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WASHINGTON CITY.

WE are indebted for the following interesting information on a subject of the first importance, to Mr. Main, an English gentleman who resides in the neighborhood of the city, and who has paid an assiduous and intelligent attention among other objects, to the planting of thorn hedges.

To a nation whose habits are agricultural, and whose peace and prosperity eminently depend on the improved cultivation of the soil, no arguments would seem necessary in favor of a mode of fencing, which is used in other countries, and which cannot fail of success in this country under a proper management. Viewed in the aspect of national economy, it is easy to shew that the substitution of thorn hedges in the place of the expensive materials at present used, would effect an annual saving of at least from five to ten millions of dollars. We offer this single circumstance in lieu of an apology for occupying our columns, at this time, with other than political matter. We shall hereafter, at a more convenient season, call the attention of our readers, and through them, we should hope, that of the nation to this interesting topic. In the mean time we will only add that Mr. Main holds himself ready to supply at moderate prices, any demands for thorns.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

PLAIN HEDGING

Comprised in a brief description of the method of planting and cultivating hedges by the assistance of the plough. Accompanied with remarks.

The season for planting thorn hedges is any time betwixt the fall of the leaf and the opening of the bud, when the weather is mild and the soil in a fit condition to work; and when an extensive line of hedging is contemplated, the work ought to be commenced as soon as circumstances will allow. In a dry soil the fall is the best time, and if the ground is naturally moist, the spring will be most suitable. The course of the intended hedge having been deep and well ploughed, the soil rendered loose and cleared of clods, stones, roots, &c. and with an evenly surface, that is, it requires little other preparation than what is bestowed for wheat, rye or other small grain. A stripe or ridge of about ten or twelve feet wide will be sufficient ground for the hedge course. In the center of this the hedge is planted in a trench or furrow, formed by the plough, and made sufficiently deep by passing it to and fro several times in the same.

The planting is performed in the following manner—As many laborers as are employed, place themselves about equally distant from each other along the trench, and by the help of a garden line set the plants upright at the proper distance, with their roots spread upon the bottom of the trench—as each plant is set it is held by the left hand and just so much mould placed upon its roots by the right as will keep it in its place, until the whole length of the garden line is set, which is then moved forwards, for some of the workmen to continue the setting whilst others are filling up that portion of the trench which is already put in levelling the surface and treading the soil firm along side, and between each of the plants. The distance at which the plants ought to be set depends upon the quality of the soil—in a poor soil, not nearer than four inches, nor wider than six in the best: but concerning this there are several opinions. In this method each workmen will be able in the course of a day to put in, and finish the planting of from five hundred to one thousand plants: and in a free mellow soil, clear of stones, roots and gravel, and a mild day in March, they may each put in a greater number. In such a favorable soil, and level situation the filling may be performed by the plough.

When the earth is dry at the time of planting, and the weather clear and breezy, it will be necessary to have a tub of water at hand in which the roots of each parcel of plants are to be dipped immediately before they are set. The bulk of the plants ought to be previously trenched in the earth near by; so that they may be ready at hand to be taken up in parcels, as they are wanted. The temporary fence ought to be set about five or six feet from the hedge; if so much room can be obtained: and indeed where more can conveniently be allowed it may be placed at seven or eight feet distant. The cultivated stripe on each side of the hedge is to be stirred by the plough and cleaned from weeds as often through the course of the summer as appears to be needful. This operation which is as simple as ploughing a row of Indian corn needs no further description. The hand hoe, and the hand also, is necessarily used to draw out such weeds as fix themselves near and betwixt the stems of the plants: but if the hedge is duly attended, there will be little occasion for hand-weeding. In a clean and loose soil this work may be done by a horse-hore, or by what is called in this part of the country a hoe-harrow; by which several miles of hedging may be stirred and weeded in the course of a day. During the first season the hedge will not make much progress, except the soil is very good and well prepared.

