

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Mappings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

GARDEN hose should be appropriate wear for a lawn party.

POOL rooms for women seem to be a super-refinement of civilization.

THE cook-book recipe is too often like the disappointing novel. It does not come out right.

THE dentist who devotes himself to pulling aching molars is necessarily a painstaking fellow.

AFTER children have passed the colic and teething stage you can please their father by complimenting them.

OF course the New York is all right, but who has stolen the difference in her speed between her former trials and her last one?

QUEEN VICTORIA has discovered a fondness for American cranberries. Slowly but surely our country is winning it way in the regard of European potentates.

GOODALL, the chief English maker of playing cards, has died and left \$800,000. He found the manufacture of cards a much more profitable business than many have found the use of them to be.

ONE Buffalo man choked over a castor-oil capsule he was trying to give himself and another Buffalo man is choking over a policy he tried to put down the throats of the American people. Experience is a bitter teacher.

SAN DIEGO, Cal., has solved the problem of idleness, and furnishes work to every able-bodied man upon her streets. Those who refuse to work and continue to beg she promptly transfers to the chain gang. The professional tramp is giving San Diego a wide berth.

A FIRE in a museum at Passaic, N. J., caused a panic among the freaks. The "three-legged man," in making his escape, forgot his third leg. The principal damage done was to the complexion of the tattooed Circassian Princess. She waited to rescue some of her belongings, and the firemen inadvertently turned the hose on her, with the result that most of the tattooing was washed off.

"PLIMSOLL'S MARK" is a mark placed on British merchant vessels, indicating the depth to which they may be loaded with safety. It is placed in accordance with a bill enacted by Parliament, at the instigation of Mr. Samuel Plimsoll, M. P., on the sides of all vessels registered in or hailing from British ports. It must be above water, and there are heavy penalties against the shipmaster who puts to sea with this "Plimsoll's Mark" covered.

EVEN the circumnavigation of the globe has been reduced to the business of a schedule. One of the great steamship companies has begun a service which involves rounding the Cape of Good Hope on the outward passage and Cape Horn on the return. The total length of the voyage, including stoppages at principal seaports in the British provinces of the South Pacific Ocean, will be a little more than the circumference of the earth at the equator.

LAST year America expected a visitation from the dreaded scourge, cholera, and the United States Board, State and County and City Boards of Health, unitedly went to work to prepare for it. The result was it did not come. No observer ever before noted so grand an object lesson in the benefits of sanitary work. It saved the country millions in money, to say nothing of the miseries and sorrows which attend such an epidemic. Will the people be as wise next year and the next? Having demonstrated the power to check and control the plague by a wise observance of sanitary laws, it will be criminal not to enforce such laws in the year to come.

TEN years ago scarcely one of the following words were common. Now they have forced their way into dictionaries, even those published in Great Britain: Antipyrine, aquaralle, bacteriology, blizzard, to boom, to cable, centerboard, cocaine, cowboy, to cycle, dude, dynamo, faddist, flabbergast, glissade, hypnotist, impromissionist, lanolin, logrolling, machine gun, magazine ride, mahatma, massage, melinite, menthol, mugwump, neoplatonism, occultism, philatelist, photogravure, platinotype, polypod, prognosis, quadriform, range-finder, referendum, religiosity, saccharin, ship railway, sloyd, telepathy, tuberculosis, vaseline, and xylophone.

NOW comes the news of a meeting held in Reading, Pa., by a large

number of heirs, of a person who is alleged to have furnished supplies to Washington's army at Valley Forge. The heirs have a little claim of about \$4,000,000 that they propose to ask Congress to liquidate. So far as history is concerned, there were no supplies in evidence at Valley Forge. Evidently the legal fool-catcher has set his net in Reading. It is strange that, with all the publicity given to such schemes, the business still prospers. Some people seem to be born with the instinct of the catfish—to gulp at every bait and swallow the hook.

