

time must prove of great and general importance. It is a well-known fact that trees have a sensible effect on climate. Where there are woods there is moisture, and a dry climate almost necessarily follows absence of timber. As the absence of fertilizing showers is a serious drawback in this part of New Zealand, it can scarcely be doubted this might in a measure be remedied by extensive planting; and I hope the day is not distant when the mulberry tree will be seen growing on our hill-sides, and standing in clusters in our valleys, and there will then be better crops of grain grown on the Waimea and neighbouring plains, and the whole character of the country be improved.

It may appear I am drawing a somewhat fanciful picture, not based on sound reasoning. But where is the reasoning unsound? We know the mulberry tree will thrive in New Zealand; the climate is just what best suits the worm which spins the silk, and is untainted with the disease which destroys the insect in old silk-producing countries. Making the very largest deductions, sericulture can be made far more profitable than any industry our rural population can engage in; and there is an immediate market for all the silk we could produce, with no chance of its ever becoming glutted. Trees will not grow and yield returns in a single season; but surely the increased ultimate profit will compensate for the delayed returns; and it must be from ignorance more than from any other cause that an industry so calculated to benefit all who engage in it, and enrich the country at large, has for so many years been wholly neglected by us.

I now come to the next branch of sericulture—the rearing of the worm which gives the silk. It will not be necessary, in a paper like the present, to speak in detail of the different kinds of worms which produce silk, their habits, or the best mode of treating them; to do this at length would occupy considerable time, and my present object is only to deal generally with my subject, and excite interest towards it. While the growing of food for the silkworm is a rude business, which any person can follow who is capable of putting a spade into the ground, the rearing of the worm is a more delicate matter, but intelligence and attention is all that is necessary to ensure success. Wherever sericulture is carried on upon any scale, “magnanaries,” or houses for the silkworms, must be erected. The insect is exceedingly sensitive to surrounding objects and influences, and unless some regard is paid to its instincts, it is vain to expect silk of the best quality. A regulated temperature, good ventilation, and abundance of proper food, are the primary requisites of success. There are minor points also, such as a subdued light, the absence of foul smells, and others which need not now be stated. Any spare room might be made to serve the purpose of a magnanary, but a wooden building specially erected for the purpose, and constructed on a proper principle, would be preferable. The labour of women and children is found preferable to that of men for attending on the worms, and this would equally apply here.

I shall conclude with a few remarks on the experience I have gained in sericulture during the four years I have given it attention, but it is necessarily only limited. By importing from Sydney a number of trees of the white mulberry, I have satisfied myself that the tree will thrive here remarkably well. The eggs which I originally procured were not of a good kind of worm, and partly through this, and partly from neglected feeding, the cocoons I first raised were light and of little value. From a better class of eggs which I obtained last year, and possibly also from giving the worms more attention, the cocoons this season are much heavier, for the difference in silk is more a question of quantity, than quality of fineness. By bestowing a good deal of attention on the worms, I have acquired improved knowledge as to the method of treating them, and I have supplemented my personal experience by studying the writings of the best authorities on sericulture, the most complete of which I fortunately possess. I have satisfied myself, by experiments, that three crops of cocoons may be raised here in a year. From the hatching of the worm to its commencement to spin occupies about forty-three days, which multiplied by three, will give, say, nineteen weeks. Now the hatching might commence with the month of November, and there would be no failure of food until nearly the end of March, the supply being maintained for nearly twenty-one weeks. To regulate hatchings in this manner would require attention, but it is done when the most is attempted to be made of sericulture. I have little to add, beyond expressing a firm conviction that sericulture may be made the most valuable industry this Colony can possess; and if I succeed in making converts to this conviction, and in however humble a manner am instrumental in bringing it into such notice as shall induce its general adoption, I shall secure the object for which I have laboured.

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### No. 5.

Mr. MACDONALD to Mr. T. C. BATCHELOR.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 13th April, 1870.

I have the honor, by the direction of Mr. Gisborne, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th ultimo, and to inform you that the correspondence respecting sericulture will be printed for both Houses of the General Assembly, and a Joint Committee asked to consider the subject, and recommend steps to be taken to encourage this industry.

I have, &c.,

ALEX. C. P. MACDONALD

(for the Under Secretary).

T. C. Batchelor, Esq., Nelson.

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### No. 6.

Mr. T. C. BATCHELOR to the Hon. W. GISBORNE.

SIR,—

Nelson, 29th April, 1870.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th instant, and beg to inform you that I have received per last mail new publications on Sericulture from the English Silk Supply Association, thereby rendering valuable information towards carrying out sericulture.

I have, &c.,

T. C. BATCHELOR.

The Hon. W. Gisborne, Colonial Secretary.