

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Items.

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If we wait until we have more than we want before beginning to give, we shall die without giving; but if we give out our scanty portion to those whose need is greater than ours, we shall live as givers, and shall be on a living. The man who gives only from his surplus never knows the real joy of giving.

It is now claimed that great and elaborate weddings discourage marriage and it is said that certain young ladies have given a negative answer because they could see no prospect of as brilliant a wedding as some of their acquaintances have had. But they should remember that the quietest weddings sometimes are followed by the happiest married lives.

HOSPITAL physicians having caused a deep sleep to fall upon an Irish patient deprived him of seven patches of hide for the benefit of a peeled Frenchman in an adjacent ward. The process of skinning a man alive had heretofore been regarded as figurative, and its status in law to be established through a suit brought by the Irishman, will be watched with interest. If a man cannot control the disposition of his own cuticle human rights are narrowing to an imperceptible point.

As THE season approaches when the musical mosquito tunes up and prepares his artesian bore with which to play a skin game on mankind, it is well to remember that by sprinkling crude petroleum on neighboring ponds and marshes you can prevent their evolution. Petroleum on the surface probably doesn't prevent the hatching of the larvae in the water, but "shuts off their wind" when they stick up their tails for breath. Keep it dark or the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals may prevent this prevention.

NEW JERSEY'S legislators have acted very sensibly in passing a law which will curb the bumptiousness of the "faith curists." Other States should hasten to follow this excellent example. If necessary, a list of the cases in which mere faith has allowed innocent people to die when medicine or surgery would have cured them might be prepared. Any Legislature would be ready to vote down the quackery five minutes after reading this list. This is a civilized age, and tolerant of almost everything. But it should not tolerate the stolidity which kills, and New Jersey leads the way in pointing this moral.

AMONG the funny things we see when we look over our exchanges is the report of a Buckeye State woman whose bump of economy, phrenologically speaking, must be large, and her utilitarian virtue on a par with it. She made use of her phthalic acid and feverish husband during eight weeks before his death, when he was prostrate and feeble, to incubate

forty-six eggs into lively young chicks by placing them in cotton batting by the side of a body. The chickens so raised might acquire tuberculosis and impart its germs to the unsuspecting victims of a relish for "broilers" we urge each State to pass a law right away against this mode of incubating before it shall become a common custom.

EVERY day the great city furnishes wonderful and pathetic pictures which illustrate the strange turns of Fortune's wheel. One Saturday a white-haired, trembling old man went to the Tombs carrying a paper bag of bananas as a friendly offering to Erastus Wiman, awaiting sentence in his cell. Years ago, it was the white-haired trembling old man who was the prisoner—in Ludlow Street Jail—under the odious law of imprisonment for debt, and Erastus Wiman was the visitor and comforter, and the prime mover in the reform which brought about the old man's deliverance. Round and round turns the giddy wheel, and men still pursue the flying phantom perched upon its rim, without thinking of danger until it is upon them!

THERE is a thrifty sort of woman who cannot bear to admit that a thing is worn out. She will spend two hours of precious time and ten dollars' worth of eyesight working on a garment in order that it may be worn one more week, or in trying to rejuvenate bed linen, handkerchiefs, and similar articles that when they once begin to give way are good for nothing, and in which the first symptom of dissolution is a sign of their ripeness for the ragbag. Hosiery with holes as large as a silver half dollar are not worth mending, since the remaining fabric, after such hard service, must be on the point of yielding. Undergarments that begin to show lengthwise rifts are past their usefulness, and towels gone in the middle would better be laid aside for lint. To wear one's self out over worn out articles is poor economy. The hours devoted to such work would be more wisely employed in reading or resting. Life is short, and the list of duties continually decaying is exceedingly long.

THE mine-owners around Birmingham, Ala., as well as in Tennessee, incensed at the violent conduct of the Hun, Slav, and Italian miners, are rapidly supplying their places with negro miners, who are more than eager and willing to go to work. The same substitution has taken place largely in West Virginia and to a certain extent in the mines of Pennsylvania. When these alien miners struck and began their incendiary work many operators set backs to work in their places, and they did so well that now they are not only retaining them but adding to their numbers. This will compel these aliens to come North and seek for work with little prospect of finding it, as the mines will soon be running with their old operatives. It is more than likely, therefore, that many of these fellows will have to go back to the countries whence they came if they can raise the passage money. They will find that they have overdone the business and struck themselves out of a job. The sooner they get home the better. Their absence will not be in the nature of a public calamity.

