UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

PAUL HENRI PICARD-GOULET, FILS, OF REIMS, FRANCE.

DEPILATING SHEEP-SKINS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 306,640, dated October 14, 1884.

Application filed September 19, 1883. (No specimens.) Patented in France August 22, 1883, No. 157,185.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, PAUL HENRI PICARD-GOULET, Fils, a citizen of France, residing at Reims, in the French Republic, have invented a new or Improved Process for Separating Wool from Sheep-Skins in the Fresh State, (for which I have obtained Letters Patent of France for fifteen years, dated August 22, 1883, No. 157,185;) and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof.

This invention relates to the separation of wool from sheep-skins in the fresh state—that is to say, as they are found immediately or shortly after the skinning of the sheep, and while they still possess their natural heat, without the necessity of drying them or submitting them to any operation whatever either on the woolly or fleshy side.

My process is exceedingly simple, and is carried out in the following manner:

First. The skins, freshly removed from the animals and still hot, are hung just as they are, without previous preparation, in a well-closed chamber, to beams or joists placed at distances from one another, according to the width of the skins to be peeled, and furnished with tenter-hooks for receiving the same, the said tenter-hooks being spaced according to the thickness of the skins. The skins are well stretched in every direction, and are prevented, as far as possible, from touching each other or the ground.

Second. When the chamber is wholly or partially full of suspended and stretched skins having their natural heat, out of contact with each other, the door is closed hermetically for a few hours in summer, or until the next day in winter, the duration of the operation depending on the temperature of the chamber.

Third. When the necessary time has elapsed the wool becomes detached of itself, and it is only necessary to remove it by the usual known means and tools. The skin is thus unhaired and the wool entirely detached from it.

The wool thus separated from the skin can be packed immediately, or it may be combed or washed without any other treatment. The skin is then tanned or tawed on the spot, or exported, after having been air-dried or simply salted.

The phenomenon of the natural separation of the wool from the skins suspended in the hermetically-closed chamber is easily explained. The fresh skins being introduced into a closed chamber as soon as possible after they have been removed from the animal, and this chamber being full, or nearly so, of these skins, hung near one another, it follows that in a few moments there is disengaged from the skins, which are still warm, a soft natural heat. This heat effects a fermentation, which forces the skin to perspire to a certain extent; the pores then open, and at that moment the wool is detached from the skin with the greatest ease.

The wool obtained by this process is admirable; it is dry, ready for packing or immediate use; it has not suffered from contact with any ingredient, either hot or cold, and is worth as much as and even more than shorn wool. In fact, at equal maturity, my natural wool is longer than shorn wool, because it has been removed with the whole of its root, while shorn wool is mutilated by the shears. This operation of shearing cuts the tube of the wool and the white grease contained therein, which constitutes its nature and its elasticity, is partly lost. My system, on the contrary, preserves this white grease, since the tube which contains it remains closed. It may therefore be concluded that my wool, which is absolutely natural, preserves all the essential qualities for combing and spinning, which shorn wool has not, and never can have.

The sorting is also more easily effected, for, by placing the skins on the tables or benches where they are to be stripped, the workman can easily separate the parts which are superior as regards fineness and nature from the inferior, base, dirty, or defective parts. This operation is completely impracticable when the wool is shorn on the back of the sheep.

If the advantages of my process are remarkably great as regards the wool, they are not less so as regards the skins, for the latter have not suffered from the use of any acid whatever, they have preserved all their elasticity and strength, and, above all, they can be dried or salted for exportation under the best conditions.

I do not claim suspending hides into liquids, nor suspending them in vats after they have received a coating or lining of chemicals; nor do I claim a process of unhairing hides which involves incipient putrefaction, which is objectionable, and which is caused by the external application of heat.

I claim—

The process for separating wool from sheepskins, which process consists in suspending the fresh skins immediately after slaughtering, and while said skins are still warm from the natural heat of the animals, in an otherwise empty closed chamber, and in starting fermentation by the natural heat only of said skins, as hereinbefore described.

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Witnesses:

A. BLÉTRY,

G. LAURENT.