

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Revenue DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1539

Press
~~Mis.~~

360.361

Dated

25. 8. 1864.

Not to be folded or roughly handled

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*Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department,
25th August 1864.*

No. 360. Read the following Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated 29th July 1864,
No. 4,840.

Read the following letter from J. SHORTT, Esq., M. D., Zillah Surgeon, Chingleput, dated 2nd
July 1864 :—

1. I have the honor to forward an account of my experiments on Cotton cultivation since
my last report.

2. *Peru valley Cotton*.—Of this species I gave a full account in my letter dated 6th July 1863.
The plants continued to thrive well till about the beginning of December when in consequence of
the prevalence of the north-east winds, they began to sicken and droop; the tender shoots became
blighted, and in some this extended to one, two, or more feet of the stem from the extremity;
these blighted branches gradually withered, and died away, and the plants exhibited a wretched
appearance; this state of things continued up to the middle of March, when they began to mend,
and throw out fresh shoots. I now had all the withered branches pruned away, and the plants
threw out a good crop of shoots, and pushed out a few flowers, but they did not attain that state
of vigour and health they presented last year. The pods as they began to form blighted away in
some, whilst in others they formed freely, and instead of ripening, as they usually do, became
black and rotted away; thus a very small supply of cotton 12 oz. only was obtained from these
plants. In constitution the Peru valley cotton resembles the Brazil which is also affected in the
same manner by the north-east winds. In my letter of the 6th July last, I said the flower of the
Peru valley cotton plant was like that of the Brazil, which was a mistake, as in the Brazil it is of
a dirty white, and in the Peru valley, it is yellow; all the other characters are the same as previ-
ously detailed; it will require a longer time to decide whether the Peru valley and the Brazil are
the same or not; at present it differs from the Brazil in the colour of the flowers, form of pod, and
want of adhesion of the seeds, in every other respect even to the form and constitution of the
plants, they are alike. I have been growing about an acre and half of the American varieties of
cotton, chiefly of the Botrbon kind; the produce has been large, and the cotton wool of fair
quality, and staple; the average produce of the acre is 250 lbs. of clean cotton wool. I have now
a bale of 300 lbs. clean, and ready, and both plants and cotton are open to inspection by any person
interested in the growth of cotton in the District. The majority of the plants had yielded their
second crop, whilst a small number were in their third and fourth year. The plants have been
lightly pruned since, and are now pushing shoots out vigorously. I have had a few plants of
other varieties, but on account of their small number they do not call for any particular remark.
Oopum Cotton or *Gossypium herbaceum*; this was planted on lands belonging to the Civil
Dispensary in December 1862 and January 1863, on the sandy wastes of the Palar river near the
village of Timmaverum, and have been fruiting remarkably well; the plants have obtained eight
and ten feet in height, are quite shrubby and were loaded with bolls of cotton, although the
plants are scattered over five or six acres, the number will only complete the stand of one acre.
I was unable to obtain coolies to pick the crop in proper time thus much of the blown cotton was
destroyed by squirrels and rats, and much more was blown down, and irretrievably injured by
mixture with the sand and vegetable debris about the place. The cotton collected was seventy-
four lbs. of clean wool per acre and is rather harsh, and crisp, but the seeds are well covered and
the bolls large; in some the wool was quite silky.

3. I should here state that these plants have been literally growing wild; they did not
receive the smallest care, and the ground was overrun with rank grass and weeds.

4. None of the American varieties either received any care from me; they were simply
protected from the access of animals, and after the crop was gathered in, some of the plants were
lightly pruned; I had the greatest difficulty to free the cotton from the seeds, notwithstanding
the full play of three churkas, but through the kindness of Dr. Hunter to whom I applied,
I obtained the loan of a patent cottage saw gin (the instrument depicted in Royle's Book on
Cotton Culture, page 540), and two churkas; with the assistance of these I was able to get
through all my cotton. The churkas answer very well for the American varieties, and the saw
gin for the *Oopum*, although the latter cuts up and deteriorates the staple very much. I have

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now the produce of Chingleput, (American and India,) a bale of 380 lbs. of cotton wool ready either to ship home or to throw in the market at Madras.

5. I regret, for reasons stated in my letter of the 8th October 1863, to have been unable to carry out any other experiment since, and had to regret the loss of the only few plants I believed I had succeeded in hybridizing, after the labour of some years between the Oopum and Bourbon. Since my communication of the 6th July 1863, the seeds of a pod produced ten Bourbon and six Oopum plants, and for greater security, the seeds were planted in the Jail Hospital compound, but through some misunderstanding of the orders of the Inspector General of Prisons, these were destroyed, notwithstanding an appeal from me, when the plants had attained between two and three feet in height, and were too old for removal elsewhere. I regret this greatly not on my own account so much as that of science, that my labours should have been thus thrown away by the ignorance of those who could not distinguish a Brinjal from a cotton plant. The fact of the seeds of a single pod producing two varieties of plants after my attempts to hybridize is a proof of itself that the experiment was a success, and the destruction of these plants was, and still is, the greatest source of regret to me.

6. Some time ago Captain White of Travancore I think was anxious to ascertain the quality of the wool from Peruvian cotton plants of various ages. I have now the pleasure to submit samples of from one to seven-year-old plants. I also submit two out of the four locks I received from the Manchester Cotton Supply Association for comparison, which renders the series the more interesting. I have not attempted to offer an opinion on the produce of plants of different ages, but will leave it for those better qualified than myself to judge of their merits.

7. The specimens submitted were not selected but only taken off the trees about the end of the crop in the beginning of May last, and are therefore not the very best.

1. Ordered to be submitted for the information of Government, and that copy be forwarded with the samples to the Resident at Travancore for communication to Captain White, the Assistant Resident, with reference to Mr. Fisher's letter to Government dated 19th January 1864.

2. Copy of Dr. Shortt's letter will also be furnished to the Agri-Horticultural Society.

3. The Board are much obliged to Dr. Shortt for keeping them so well informed of the progress of his interesting experiments. They request that he will in future apply to them if he has any difficulty in obtaining the use of gins for cleaning the produce.

4. Should the Board not have any machines available at the moment, they could generally procure what might be needed with little difficulty.

No. 361.

ORDER THEREON, 25th August 1864, No. 1,539.

Miscellaneous.

1. Ordered to be forwarded to the Home Government and laid on the Editors' table.

2. The Board will convey the acknowledgments of Government to Dr. Shortt.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) J. D. SIM,

Secretary to Government.

To the Board of Revenue.

„ the Editors' table.

Exd. S. T. Augustin.

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Shortt & Co. George
25th Aug. 1864

14 Board of Rev. Dept. 26 Aug^r
Editors' table.

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of 25 August/64 no 30 mis

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