THE season is at hand in which the farmer will put in twelve or fifteen hours a day at work, and see that every hand on the farm does the same. He will hardly stop during that time long enough to eat his food properly, and take no time to either read or think. Is this good policy? Is it either wise, prudent, or profitable? The women in the house will be compelled to work hours longer than the men outside. Will that pay? Some of these are mothers, and have duties and responsibilities as such, which, if found in any kind of stock, would justify a relief from work. Surely the farmer will not overwork his wife more than he would his stock, or himself to a point where thinking is out of the question, and planning impossible. The average farmer, however, will aim at nothing short of getting the work done, no matter how or what the consequences, so long as it is done. It is a foolhardy policy. It will not pay either in money or health. Let us take time to think, to read, to plan, and to live. There are duties in these regards that we owe to ourselves, our wives, our progeny, and our success that are not met with in brute force.

The Ideal and the Real.
"And all these poems of June," she said, "do they flow from your soul?"
"No, madam," replied Brady. "It is simply hard work. What you regard as poetic inspiration is simply a matter of poetic perspiration."—Washington Star.

An appropriate motto for a Senate committee room: "Who enters here leaves soap behind."

SURE INDICATIONS.

Oh, if she greets you with a smile
She wears for you alone
And lingers o'er your name awhile
With soft, caressing tone
If in her eyes there shines a light
Now tender, now demure—
She loves you!
She loves you!
Of that you may be sure.
Or, if she has no use for you,
And let's you plainly see,
Whatever you may say or do,
How "horrid" she can be;
And if your treatment is much worse
Than other men endure—
She loves you!
She loves you!
Of that you may be sure.
But if she's friendly and polite,
No matter where and when,
And greets you with the mild delight
She shows for those whom she
No warmth or coldness in her air,
You'd better seek a cure—
She loves you not!
She loves you not!
Of that you may be sure.

HE GOT HIS REWARD.

Somewhat distance from one of the main routes between the Eastern States and California, hollowing out the scoriae apex of a deep, rugged conical elevation, is the crater of an old volcano.

One day a small party of adventurous ladies and gentlemen, leaving their riding and baggage mules at the base of the steep ascent, clambered up its aged sides to the summit, where an extended view over a picturesque landscape was their first reward.

One of the party was a bright, vivacious, venturesome girl, who was both the pride and the worry of her accompanying parents, the latter because she was so full of romping, giddy, daring life.

Ada Wilden, quick of motion and light of foot, so skinned over the rough, honey-comb'd surface of the scoriae pile that she soon put considerable distance between her and her parents, and now, instead of heeding her mother's call to come back to her, she began to recede along the edge of the crater, finally mounting what seemed to be a toppling crag, and standing up clear against the background of shimmering sky.

The next moment there came a piercing shriek from the same quarter, and the treacherous lava and daring girl went down together to the awful depths below.

When the fearful spot was reached nothing of the missing girl could be seen, but 100 feet below some of the debris of the fallen crag was visible along the edge of the black, stagnant water.

"All of us will help. We will do everything we can," cried a voice, to which all the others gave ready assent.

The speaker was a young man, supposed to be very partial to Ada, and to him the distressed father turned, with a mournful hope.

"It will be necessary to go down into the water to find her," he said.

"Oh, I could not do that," replied the young man, shrinking back.

"The water might poison me. Besides, the cliff here is beetling, and there is no way, safe or otherwise, that one could climb down to the pool."

And this was the young man who wanted Ada—f he could secure her with no more exertion than is required to pick a rose from the parental bush.

But when it came to risking his life for hers—ah! that was quite a different matter. There were plenty of rose bushes and roses!

Several of the ladies who had noted the persistency with which he had thrown himself into Miss Wilden's company now glanced at him with the contempt which gentle women feel for cowardice in men.

As for the other men, they looked at one another. Many of them would have started to the rescue if they could have shared the peril together, but solitude is ever so much difficult to play in the game of heroism!

"Who will venture?" said Mr. Wilden, wildly.

I was going down. I suppose my parents will never get done scolding me about it. It's nicely romantic, though, isn't it? And you've happened along just in time to rescue me!"

"You are not quite rescued yet, Miss Ada," smiled the amused hunter.

"But I shall be, Mr.——"
"Randolph."
"I shall be, Mr. Randolph, of course. You are not going to miss the reward father offered for me."