MANY agricultural colleges now offer short winter courses in agriculture. They are doing all they can to widen the opportunities for young men to get instruction in agriculture. The courses are carefully arranged and the instruction is practically free. Many have attended these winter schools of agriculture with profit and pleasure. More will do so. There never was a time when there was greater need for young farmers to have all the instruction in agriculture they can possibly get. The winter school of agriculture cannot give them all they need, but what it does give them is most valuable. The educational work of the school does not stop when the students return home. Not a few will continue their study, reading and investigation commenced while in attendance at school. That is one of the objects of the short course in agriculture, to start the young farmer in the right road. Through these short courses the agricultural colleges have gained students for the full, regular courses.

The circumstances attending the execution of Painter at Chicago were sickeningly horrible. By the breaking of the rope the wretched man fell several feet to the hard floor below. Mutilated by the fall he was taken back and suspended again until the physicians pronounced him dead. Whether he was conscious and suffered from the fall before the second suspension no one can say with certainty, but it was an accident which should not have happened. There had been ample time for preparation, the weight of the prisoner was known, and it should have been a simple matter to provide a rope capable of holding the weight firmly and securely. It will not be a matter of surprise if the dreadful details shall arouse a public demand for some kind of reform in public execution by which such an accident as this will be impossible. Painter's hanging was something more than punishment. It involved unnecessary torture, and this is not included in the legal penalty. It ought never to occur again. There is no reasonable excuse for it.

THE opinion has been openly expressed during the last half of 1893 by men of high standing on the other side of the water that a great war cannot be put off longer than the coming spring. Italy is now in the throes of civil war, and the report is just at hand that France is lending the revolution in Sicily material help. Late accounts have it that Germany has succeeded in the construction of a perfectly manageable balloon, which will convey very considerable amount of freight, but it is said the Germans are keeping everything about the balloon in the dark. It is suspected, however, that when war comes these balloons will be used for dropping dynamite bombs on belligerent war vessels, headquarters, and cities. Certain metropolitan journals more than a year ago made the suggestion that balloons would be made to do just this kind of service in war, and if entire success can be achieved in the cases we have named it will almost certainly lead to radical revolution in the art of war among nations. Of course it must be conceded that a good deal of the talk indulged in at a good many of the statements that are sent out regarding the war prospect, are merely sensational; at the same time we cannot reject everything of the kind that comes to us through the common public channels.

Didn't Know What Work Was. Farmer Hardist—What under the sun is the reason that boys are such no account critters nowadays? Here is our son, Jasper, pretty high crazy to leave the old farm and try to git a job in town. Mrs. Hardist (meekly)—Perhaps he thinks the work won't be quite so hard. Farmer Hardist—Work? Why, shucks, Polly, he don't skurecely know what work is. He hain't done a thing since supper but milk the cows, feed the horses, slop the hogs, split and carry in the wood and kindlin', shell a little corn, ketch the colt, and turn the grindstone for me about half an hour. He's had all the rest of the time to himself, except the few minutes to kink him to mend the bridle. I broke this mornin'. W. at in the name o' thunder makes all the boys so crazy to leave the old farm?—Life.

Give a friend a club, and he is very apt to hit you over the head with it.

THE SERVANT QUESTION.

The Vexed Problem Spreading Anew in America and England.

The servant-girl question is again engrossing attention both in the East and in England, says the San Francisco Argonaut. The revelations of Elizabeth L. Banks, an American "newspaper woman" who went out to service in London and then related her experience to the papers, are read with avidity. In New York, Miss Kate Gannett Wells is lecturing mothers of families, whom she holds responsible for the inconveniences of modern servant-girlism. In both countries the trouble is that the line between mistress and servant is not drawn with sufficient distinctness; the relative duties of each are too vaguely defined; the mistress is always complaining of the encroachments of the domestic, and the latter is resenting the selfish thoughtlessness of her employer. The servant says that the mistress does not seem to remember that cook and house-maid have feelings; the mistress wails that her servants have no affection for her. Over and above all this, the question of wages is an unceasing source of friction. The market value of a trained servant is constantly rising. The mistress thinks she is badly treated when a servant whom she has trained demands an advance in consequence of the training.

