

A new bee paper is promised for May 15. The new production is to come from the land of "basswood hams and wooden nutmegs"—New Haven, Conn.—with Benton L. Sage publisher. The prospectus promises large things, and time will tell the style of the paper.

Postmaster General Bissell has expressed a compliment to Nebraska in giving Mr. E. Whitecomb, postmaster at Friend, leave of absence for 30 days, to get the Nebraska honey exhibit in place, as he is superintendent in charge of our state apiary exhibit.

—THE—

Nebraska Bee keeper.

Subscription Price, 50 Cents per Year.

York, Nebraska.

Devoted to Bee-Culture, Honey Production, Fruits, Flowers, Etc.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

Stilson & Sons, Editors and Publishers.

E. Whitcomb, president of the Neb. State Bee-Keepers' Association, is looking after the bee and honey interests at the World's Fair.

April has been dry, cold and windy. Altogether, a hard one for bees; some have starved, others are starving. How are your bees? have you taken good care to see that they had plenty of honey to live on?

The bee keepers of Hamilton Co. will hold their next county meeting, May 20 at the supply store of Chas. White, in Aurora. Chas. White, Sec.

The bee-keepers of Auburn have made a move in the right direction, in organizing an association, with J. Gilbert as president and L. L. Alsbaugh as secretary.

The next meeting of the York Co. Bee Keepers Ass'n will be held at the home of S. Spellman on May 24. Mr. Spellman lives 7 miles south-west of York, and is a splendid place to visit. Let the bee-keepers make a good turnout.

We would be pleased to have short reports from the different bee-keepers' societies, as there are several county societies, and also would like to have date and place they are to be held.

We would like to have short reports from bee-keepers, as to the condition of bees, etc., to print. All copy should reach us not later than the 20th of each month for the next issue.

No Swarming.

The first perfect and practical NON-SWARMING plan that ever was brought to completion is *found at last*. Nothing like it ever done. I worked this plan on 100 colonies last year (1892) and I do not make my statements at random in my circular, as each point has been fully tested.

Tells you all about it. No hunting or caging queens, cutting cells, moving hives or even opening the brood chamber at all during the honey season, etc., etc., and *more honey with no swarming*. Get into line and "keep up with the procession" or you'll get left. The device will be put on the market within the reach of all, or if your dealer does not supply them yet, they may be ordered of me by express or freight at the following prices, complete. \$.75 each, \$.5 per 10, \$.40 per 100. By mail \$.35 each extra. As one device works two hives, at tens rates the cost is *only \$.25 per hive*. Be sure and send for circular, as this plan is almost too good to believe its being true.

H. P. Langdon,
East Constable, N. Y.

—THE—

Nebraska Bee-Keeper,
And The

COLORADO WEEKLY SUN

One Year for 95 cents.

We take pleasure in informing our readers that we have made arrangements with The Colorado Sun Publishing Co. to club this paper with the *Colorado Weekly Sun* at the very low price of 95 cents. The *Colorado Weekly Sun* has secured a phenomenal circulation and covers the entire field west of the Missouri river. It is a large eight page paper and contains all the news of the world, Literary Features, Mining News, Departments for the Home, the Farmer and the Children.

Cash must accompany all orders.

Address, Neb. Bee-Keeper.
York, Neb.

FRUITS AND FLOWERS.

Stark Bros., of Louisiana, Mo., are putting out a very useful book, regarding Fruits and Fruit Trees, in connection with their Catalogue and Price List. We have received specimen pages which contain photo-tint illustrations from actual photographs of their large Orchards and Nursery Grounds. One of their specialties is whole-root grafted trees which are taking the lead. The Book, when issued, will be sent free to all fruit growers.

The Flowers for the Fair.

Ten car loads of orchids, palms and other rare exotics were placed in the horticultural building and greenhouses yesterday. They arrived in the grounds Saturday night from Short Hills, N. J., and made a special floral train which cost \$3,000 for transportation alone.

Two cars were filled with orchids, which were hidden away in the greenhouses to be groomed and petted for the World's Fair orchid show which opens May 9. "Uncle" John Thorp lingered around the aristocratic aliens and touched them tender fingers. He had some of the majestic tree ferns from the New Jersey conservatory taken to the south curtain of the horticultural building, and there arranged in two stately rows, forming an avenue of palms.

In the afternoon several carloads of palms from Jay Gould's conservatories at Irvington-on-the-Hudson came in.