"If I save you, Miss Ada, it will be for yourself and not for the pecuniary reward."
"Is papa worried?" she asked.

"Naturally."
"Is, of course, frantic."
"How thoughtless it was of me! Oh, dear, I am always doing the most unexpected things, and utterly without premeditation, I assure you."

"I can readily believe," laughed Randolph, "that you did not mean to fall such a distance."
"No, but, really, it didn't hurt me a bit, though I shouldn't care to try it over again."
"I should think not."

Randolph was divided between a desire to laugh and admiration of her wonderful coolness. Though she had escaped death by what was little short of a miracle, she appeared to look upon the adventure as something wonderful and jolly.

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AGRICULTURAL NEWS.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR RURAL READERS.

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bing with the flannel, still slightly daunted with heretofore, and your boots will be soft and flexible as new kid, and be very little affected by their bath in the rain.

How Old Shall Cows Be Kept.

Unless a cow has remarkable individual value as a milk and butter producer, and has shown ability to perpetuate these qualities in her progeny, 10 to 12 years old is long enough to keep her. A good many cows condemn themselves long before that time. We have known cows to breed up to 18 or 19 years old, but they had to be fed ground grain and bran mixed with moistened oat hay. The cow was no profit in milk and butter made this way, for the old cow gradually lessened her yield. The object was to procure calves from this cow to be used for breeding. But as the cow decreased in value so also did her calves. Those last born were feeble, and not good milkers either. A cow whose milk production has been artificially forced for two or three years is apt never the easier to come up to the standards she had before, as the production of an excessive amount of milk impairs the animal's constitutional vigor.

Keeping Ice from Melting.

No matter whether ice is purchased or comes from the ice house where it has been put up by its owner for his own use, it represents value and should not be wasted. If exposed to the air it melts rapidly, with the effect of making the air cooler. What is wanted is that the lump remain unbroken and very gradually cool whatever it is intended to preserve. Wrapping it in cloths is often practised, and for this purpose woolen is better than cotton, as it is a proper conductor. Paper is better than either, with the further advantage that it does not admit air, and when newspapers are used they can be thrown away when wet without any necessity of washing or drying them.

Farm Notes.

All lines of business have their ups and downs, and it is only those who stick to what they have undertaken and follow it intelligently who are successful.

No farmer should be satisfied with an "average" crop. The farm should be made to produce more every year than it did previously. The average crop may cause a loss, and a slight gain may be profit.

Corn feeds very close to the surface, and for that reason the soil should not be cultivated in a manner to break the roots too much. Shallow cultivation, just sufficient to keep the top soil loose, should be practiced.

Wheat as a staple crop will find favor with farmers this season who are reducing a reeve in wheat. Prices are not liable to fall much for several years. In Michigan, where great attention is given this crop, they seldom net as low as \$1 per bushel.

Most farmers have learned the value of persistent labor; many more have yet to grasp the importance of systematic work. These latter often wonder why the city man, who takes to farming, frequently makes a financial success, backed by no practical experience. Usually it is because his school, college, or business training has taught him discipline of mind.

If a field is covered with weeds turn on the sheep. It is better to convert the weeds into mutton than to have them go to seed and stock the land with weeds next season. Sheep eat the weeds down close to the ground, and they will come back again for the newer growth if any appears. Ragweed, purslane, crab grass, pigweed and all young weeds that are just starting will be consumed by them.

Purslane is a weed that is very persistent, and it is not easily killed. Geese are very partial to it, and hogs relish it highly. One of the best methods of destroying it is to employ a boy to feed it to the hogs, and it will then be a crop worth having, provided that the hogs are kept well supplied with it; but it is not advisable to attempt to feed hogs by allowing the weed to grow if it can be kept down. Purslane should not be given the least chance.

THERE is some disposition to laugh at men who go into agriculture late in life. This is all wrong, as it is a tribute to the attractions of the occupation. It may be that they do not go to work in a practical manner, but most of them have some good ideas. Often these men have money enough to indulge in fancy farming, and then, by bringing in improved stock, etc., they prove themselves a valuable addition to the community. Do not discourage any man who wants to try farming, but give him all the aid you can. There is room enough for all who come, in some branch of the industry.

Curing a Bolting Horse.

A horse purchased at an equine "rubbish" sale was a confirmed bolter. No sooner was it harnessed than it set off at full gallop, a career which generally ended in a smash and the immediate release of the culprit. But the new purchaser, far from trying to check this propensity, resolved, as he said, to "humor him a bit," and generously "lent him to a fire engine." The horse soon found that he was encouraged not only to bolt at the starting, but to keep up the pace, and in six months was quite ready to stand in harness or to start at any speed wished by his driver.

