

VANILLA BEAN CULTURE.

One of the Most Profitable Crops of Tropical Countries.

Mexican Growers Receive from \$5 to \$15 for a Pound of Cured Beans—The Drying Process is Very Tedious and Complicated.

Vanilla as a flavoring for ice creams and other delicacies, from once being considered a luxury, has now come to be so generally used that it is considered a necessity, and it would be very hard to find a substitute for it. Commercial extract of vanilla is obtained from the vanilla bean, which is a native of Mexico, and is probably the most valuable fruit grown, the best quality of Mexican beans often being worth nearly their weight in silver. While the vanilla is a native of Mexico, of recent years it has been transplanted to a number of different countries, and will grow in any locality where the temperature does not fall below 65 degrees. The best beans, however, still come from Mexico.

The vanilla plant is a climbing vine, with a stem about as thick as an ordinary lead pencil, covered with dark-green, spear-shaped leaves.

The vines blossom profusely during March and April. The flower is yellow and has a very agreeable sweet smell. By far the greater number of blossoms wither and fall off, and the ones producing beans are a very small percentage of the total number. The beans grow very rapidly for the first two months, and by the 1st of July have attained their full size, and from that time on grow but little, if any. The beans, or pods, are from six to twelve inches long, and about half an inch in diameter, and when ripe are about the color of a banana, and have very much the same appearance, except that they are a little less in diameter and somewhat longer. Each vine yields about 100 beans, and some vines have a single branch that bear 12 or 15 pods.

From the 1st of July, when the bean is a dark-green color, it grows but little in size, turning gradually a yellow color, until the last of December or 1st



DRYING VANILLA BEANS.

of January, when it is fully ripe and ready for gathering. The pods are filled with minute black seeds and a small quantity of pulp, and when prepared for market become reduced to about one-fourth their original thickness, are black in color, and emit a very sweet, agreeable perfume.

The curing of the beans is a slow, tedious process, and one requiring a great amount of care and attention. For the most part the growers do not cure their own beans, but sell them in miscellaneous lots to curers, who employ experts for that purpose. The total time consumed by the curing process is about five months. The beans as soon as gathered are spread out in the sun on black blankets, and allowed to remain until they are quite hot to the touch. They are then gathered up and placed in a sweating box, which is simply a wooden box large enough to hold all the beans. This box is well warmed in the sun, and its whole interior is then lined with blankets that have been out in the sun.

After the beans are in the box the ends of the blankets are folded over them and other warmed blankets are placed over and around the box. The whole is then allowed to remain for 36 hours, by which time the ripest of the vanilla will begin to turn black, and the box will have lost most of its heat. The beans now have to be spread out in the sun again, after which they are again sweated, and this process continued four or five times, until the beans are the proper color.

As the ripe beans turn black the quickest, after each sweating the whole lot has to be gone over, and the ones which are black enough picked out and placed by themselves. Great care must be exercised in this process, as, if they are very little oversweated, it is sufficient to reduce the weight about one pound per 1,000 beans, which would be a great loss, and, as the bean loses part of its color when over-dried, there is a further loss of about one dollar per pound on account of poor color.

As soon as the beans have been sufficiently sweated and are of the proper color they are spread out on drying racks, being carefully gone over from day to day, and any that show signs of moisture or mold are taken out and put in the sun until the mold disappears, when they are again placed on the racks. When of the proper dryness, which the operator from experience can judge very accurately by the feeling of the bean, they are taken from the racks and carefully assorted into bunches of 50, all the beans in one bunch being of the same length.

The price the beans bring depends entirely on their length and color, says the Chicago Record, and varies from eight dollars to fifteen dollars per pound. Each bunch of 50 beans weighs from a pound to a pound and a half, and a tin containing 40 bunches is worth therefore in the neighborhood of \$500.

Millinery
—and—
Fancy Work!
We have always shown an unusual beautiful line of goods during the holidays, and our stock this year is thoroughly up to date. Many new designs in Fancy Work and Sterling Silver Jewelry.
Mrs. J. MATHERS.

CHESTNUT'S
The Principal Holiday Shopping Mart in Freeland for More Than Ten Years.
Toys In Abundance!
Hundreds of Tree Ornaments.
We never had such a large stock as we are displaying this year. Two floors full, containing the latest and handsomest products of the Toy-maker's art.
The Largest Doll in Freeland given away free—one chance on every 25c purchase.
S. J. JONSON

Specialties for the Holidays!
ROCHESTER LADIES' FINE SHOES
SOLE AGENT.
Boys' and Youths' Home-Made Grain and Kangaroo Calf Shoes.
Fine Slippers, largest and most complete stock of Rubbers ever brought to Freeland.
MEN'S AND BOYS' FELTS AND OVERS OF ALL QUALITY AND DESCRIPTION.
J. L. OWEN, MAIN STREET, BELOW CENTRE.