Mr. Thorp selected these himself and picked the finest of that notable collection. They are magnificent specimens of palms, the two seaforthias standing forty feet high, and two oranges and cocoanuts from thirty-five to forty feet in height. With this lordly group are two screen palms, which Mr. Thorp says are the grandest speci-

mens he ever saw. These living pillars are in the north curtain of the building. The century plant beneath the dome looked down upon a constant throng of visitors. Its paper caps had been taken off the buds, about to awake from their 100-year sleep, attracted the attention of every one.

Beneath the pyramid of plants in the center of the horticultural building Mr. Allabough of Deadwood was hastening the completion of the crystal cave, with stalacties, quartz and spar from the mammoth crystal cave in the Black hills, fifteen miles from Deadwood. Seven of the 1,400 rooms in the series which extends under ground for fifty miles southwest of Deadwood will be reproduced, using 300,000 pounds of crystals. The bridal chamber will be appropriately dedicated May 1, for a Black hills miner and his eastern sweetheart are to be married there on the day the World's Fair opens.

Winter Pears.

Summer is conspicuous for its variety of fruits, and winter for its paucity of them. Every one expects to have winter apples, and a few people keep winter rapes; but who puts down a supply of winter pears? Yet winter pears are as easy to grow as the summer and fall kinds, and of good varieties there are a score or more. Some of them keep as readily as apples.* *. We find in our Boston market in mid-winter such varieties as Anjou, Bosc, Dana's Hovey and the like alongside with Lawrence, Nelis and other strictly winter varieties. Still, it is important to recognize a distinct difference, and this is in favor of the winter kinds. Doubtless the fall kinds can be successfully kept, for an indefinite time in a temperature about at the freezing point, coming out fair and with little or no shrinkage. But they have not had the natural ripening process, and

as a consequence all lack flavor. We may be thankful that we have a sufficient number of late-keeping varieties which require only ordinarily good treatment to bring them into prime condition throughout the winter. Lawrence, for example, scarcely requires more care than winter apples, and in most soils it produces as regularly and abundantly as the apple.

Our treatment of the fruit is simple. The picking is done on a clear, dry day, into bushel boxes, as late in the fall as the weather will permit. The fruit is then stored in a cool, rather moist cellar. If the temperature can be kept near the freezing point, even the Lawrence may be kept along through January and the Josephine into May. As the fruit is wanted, either for the table or for market, it should be placed in drawers in a warm room for about 10 days before it is used. This will hasten the ripening process, and secure the right flavor in the fruit.

W. C. Strong, in American Gardening.

Horticultural Writers and Fruits.

With the introduction of almost every new variety of fruit, the introducer has to encounter the condemnation of careless and unskilled growers who, not finding with their slovenly culture the results put forth by originators and introducers, condemn a fruit as a fraud from the start. These men are very prompt to rush into print. They are of a kind easily excited by flowery announcements, and easily led to believe that something has been found of superior merit that they may grow abundantly, and of the finest quality, in poor and weedy land, with the minimum

of attention and skill. The disappointments of this class of growers are many and severe, and their outcries very loud. The agricultural and horticultural journals which have no experimental grounds of their own, possess no check upon the snap judgments of these critics and therefore they are unable to protect their readers from being misled by them. * * It is a conspicuous fact that some of our most extensively grown and profitable fruits are constantly under condemnation in the press, yet they are being planted widely, and with a total indifference to all criticism. The Ben Davis apple, the Concord grape, the Wilson and Crescent strawberries, are but a few of these fruits, iron-clad against criticism, because criticism has no perceptible effect upon their profitable cultivation and sale. When we come to study this matter in relation to apples, the fact immediately becomes conspicuous, that all our most popular American apples (excepting Ben Davis) can only be grown to advantage within comparatively narrow limits, and often only by special pains. The lesson from all these facts is that writers for the agricultural and horticultural press upon the subject of fruit-growing would serve the public better by taking a broader view of their specialty, and by ceasing to promulgate local experience as of general application.—*T. H. Hoskins, in American Gardening for May.*



J. M. Carr,

Manufacturer and Dealer in Bee-
Keeper's Supplies.

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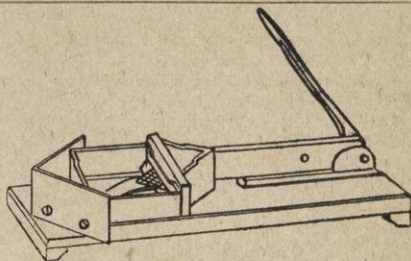
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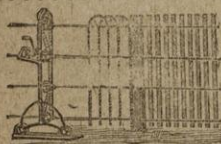
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