In this city, John Channaman has allowed the servant-girl out of the kitchen, to the advantage of the employer. He is not so quarrelsome as the Irish girl, nor so impertinent, and he does his work better. He has his drawbacks. He will not stand interference, and he thoroughly understands that his relation with his master is a business relation, into which sentiment does not enter. He will leave a house where he has served for ten or twelve years without a pang; whenever a Geary law, or other similar enactment, reduces the supply of house-servants, he will insist on an advance of wages with a child-like and bland smile but with iron firmness. He is a master of economies. But his morals do not require looking after, and he is almost invariably honest.

In the East, the handling of the servant-girl question has suffered from English example. In the old days, the servants were "help" and dined at the family table. Their footing resembled that of the valets in Moliere's comedies, who were confidants and advisers of their masters. But with the influx of English manners, new relations between the mistress and maid were imported. Helps became servants, and dined in the kitchen. Thus far no harm was done. The house-maid could not have felt at home in the family circle, nor could the remarks she injected into the general conversation have been improving. But the mistresses of American households went further, and seemed to desire to ignore the existence of the maid, except as an instrument of service. They avoided recognizing her in the mornings and only addressed her to give her an order. This was a wholly unnecessary slight to the girl. It was English. An Englishman will call and dine at a house for years, and never by word or look recognize the existence of the man who for all that time has opened the front-door for him or changed his plate at the table. The Englishman's idea is that he belongs to a different order of created beings from the butler and the footman, and that his self-respect would suffer if he addressed them except on official business. Thackeray hit off the notion when he tells of an English Duke, who being addressed in a crowd by a stranger, beckoned to his Aide-de-camp to answer the remark.

It does not seem that the spheres would crumble if American ladies admitted by word and act that their servants are human beings. Their social position might survive in viving about their health when they are ill. But a mistress of a household will undo the benefit of kindness if she breaks down altogether the conventional barrier between mistress and maid. A servant who is placed on a footing of absolute equality with her mistress will not perform good work, and when it becomes necessary to exercise authority, the attempt will involve a quarrel.

Shipping Molasses in Bulk.

Almost all the molasses which comes from Cuba to the United States is brought in the same tanks in steamships that are used to carry petroleum as a return cargo. The ships' tanks are about sixteen feet deep and have a neck seven feet deep. They are lumped full of oil at Brooklyn or Philadelphia, then taken to Havana, and the oil is pumped out into the tanks of the refining plants there. Molasses is brought from the interior of the island in huge horse-heads, which are emptied into storage tanks. A suction pump drawing about 10,000 gallons an hour fills each ship's tank to within about two feet of the top that amount of space being required for the expansion of the molasses. It might be supposed that the petroleum would have a bad effect upon the molasses, but it has been shown that the contrary is the case, and as nearly one-half the importation is made into rum and the balance refined into sugar, a little oil is not of much account. The tanks are cleaned after the molasses has been pumped out by turning in a powerful steam jet, which washes down the sides and liquefies whatever molasses may be left in the bottom of the tank, and the suction pump finishes the work.

A cargo of molasses, which formerly required ten or twelve days, can now be unloaded in forty-eight hours, while the difference in cost of handling, to say nothing of the saving of time, amounts to a large sum. The first attempt at handling

molasses in bulk was made by the brig Novely in 1877. She was fitted with a lining and her whole hold was used without partitions. She made several trips between Matanzas and Boston, but was not successful as a dividend earner. Since the present system of dividing a vessel's hold into tanks was devised and put in practice on steamers the profits of the trade and the steamship companies have largely increased.—Albany Express.

Celestial Collisions.

