

Eucalyptus Oil.

The old saying, that "It is an ill wind that blows nobody good," is being realised by the dealers in Eucalyptus oil, which is strongly advocated as an influenza preventive [without however any adequate evidence of its being more than a palliative. *Ed.*] From our contemporary, the *Chemist and Druggist*, we learn that owing to the very great demand for the oil, a parcel of a fine brand which only two or three days previously had been sold for 2s. 6d. per lb., sprung up suddenly to 4s. 4d., since which time quotations have advanced by 6d. per day, or even more, till on January 20th it reached 7s. 6d., and on the following day 8s. was paid for the oil of *E. globulus*, and it was stated that 50 lb. of the same oil had been sold during the day at 12s. 6d. per lb. At that date, nearly all holders who had any merchantable oils to sell had been cleared out, but a vessel was said to be due having a considerable quantity on board, though most of this was already sold before it had actually arrived. Since this was written, the *Ormuz* has arrived with about 2,000 lb. on board, and further supplies are expected.

Our contemporary before referred to, speaking of the fillip which the influenza scare has given to Eucalyptus oil, says, it is highly probable that in the future it will remain a regular domestic remedy, as it has become in Australia, the home of the plants, which yield it; and it is further an interesting fact, that as the reputation of Eucalyptus oil has grown in public estimation, other sources of supply than Australia have been discovered, and even in Australia the distilling industry is no longer confined

to Victoria, all the colonies now sending supplies to this country. Considerable quantities of the oil are distilled in the South of France, and as many as 20,000 lbs. of the oil of *Eucalyptus globulus* are now exported yearly from California.

The growth of the *Eucalyptus* in California is another example of how rapidly new industries are developed in the far west. The first plantation of any extent was made in 1869, when 55 acres of hill land at the back of the town of Haywards, was planted with *E. globulus* seedlings, to supply the want of timber, and to improve the climatic conditions of the locality. As it proved a satisfactory investment, yielding a profit of 17·50 dols. per acre per annum, which was increased as experience was gained, the example thus set was quickly followed by others. One large forest was planted seven miles south of Los Angeles, and now the *Eucalyptus* is found over a tract of 400 miles along the Californian coast, cultivated in fields varying up to 100 acres. The trees, which are chiefly *E. globulus*, grow rapidly, and form a splendid shelter; the other species grown is *E. rostrata*, but this is cultivated chiefly for its timber.

At first no attention was given to the distillation of the oil, and its adoption as a commercial article is thus described:—"In 1883, a Mr. George Downie discovered by accident that a decoction of *Eucalyptus* leaves removed the scale from boilers. He set about putting a preparation on the market, and succeeded in this. Meanwhile, he found that in superintending the manufacture of the boiler fluid, he had lost an asthmatic affection from which he had suffered for years. A friend with whom he was associated in the work was also cured of bronchitis. They had noticed the pleasant odour which came from the boilers, but they were unaware that the leaves contained a volatile body until they were told what a valuable oil they were wasting. Means were at once taken to collect it, and that with the boiler fluid was the beginning of a very respectable industry, which was ultimately taken over by the company. The factory is situated at the San Lorenzo Station, on the Southern Pacific Railway. The trees in the forests and plantations are cut down, and the leaves gathered by men called strippers. From 10 to 12 tons of leaves are operated upon daily, these yielding 1,500 gallons of boiler fluid, and 70 lbs. of essential oil. The oil is thus a big product, and during past two years, it has become so important a part of the industry, that the company have appointed a skilful chemist, under whose instructions the purity of the distillate has become greatly improved." (*John R. Jackson, in the Gardener's Chronicle*).