XIX. Of an attempt to make the maple sugar above an hundred years ago

Dr. Thornton

To cite this article: Dr. Thornton (1798) XIX. Of an attempt to make the maple sugar above an hundred years ago , Philosophical Magazine Series 1, 1:3, 322-323, DOI: [10.1080/14786449808676845](https://doi.org/10.1080/14786449808676845)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14786449808676845>

Published online: 04 Mar 2010.

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XIX. *Of an Attempt to make the Maple Sugar above an hundred Years ago. Communicated by Dr. THORNTON, Lecturer on Medical Botany at Guy's Hospital, &c.*

IT appears, by the following correspondence between Dr. Robinson and Mr. Ray, that the property of the American maple of yielding a saccharine juice was known above a century ago, and that attempts were even made to produce sugar from it :

Dr. ROBINSON to Mr. RAY.

“ Dear Sir, *London, March 10, 1684.*

“ I have enclosed you some sugar of the first boiling got from the juice of the wounded maple : Mr. Ashton, Secretary to the Royal Society, presented it to me. 'Twas sent from Canada, where the natives prepare it from the said juice ; eight pints yielding commonly a pound of sugar. The Indians have practised it time out of mind ; the French begin now to refine it, and to turn it to much advantage. If you have any of these trees by you, could you not make the trial, proceeding as with the sugar cane ?”

Answer to Dr. ROBINSON.

“ *Black Notley, April 1, 1684.*

“ Yours of the 10th instant I received, and therein an enclosed specimen of the Canada sugar, a thing to me strange and before unheard of. It were well worth the experiment you mention. I therefore engaged a friend and neighbour of mine, an ingenious apothecary, whom I employed yesterday to boil the juice of the greater maple, a tree which grows freely half a mile off from my residence. Having made an extract, he found a whitish substance, like to brown sugar, and tasting very sweet, immersed in a substance of the colour and consistency of molasses. Upon curing, I have no doubt it will make perfect sugar. When it is cured, I will give you a further account of it.”

Here

Here the matter ended ; and after the paper given you on the American maple (see p. 182), I hope the subject will be again pursued with ardour in this country, and this curious investigation turn of profit to this nation.—I shall send you, for your next number, a paper on the mulberry-tree, and the rearing of silk-worms.

INTELLIGENCE.

LEARNED SOCIETIES.

DENMARK.

THE Royal Society of Copenhagen has this year proposed a gold medal, value 100 rix-dollars, for the best answer to each of the following questions :

I. HISTORY.

Quænam gentes ante Norvægicos Americam invenerint, et itinera per mare in hanc terræ regionem intiterint ? Quousque detecta Norvægicorum in America præfertim Austrum versus extensa fuerint ? Quæ hac de re constitui poterunt, argumentis et conjecturis ex scriptis, monumentisve, v.c. munimentis, ædificiis, linguis, traditionibus Americanis probanda sunt.

“ What nations discovered America, and kept up an intercourse by sea with that country before the Norwegians ?
 “ How far did the discoveries of the Norwegians in America extend towards the South ? The proofs and grounds of conjecture must be drawn partly from written documents and partly from monuments, such as fortifications, edifices, languages and traditions still existing in America.”

II. IN THE MATHEMATICS.

Invenire functionem omnium quantitatum quæ conjunctim determinant magnitudinem effectus calorisfici, cujuscunque materie igni accipiendo aptæ in re familiari usitata, tam ligni, quam cespitis caminarii et lithantracis, seu carbonum fossilium cujuscunque speciei.