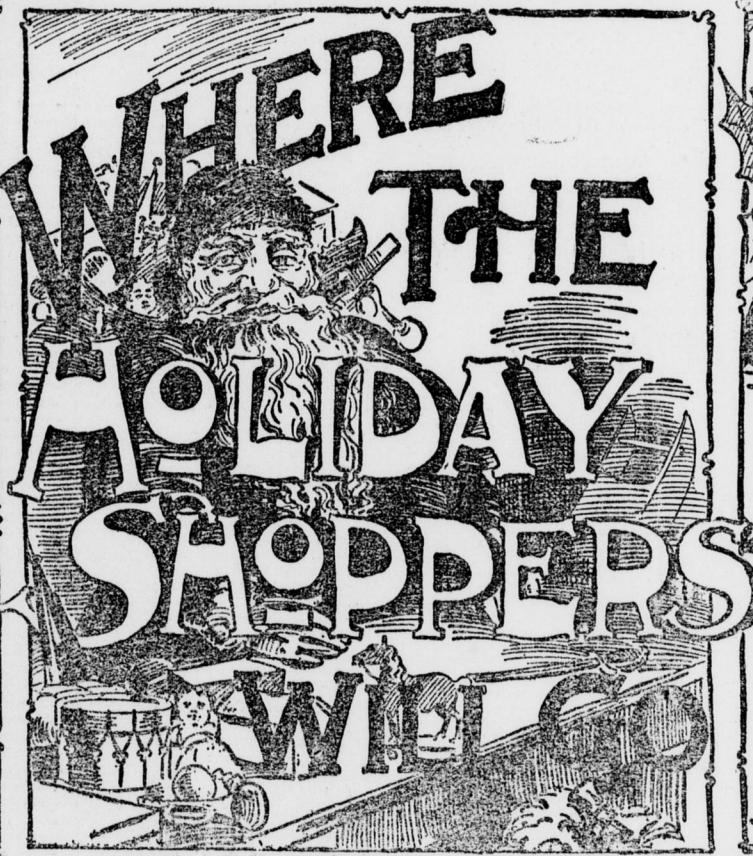
You May Need a Cape
Or Your Girl a Nice Coat?
If so we can sell you as good a Coat or Cape as you can get in the country. We will respect your wishes and will do our best to force an inferior garment on you and charge a big price.
MILLINERY AND DRESSMAKING.
Mrs. R. Thompson,
Centre Street, Near South.

MERKT'S HOLIDAY BAZAAR
Centre Street, Above Main.
Everything imaginable for the children's stockings, and a great many things which will interest the older people. For the little ones we have Toys and Tree Ornaments of every kind—all of them handsome and pleasing, many of them useful and lasting. Prices to suit the times. For young men we have Pipes, Cigar Holders, Smoking Sets and other things, which make pleasing holiday gifts. For the older people, who spread the dinner table, we can furnish all the delicacies of the season.

WM. L. KEIPER,
Leading Jeweler (Established 1882.)
Centre Street Above Main.
Headquarters for Diamonds, Watches, Clocks AND JEWELRY OF ALL KINDS.

The largest and finest line of
Watches, Clocks, Jewelry
AND SILVERWARE
at Reasonable Prices
AT BUTTERWICK'S
Corner of Front and Centre Streets.

WM. BIRKBECK
Hardware Novelties suitable for the holidays—a big assortment of useful things which make pleasing and beautiful presents.
A Great Stock of Skates.
BICYCLES AND ALL WHEEL GOODS.
Regular line of
STOVES, HEATERS, RANGES, ETC.
Steam Fitting, Tin Roofing and Spouting.
PLUMBING A SPECIALTY.



GILLESPIE & CURRY
GROCERS.
The choicest eatable for the holidays and all other days. Everything new. Lowest prices in town.
CENTRE ST., BELOW SOUTH.

AN EXCELLENT NEW YEAR GIFT!
A PRESENT TWICE A WEEK FOR A WHOLE YEAR FOR \$1.50.
A SUBSCRIPTION TO THE TRIBUNE.

S. WENNER & SONS,
Centre and Luzerne Streets.
The choicest line of Groceries kept constantly in stock. A big assortment of Dry Goods, which comprises many pieces in Dress Goods and Novelties, that could be turned into appropriate holiday gifts. Call and see for yourselves.
PRICES ALWAYS REASONABLE.

J. J. SWEENEY,
Gents' Furnisher.
NECKWEAR, UNDERWEAR, HOSIERY, HATS, CAPS, GLOVES, Etc.
Elegant Silk Handkerchiefs—Many Varieties—Suitable for Holiday Presents.

ROCKERS -- COUCHES
In the Grand Rush of Gift-Giving
Do not forget the old folks or your married friends. Santa Claus will take good care of the children, while the duty devolves upon you to remember your parents and aged relatives. Make this a Happy New Year for your father or mother, or perhaps an old friend, by presenting them with a big soft Rocker or a modern Couch. They will be pleased and will bless you. We are carrying an extra large stock this season and will guarantee every purchaser a bargain.
F. H. ALBERT.

A. RUDEWICK'S
General Store.
Numerous Bargains for the Holidays In Clothing and Furniture.
FRESH GROCERIES OF ALL KINDS. TURKEYS AND CHICKENS.
Birkbeck Street, South Heberton.

WM. WILLIAMSON
offers to holiday buyers a choice selection of useful articles in Hardware. All sorts of presents for tradesmen. A big stock of Fancy Lamps, any one of which will be sure to please your married friends. Skates, Pocket Knives, for the boys.
FULL LINE OF STOVES, HEATERS AND GENERAL HARDWARE.
Washington and Front STREETS.

Examine
Laubach's
Toys and Candy.

JAMES QUIGLEY
has a choice line of Confectionery and Fruits.
Especially for the Holidays.

SMITH'S
91 CENTRE STREET.
Closing out entire stock of Clothing, Gents' Furnishing Goods, Boots and Shoes. We are going out of business. A great opportunity to buy gifts in Handkerchiefs, Gloves, Mufflers, etc. Everything sold below wholesale cost.
Auction Sale Every Saturday Night.