After the fall of the leaf in open weather, the young hedge is to be trimmed and reduced to an equal height, in order to check the strong and give the weaker plants opportunity to rise; this operation is essentially necessary to the prosperity of the hedge, and cannot with propriety be omitted for the first four years every fall, or in the spring, before the bud is unfolded: but never in the time of severe frost. It requires but little time when the hedge is young and is expeditiously done with a pair of hedge shears. Another article of equal importance is the supply of such plants as are accidentally destroyed. At the end of the first year the hedge must be carefully examined, and wherever any plant is wanting it must be replaced from a reserve kept in a nursery for the purpose; two or three plants for every hundred in the hedge will generally be found sufficient. At the end of the second year, or during the torpid season the same care must be exerted, and if neglected then, it will seldom succeed afterwards.

The weeding and stirring the soil are to be continued for four or five years, and the trimming, after that period, may or may not be continued, according as the owner of the hedge may incline or according to his intention towards it, as an ornamental, or merely as an useful appendage to his premises.

If these directions are duly attended to, and if the soil and seasons are but tolerably favorable, the hedge at the end of four or five years will be stout enough to resist the impressions of horses and black cattle; and were it not on account of hogs being allowed to go at large, it would be very easy to fence with thorn hedges against the rest of our domestic stock. However, as this mischievous, though much esteemed part of our rural retinue, must always be calculated upon in any of our schemes of fencing; we must either render our hedges impervious to them, or such fences will be good for very little. To effect this as soon as we can will be very desirable. The quickest way that I am acquainted with, is to have it done by the hedge itself; without any auxiliary aid from other materials, is to have the hedge well ploughed in the spring of the year; that is, when the plants have generally attained the size of a person's thumb, and just before the bud opens, let all the plants be cut off within two or three inches of the ground. In the course of the growing season, the shoots from their stumps will rise many of them to the height of five or six feet, appearing at the bottom numerous, close, and full of thorns—at the fall of the leaf cut the tops off evenly to within two or three feet only of the ground. Continue the culture for three years and equalise the hedge every fall; letting it rise higher and higher every time, so as to attain at that period an altitude agreeable to the inclination of its owner. Thus in five years from the time it was planted the hedge will not only be secure against horses, cows, &c. but also prove impervious to pigs and almost the youngest fry of our domestic poultry. It may be asked here, why not plant the hedge close enough at first, and then the heading would be unnecessary and a year or two's growth saved? But experience informs that this advice if followed would not answer the purpose near so effectually as the method described.

Another mode of quickly closing a hedge, is to drive in a stake of square split timber, betwixt each of the young plants; the stakes being about three feet long, sharpened at one end, inserted while the hedge is two or at most three years old, and while the plants are sufficiently flexible to be drawn aside or bent over, while the stakes are driven in. This method though much inferior and far more expensive than the first, is useful where the temporary fence is decayed or almost useless, so that the hedge is when thus closed up a sufficient fence of itself. It only requires about one thousand pieces of the size of a stout rail of nine feet in length, each of which sawed into three, and these quartered, will afford stuff sufficient for closing one mile of hedging against all the branches of the brushy family.

It is probable that the ditching mode of hedging was originally invented from the necessity of having a temporary defence of some sort or other included in the scheme; and in a country where the price of labour is cheaper than the price of timber, with a climate moist, mild, and temperate, and soil not liable to be spued up by the frost, nor washed away by torrent rains, where also every person is obliged by law to take care of his own cattle only, ditching is not only allowable but advantageous: Nevertheless, in this country where something like the reverse of all these circumstances is the case, ditching is not only injurious to the scheme but is altogether unnecessary.

There are but few places in America, as yet, where materials of some sort of wood or other cannot be found to form the temporary fence; and where such cannot be had, and there is a necessity for a ditch, if the hedge is planted on the plain cultivated surface inside of it where it can be cultivated by the plough, it will answer much better than having the plants put in the face of the bank; and projecting in that unnatural position, over the ditch. However, two ditches cut across a marshy bottom, and a hedge planted on the artificial elevation, of sufficient breadth betwixt them, will sometimes be requisite to carry a line of hedging over a swamp.

Perhaps the reason that quikset hedges have been hitherto so little regarded in the United states, is in some degree to be attributed, to the little success that has commonly ensued from the few trials that have been made upon the scheme.