Astronomers are yet discussing the new star which suddenly flared up in the constellation Auriga in February, 1892, and which afterward turned into a nebula. The general opinion is that a collision of some kind occurred out there in the heavens. It is plain that it must have been a pretty serious collision to produce a blaze visible some millions of millions of miles away. Indeed, the puzzling thing is that so great an outburst of heat and light should so soon have disappeared. If two suns or two great worlds, had met in full career and smashed one another, the heat developed would have sufficed to make them glow like a conflagration in the sky until long after the new star in Auriga had lost its brilliancy.

On this account the opinion seems to be gaining ground that the collision to which the appearance of the new star was due must have occurred either between two swarms of meteors, or between a huge solid, dark body and a cloud of celestial dust.

If it was the meeting of meteor swarms, then the smallness of the individual meteors would account for the rapid loss of light after the sudden blaze at the moment of the encounter; and if it was a solid sphere, an extinguished sun, for instance, plunging through cosmic dust or scattered nebulous matter, the fact that only the surface of the great body would probably be heated by the collision might account for the quick fading of the star.

But what a glimpse into the marvels of surrounding space is supplied by such facts and theories as these! How filled must the heavens be, even where they seem the blackest and most vacant, with scattered meteors, celestial dust clouds, and wandering bodies that once, perhaps, shone as living stars, but now are dark and invisible except when fired into temporary brilliancy by collision!

In view of such facts it no longer seems quite as wonderful as it once did that the earth, traveling with the sun through the universe, continually encounters strange particles of matter that come darting down through its atmosphere in the form of fire-balls.

Knowing how well the air protects us against such missiles, one can look forward with a unanimity, and even with eagerness to the possibility that our globe may sometime meet a swarm of straying meteors capable of illuminating the atmosphere so brilliantly that the light may even attract the eyes of dwellers on other planets, and set them to wondering what strange thing has come to pass upon the earth.

Upheld His Reputation.

We generally find that a person who brags is usually a coward, but in this case the old man upheld his reputation.

An old cobbler in Amity street, who was largely patronized by the young bloods, once boasted that nothing was capable of frightening him. Two young men once determined to put his courage to the test. One of them pretended to be dead, while the other went to the cobbler and asked him to sit up all night with the corpse. The old man, who had some pressing work in hand which had to be delivered next morning, took his leather and his tools with him, sat down near the supposed dead body, and set about his task. At midnight they brought him a cup of cafe noir to keep him awake, which he gratefully partook of, and then immediately resumed his work. The coffee, however, put him in such a happy frame of mind that, entirely forgetting the presence of the corpse, he struck up a lively song, beating time all the while with his hammer on the lapstone. Suddenly the imaginary corpse raised itself into a sitting posture, and exclaimed, in a hollow voice: "People ought not to sing when keeping watch over a dead body."

The cobbler shook his head, gave the young man a smart rap and said: "People shouldn't talk when they are dead."

This was the last time anybody tried to frighten the old cobbler.

Value of the Erie Canal.

The Erie canal is often called a priceless inheritance to the state of New York, and it is conceded by the press, also by hundreds of eminent statesmen, that the state of New York has become the wealthiest in the Union through the agency of the Erie-Hudson waterway, which connects the great chain of lakes with the Atlantic Ocean. According to the evidence of highly-respected merchants given before legislative investigating committees, the actual direct cash benefit to the state from canal commerce in 1893 footed up to over \$12,000,000; and the indirect benefits in various ways to the masses throughout the common wealth are simply incalculable.—Buffalo News.

Another Three.

Someone has said that the three hardest words to pronounce consecutively are, "I was mistaken." Let the person who believes this assertion try his articulating powers on the names of the lakes in the State of Maine—three, for instance, Hunk-tyahob, Wis-norumgohio, Mahoga-pragohog.

REAL RURAL READING

WILL BE FOUND IN THIS DEPARTMENT.

Value of Corn Fodder as Determined by Experiment—Winter Exercise for Live Stock—How to Feed Straw—Stabling Cows in Wet Weather.

Corn Fodder.