It is said that the light of a match will frighten a wolf, but a love match sometimes fails to keep the wolf from the door.

THERE is no severer test of self-reliance than a threadbare suit.

Cows Should Not Be Kept After They Are Twelve Years Old—Extra Work on the Farm Pays—To Keep Ice from Melting—Cultivating After Showers.

Top Ventilation in Hen Houses.

From the inquiries made to the Philadelphia Farm, some of whom complain that their fowls are affected with blindness and swelled eyes, we surmise that many of them use top ventilators. Ventilation is certainly necessary at this season, but drafts which come down upon the hens are in various, even in summer, if the weather is damp. A top ventilator may be useful or not, according to the direction of the wind. The best way to ventilate a poultry-house in summer is to leave the door and windows open, but the openings should be covered with wire mosquito-netting, or half-inch wiremesh, with the roosts back from the draft. It is not injurious for fowls to be in a draft on a warm summer night, but should the wind shift to the northeast, and the air become damp, they easily become affected. If the draft comes over their heads the result is usually blindness and swollen eyes. The cracks and crevices are somewhat the sources of drafts also. All ventilators should be under control. The top ventilator is excellent if it is opened or closed according to the direction of the wind and the condition of the atmosphere.

The Benefit of Hraising Oats.

Wet oats could be run through the mill to make better feed for horses. The reason has been given many times. Both the grain and chaff digests better, the indigestible woody fiber of both being broken admits of the action of the stomach more freely and fully. Careful feeders of horses know that in feeding oats, especially the whole grain, much depends upon the nature of the hull or chaff. It is not always the heaviest grain that gives the best results. That which is much above the standard weight has most often a rough, gritty chaff, which so acts on the stomach as to expel much of the grain in an indigestible state. The hull, however soft in texture, is laxative, and a modern degree of laxativeness is beneficial, especially to breeding animals, but there is no gain in passing through the heaviest grain in a nearly whole state. Better use a light grain, which will be more thoroughly digested. It is commonly supposed that the oat which sells for the highest price is the best feed, but it is not always the case.—Farming World.

Cultivating After Showers.

There is no time better to cultivate the soil than after a light rain-fall, by which we mean any shower in which enough water does not fall to make the soil sticky. There are a score of times when such rain falls during the summer. In this is to be included times when the corn leaves are wet with dew in the morning, so that hitting the white tree on the leaf causes the drops of dew to fall to the ground. This dew is always rich in ammonia in summer, but unless it is cultivated into the soil very quickly it is evaporated and entirely lost. Every cultivation of the soil, while it is surface wet, imprisons some moisture under the turned surface, and this condition is undoubtedly favorable to nitrification of the air, even if no ammonia were in the rain water in the first place. Cultivation after a crust has formed on the surface prevents the radiation of heat and the evaporation of moisture, and it does all the more good if the soil turned up by the cultivator is less moist than that which it turns under.

The Extra Work Pays.

It is often the complaint that ordinary farming does not pay. It is probably always true. The ordinary kind of farming is that in which the farmer attempts to grow crops with the least labor. He does not usually succeed in saving a great deal of work for weeds and insects have to be fought first or last to save the crop. What he does is usually to delay the work until nearly all the injury possible has been done. Then with the crop half or more ruined, the work that has to be done does little good, and of course it does not pay. Thorough work from the first costs somewhat more, but it pays when the crop comes to be harvested. The mistake of the poor farmer is most often seen in his attempts to grow the crops that cost least labor. It is such crops that never pay very largely, because there are too many farmers in that kind of competition. It is true in farming as it is in every other kind of business, that the extra work, which is more than most will attempt, pays the best.

How to Dry Wet Shoes.

When, without overshoes, you have been caught in a heavy rainstorm, perhaps you have known already what to do with your best kid boots, which, have been thoroughly wet through, and which, if left to dry in the ordinary way, will be stiff, brittle and unlovely. If not, you will be glad to learn what I heard only recently from one whose experience is of value. First wipe off gently with a soft cloth all surface water, rub well with kerosene oil, using for the purpose the furred side of canton flannel. Set them aside till partially dry, when a second treatment of oil is advisable. They may then be deposited in a conveniently warm place, where they will dry gradually and thoroughly. Before applying French kid dressing, give them a final rub-