This ill success, I am apprehensive, has generally accrued from their being planted in the ditching method; where from the want of weeding & the position of the plants exposing them to be undermined by the frosts & heavy showers of rain, the hedges fall into gaps, and in place of an elegant, compact and evenly fence appearing like a verdant walk around the field, it is seen in detached fragments only an incumbrance of the ground—or perhaps left by an highway side as a standing memento to every observant passenger, to deter him from ever attempting such an useless, graceless, and preposterous scheme of fencing.

Much yet remains to be said upon the subject: I shall, however conclude for this time, by inviting those landholders who reside in parts of the country where wood is beginning to be scarce, to turn their attention to the culture of quick-set hedges: and if they take the opportunity while their old fences will still last a few years, and have their young hedges protected thereby; it may save many worthy field from being left without a fence, and many a farm being deserted.

THOMAS MAIN.

December 11, 1804.

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

CONGRESS has again voted a large sum of money (130,000 Dollars) to proceed with the Capitol, and has made appropriations for marine barracks, &c. in short their determination to continue this City as the permanent seat of government has been evinced on every occasion. A proposition is now before the House of Representatives for erecting a bridge over the Potomac, I shall therefore endeavor candidly to investigate all the arguments against it and in favor of it.

The first objection which will be urged is the unconstitutionality of the measure.—If the proposed bridge could create any obstruction injurious to Maryland or Virginia in the remotest degree, a question might arise, but nature having created rocks across the river, above George Town, the district of Columbia can alone be affected, and Virginia and Maryland can no more suffer injury than Georgia or the province of Maine. When the district was ceded, both sides of the river were included to preclude all possible interference of any state. To my mind there is but one question, that of expediency, which embraces also the interests of all—George Town has already remonstrated against it, alledging that it will impede the navigation to her port; The quantity of vessels now repairing or likely to repair to it, may be easily calculated, and the slight impediment created by the necessity of going through a draw bridge may be easily estimated, where the channel is so narrow. It must however be admitted, that George Town will in some degree suffer by diverting the road and making that straight which is now so *elbowed*, and which obliges every traveller to pass through it—on the other hand let us consider what the other parts of the district would obtain.

First. Alexandria would save five or six miles of very bad road in repairing to Congress or to the Bank of the United States (which in six years more will be removed here) or to the City generally, and thus also vice versa, most of the Citizens of Washington.

Secondly. Provisions, Hay, &c. could be brought with facility and expedition from Virginia.

Thirdly, Every traveller would benefit from the Atlantic States who go by land through this City. It would save one Stage or change of horses to the mail, it would expedite public communication, and prevent a great loss of time, and a great deal of suffering, to thousands annually.—The road from George Town to Alexandria is at this time almost impassible, and will not be made Turnpike, as the direct communication by a bridge is expected sooner or later to pass; the poor foot traveller is obliged therefore to wade through five miles of mud and mire, and toil over hills all of which might be totally avoided by a bridge.—It is impossible accurately to estimate the great saving of expence and time, and suffering which this bridge would create, and in this point of view, the benefits are so obvious that justice to the district generally, and to the public at large, loudly and forcibly pleads in favor of it.

Will not the plenty of provisions, &c. be encreased and their price decreased by additional competition? Will not intercourse be promoted by this facility? Will George Town be *deprived* of one fair advantage? Suppose for a moment that there should be a very few minutes delay to every ship going there, what does it amount to? Bladensburg might with almost equal propriety have complained of the bridge erected over the Eastern branch, as their small vessels must go through the draw.

The leading principle of a republican or just government is to consult the interests of the majority, and in this case not only the permanent inhabitants of this City and Alexandria would be benefited, but all the neighborhood, and all the strangers resorting to both places, but also the numbers who are daily compelled by business to travel from North to South.

If draw bridges were novelties, our imaginations might be alarmed by apprehended obstructions, but in Europe and America they exist without experiencing evils, they accommodate all travelling by land and water. Cambridge in Massachusetts is made a port of entry, although there are two draw bridges intervening, but it were useless to produce instances where they so much abound. The question is almost reduced to this. Whether straight roads and draw bridges shall be exploded.

Congressional Register.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9.

Debate on receding the District of Columbia.

[Continued.]

Mr. LUCAS. After having heard the question under consideration so extensively and ably discussed, I rise with the greatest diffidence, indeed I do rise not so much in hope to throw light as to justify the vote which I intend to give.