1. All parts of the corn plant contain valuable food materials, the dry matter containing nearly the same composition, says the Philadelphia Press.
2. The corn stubble and husks contain nearly 60 per cent. of the total digestible matter produced by the plant, and the blades only 11 per cent.
3. Corn husks or shucks contain 72 per cent. of digestible matter.
4. Corn stubble or butts contain 64.5 per cent. of digestible matter.
5. Corn blades or leaves contain 64.2 per cent. of digestible matter.
6. Top corn fodder contains 55 per cent. of digestible matter.
7. There is more digestible matter contained in the corn fodder from one acre than in the ears.
8. The corn fodder from one acre yields as much digestible matter as two tons of timothy hay.
9. There is enough digestible matter produced by the corn fodder grown in the Southern States to winter all the stock in those States, if it were properly preserved and prepared in a palatable form.
10. By cutting and crushing the corn stalks cattle will eat and utilize nearly all of them.
11. Corn fodder furnishes a food rich in digestible carbohydrates.
12. Corn fodder, when fed alone, will nearly maintain cattle, but should be supplemented with some food rich in nitrogen when feeding for the production of growth, flesh, or milk.

Winter Exercise for Live Stock.

On disputed questions men are apt to take views that are extreme. Amid the din of the battle of controversy there is danger that the truth will be obscured for the sake of momentary victory. It is to be feared that so it has been with this question. Some have contended that all cattle need exercise, and daily, in winter. Others have claimed that they do not need any exercise, and yet others, including the writer, have said that the question is yet undecided, since instances are on record wherein beef-breeding stocks and dairy cattle have been kept tied in the stall the whole of the winter for years in succession, and without any apparent harm having come to them in consequence.

On the other hand, it has been affirmed, but apparently without sustaining evidence, that since keeping animals tied thus is unnatural, it must inevitably lead to an undermining of the constitution and stamina of the stock. In considering this question we should bear in mind that the improvement made in the various breeds of live stock during recent centuries has been made possible by subjecting them to artificial conditions, and that the highest attainment in utility, for the time being at least, has been attained when the divergence from these conditions has been greatest.—Exchange.

How to Feed Straw Profitably.

There are some farmers who keep stock of such poor quality that they cannot afford to feed it grain. Their only way of wintering stock is to provide coarse fodder, like straw and cornstalks, of which enough will be eaten to sustain life without much chance of adding to growth or flesh. There is no profit in this, for unless there is some gain by increased weight the maintenance ration will cost more than the increased value of animals in the spring. There seems to be more reason in the objection of those who have the best stock that they cannot afford to feed it much straw. They surely cannot if corn be the chief grain fed, for both corn and straw are largely carbonaceous. Some grain or other feed that contains more nitrogenous nutrition will make straw feeding more profitable. With a large feeding of bran or wheat middlings considerable straw will be eaten. So, too, it will when linseed or cotton-seed meal is fed. Sheep that are fed beans and bean straw will eat the straw of other grains in considerable quantities to vary their ration, which has not enough carbohydrates.

Cribbing in the Field.

It saves a good deal of labor in husking corn to throw the ears in a box as they are husked. Some will fall outside when fast husking is attempted, but it is easier to pick up the scattering than to leave all on the ground. There is a further saving in the fact that these boxes at night may be piled one on another to the height of four, or five, or six tiers, and a couple of wide boards laid lengthwise of the crib will protect them from rain or snow. Those who grow sweet corn for seed often provide boxes to hold their entire crop, and leave the corn thus cribbed in the field until it is dried out enough to market. With slatted boxes built up one row wide corn will dry out very fast. The boxes need not be very expensive.

Strikes Under Straw Stacks.

Provided the stack is held up by strong wooden supports, a stable under the stack makes one of the best, cheapest and warmest winter shelters for any kind of stock, says an exchange. It should be built so that animals cannot eat away the stack where it has no supports, as they will often do when forced to get their living from a stack. In older times stacks of hay were often left to be eaten away by young stock, with the

result of wasting a good deal of the hay and towards spring having an overturned stack, killing calves and sheep imprisoned under it. There is little of this kind of wastefulness among farmers now. The wonder is that such management could ever have been so common as it undoubtedly was.

