

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THOMAS J. DUNKIN, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

IMPROVEMENT IN THE MANUFACTURE OF TEXTILE FABRICS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 39,556, dated August 18, 1863.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, THOMAS J. DUNKIN, of the city, county, and State of New York, have invented a new and useful Improvement in the Manufacture of Textile Fabrics, &c.; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same.

This invention consists in the employment or use of the silky down contained in the seed-vessels of milkweed, (*Asclepias Syriaca*), either pure or by mixing the same in certain proportions with cotton, wool, silk, or other fibrous materials for the purpose of producing textile fabrics of any description whatever—such as cloth, thread, twine, and also wadding and batting.

To enable those skilled in the art to fully understand my invention, I will proceed to describe it.

The seed cells of the milkweed or *Asclepias Syriaca* contain a silky down, the fiber of which resembles in appearance that of cotton or white silk. This plant grows spontaneously throughout the northern states, and in its uncultivated state the staple of its fiber is rather short and not calculated to make a strong and durable fabric; but by cultivating the plant the staple may be rendered longer and better adapted for working it up into thread, or to subject it to the manipulations rendered necessary in preparing the fiber for weaving, or for the purpose of working it up into other fabrics. The fiber of the silky down of the milkweed can thus either be worked up into the desired fabric without mixing it with any other fiber, or it can be mixed very advantageously with cotton, wool, silk, or other material from which textile fabrics are generally manufactured. With cotton the down of the milkweed may be mixed in any proportion desirable, and I

have produced a tolerably good cloth by adding one-fifth part of cotton and four-fifths of my new fiber. The mixture is treated in the same manner as pure cotton, and the cloth produced is very soft and glossy. I have also produced felt of superior quality by mixing equal parts of my new fiber with wool and working the mixture up in the ordinary manner.

The felt thus obtained is much softer than felt made of pure wool, its surface is fine and smooth, and it presents a glossy appearance.

My new fiber can be used with advantage in the manufacture of cloth, thread, twine, wadding, and batting, and it can be mixed with silk and wool and employed for the purpose of producing hat-bodies, gloves, mittens, and paper, and when mixed with cotton, hemp, or flax it can be used in the manufacture of all textile fabrics generally produced from said fibers. It will also make a desirable stuffing for mattresses and batting.

I am aware that the fibers in the external and internal cortex of the *Asclepias Syriaca* have been used in the manufacture of textile fabrics, and that the same is fully described in a patent granted to Margaret Gerrish, March 27, 1834. I therefore wish it understood that I make no claim to such invention.

What I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

The employment or use, in the manufacture of textile fabrics, &c., of the silky down contained in the seed-cells of milkweed or *Asclepias Syriaca*, substantially in the manner herein set forth and described.

THOS. J. DUNKIN.

Witnesses:

M. S. PARTRIDGE,
DANIEL ROBERTSON.