That I may preserve perspicuity, I shall investigate the following points in their proper order.

Hath Congress the constitutional power to cede to the states of Maryland and Virginia, part of the district of Columbia? Hath Congress the power to cede it without the consent of the inhabitants of the parts intended to be ceded? Is it expedient to make that cession, both with respect to the United States and with respect to the inhabitants of the parts intended to be ceded?

The power vested in Congress by the constitution to accept a district not exceeding ten miles square, to become the seat of government, is a power which appears to stand on a perfect level with all the other powers enumerated in the eighth section of the first article; it is as optional to Congress to accept or not accept a district not exceeding ten miles, as to lay or not lay duties, imposts and excises. There was a seat of government before the district of Columbia was in existence, and there may be a seat of government after the district of Columbia may have ceased to exist. If it be urged that in as much as there is not in the constitution an express delegation of powers to cede the district, Congress cannot cede it, I shall retort, that as there is no express power delegated by the constitution to repeal laws laying impost or excise, Congress cannot repeal such laws. This argument proves too much to prove any thing. My apprehension of the power of Congress is, that whatever it hath the power to do, it hath the virtual power to undo; indeed without that power Congress could not change its operations with circumstances, nor improve the system of legislation.

The next question is this—hath Congress the power to cede a part of the district of Columbia without the consent of the inhabitants of that part? This point leads to a previous one. Could the legislatures of Virginia and Maryland originally cede to Congress a part of their states not exceeding ten miles square, without the consent of the inhabitants of the parts ceded? I believe that those legislatures had not that power. It ought to remembered that the inhabitants of the district of Columbia, although they have been represented in the course of the debates as men in a state of degradation, were a part of the people who, in the preamble of the constitution of the United States, did express themselves in the following manner:—"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity," &c. The right of being represented in the legislatures of their respective states, and in Congress, was the right of the inhabitants of the district of Columbia at the time they were component parts of the states of Virginia & Maryland. Those blessings of liberty were secured to them and their posterity by their respective state constitutions, and by the federal compact. How then can it be conceived that the legislatures of Virginia and Maryland had the power to give them away, to become subject to the "exclusive legislation of Congress in all cases whatsoever;"—that is, to be deprived of their elective franchise and right of representation? How can it be conceived that the legislatures of these states, that are the creatures of the constitution, had the power to bereave Americans of the most valuable rights that the constitution of their country guaranty to them? It is the comfort and pride of an American, that no power on earth but his own can deprive him of his constitutional rights; this is a principle self-evident. But it is urged, that the inhabitants of the district of Columbia, notwithstanding this, are actually subject to Congress, without elective franchise. This I grant. But if they are so, it is by their consent, without which the cession could not have been legitimate. Thus it hath been their pleasure to barter their elective franchise for pecuniary advantages, or other considerations arising from being within the bounds of the seat of government. It is evidently a matter of choice on their part, and they have been put in that situation neither by violence or conquest. To those who contend that the legislatures of Maryland and Virginia were of themselves as competent to make the cession to Congress as Congress was competent to accept, I beg leave to observe that yet as by those acts the right of elective franchise of the inhabitants of the parts ceded would have been virtually defeated, this brings me back to my former position, that the cession made by Maryland and Virginia could not be legitimate without the consent of the inhabitants of the part ceded, otherwise the constitution would give power to invade liberties which at the same time the constitution intended to secure. This consent was given by acclamation, even the women and children of the district rejoiced on that occasion. Hence the consent of the inhabitants of the district having been necessary to render the cession legitimate, and that consent having been given, a contract exists between them and Congress; a contract may exist and does generally exist between the governors and the governed, the protection and subjection are reciprocal obligations even in monarchies; the whigs of England contended in 1688, that James the Second had violated the original contract between him and his people, a contract which nobody pretended to be reduced to forms and written, but which nevertheless was binding, and derived its force from the relations necessarily existing, between the monarch and the subject.

Certainly, Mr. Chairman, the inhabitants of this district are not in a worse situation than subjects are under a monarchy; yet a worse treatment is offered to them; by the present resolutions they are to be receded against their consent to Maryland and Virginia. The word