The Jessica Grape.

The Jessica is a variety of grape which originated in Canada. It is early, with small bunch and berry, and of good flavor. Like the Delaware, it has the fault of setting too many bunches, and if allowed to overbear it is not so good nor so early as it should be. Nearly all kinds of grapes need thinning, which is easily done by pinching off one or two of the blossom buds on each shoot just as soon as they become visible. Two bunches are enough on any shoot, and some of the latter varieties are more sure to ripen if the bunches on a shoot are reduced to one.

What One Man Realized.

My hens yielded me a profit of \$2.93 a head, besides the eggs, etc., we used in our family, and that would carry it up to over \$3 per head, writes a bright man to the Massachusetts Ploughman. My sales were at common market prices. I don't keep any fancy stock, no thoroughbreds mine are mixed breeds. This is only one of the things on a small farm that makes small farms pay. I don't know of any one who has been able to come up to those figures, with sales at ordinary market prices, on mixed hens.

Farm Notes.

MONEY spent for good trees is well invested if they are cared for after setting.

If best of all fruits are grown, there is little danger of overstocking the market.

If well done, either root grafting or budding will give long-lived trees.

In order to keep up a supply of small fruit, plant several varieties which ripen at different times.

RYE is good for a young orchard and if it is near the poultry yard will furnish excellent winter pasture for fowls.

It is the comfortable cow which fills the pail with milk and the milk with butter fat. Remember this to your profit.

CAREFUL packing and handling, clean, stout packings and a near-by market are the three desirable things for profitable fruit growing.

It is generally admitted that for stock cooked food is the best, but the labor and fuel required for the purpose adds too much to the cost of the food.

THROW dish water around fruit trees, currants, gooseberries, etc. Coffee grounds are said to be valuable when put around shrubbery and flowering plants.

WHEN buying sheep it is just as well to get those which are prolific, so long as they have other desirable qualities in addition. The Shropshires, Dorsets, and others are of this class.

WHEAT bran is an indispensable feed for butter cows. Even on the best pasture a daily food of bran will pay well. It has recently been ascertained that the heaviest bran is not better butter producing food than that which is lighter. It should not weigh more than eighteen or twenty pounds to the bushel.

PUMPKINS ought to be promptly re-instated in the position they held in the estimation of the old-time farmer. They furnish an excellent addition to the food of swine and milch cows, and can be grown at very little cost. Put in a field of them with the corn, if you think it will not pay to grow them alone.

A FARMER need not necessarily remain so. A good farmer will make his farm a savings bank. It may require several years to bring it to a high degree of fertility, and the farmer may be compelled to live in a frugal manner, but in a few years the farm will be more valuable and the farmer wealthy. Beginning at the bottom and gradually improving is a sure road to success.

ONE of the best modes of educating the boy to the importance of pure-bred stock is to buy him a few pure-bred fowls and allow him the proceeds. It will not be long before he will familiarize himself with the "points", and begin to advertise his birds and eggs for sale. He will then be disposed to study the points and characteristics of animals, and take a great interest in all classes of stock.

It is the Mind That Sees.

How do we see? Did you ever chance to think? I have asked quite a number of people lately, and they reply: "With our eyes, of course, how else?" or words to that effect. Did you ever realize how much of our vision is mental? We see nothing properly and definitely until the mind lends its perception. We may be gazing at a picture, yet be unable to see anything but a confused mass of color—because the mind is seeing faces of scenes a thousand miles away, perhaps. Call the mental vision back and the figures on the canvas take their proper places, at once we see the picture. Or shut your eyes. Can you not see the face of those you love or hate as clearly as you ever saw them with the physical means of sight? How many times [one glances at his watch, yet, when asked the time as he replaces it in his pocket, is unable to tell simply because he looked only with the eyes and not with the mind also.—Boston Advertiser.

WHEN a man helps his wife with her work, she has to drop what she is doing to wait on him.