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How to Make Good Roads.

No doubt the bicycle deserves credit for much of the newly awakened interest in the betterment of our country roads. Certain it is that the last decade has begun a new era in the history of our highways. Science and literary talent have now added their quota to the new movement. Under the title "American Highways," Prof. N. S. Shaler of Yale has produced an important and comprehensive work on the subject. He treats every phase of the subject scientifically yet simply and sensibly. It would be in the nature of a national blessing if every local highway commissioner could be presented with a copy and induced to master its contents.

Prof. Shaler is not only a geologist and an instructor in the only university that has made road-making a part of its curriculum, but he is a practical man and a member of the Massachusetts Highway Commission recently established by the Legislature of that State. His mere opinion, therefore, has weight. But he confines himself chiefly to facts and experiences. He begins historically, showing how the American colonists came honestly by their slovenly road-making methods, having brought over with them only the ideas of the Dark Ages on the subject of roads. No well-paved roads existed in America until after 1800. Then came an era of toll roads. Gradually there grew up a system of local appropriations or of enforced labor for road taxes. This compulsory working out of road taxes Prof. Shaler denounces as the bane of American highways. He says there is no reliable intermediate method between that of private toll roads and roads controlled by a State commission.

On the subject of methods and materials for road-making Prof. Shaler is most helpful. He is a firm believer in the macadam road of broken stone, and can tell just what kinds of rock will give the best results. What scientists call amorphic trap rock stands at the head of the list, closely followed by the crystalline granites and their cousins, the syenites that have been used to pave the down-town districts of Chicago. The limestone so much used on our dusty macadamized streets is classed as almost the worst material when used alone, though the author recommends its use in the Great Lake region, where it is the only abundant rock, stipulating, however, that it must be covered with a top coating of the trappean or granitic materials obtained from the country north of the lakes.

It is pleasing to note that Prof. Shaler is perhaps the first authoritative writer to give due prominence to the value of glacial drift gravels for road-making purposes. His chapters on this subject will be especially valuable to Western highway commissioners, as he brings all his geological knowledge to bear upon the question of where to find the valuable beds of this gravel that underlie the soil of the whole lake region, and especially of Wisconsin and Illinois. This gravel is made up of the hard bits of rock swept down by the ice floods of the glacial epoch from the north, and drifted into these beds by the streams of water that accompanied the passing of the ice period. Every wheelman who has traversed the excellent country roads to the northwest of Chicago can testify what fine material this gravel makes for country highways, and how important is the information vouchsafed by Prof. Shaler that from New England to Central Wisconsin "it hardly occurs that the wash drift cannot be found within an area of ten miles square."

One is almost inclined to reverse Prof. Shaler's judgment classing these gravel roads below those formed of granitic rocks. At any rate, the glacial drift gravel is by far the most valuable material within easy reach of Western road-makers. It is sincerely to be hoped that all authorities interested in the betterment of Western roads will "read, ponder, and inwardly digest"—not the gravel, but Prof. Shaler's wise words as to how and where to find it and how most cheaply and effectively to utilize it.

A Prison in the Marquesas.

That "the French are a good-natured people and make easy masters" was Robert Louis Stevenson's conclusion, when he had studied the various protectorates that serve for governments in the South Sea Islands. The Marquesas group, for instance, is under French control. Mr. Stevenson tells in "In the South Seas" how he visited the calaboose at Tai-o-hae—the port of entry—and found it empty.

From this noontide quietude it must not be supposed the prison was untenanted. The calaboose at Tai-o-hae does a good business. But some of its occupants were gardening at the residency, and the rest were probably at work upon the streets, as free as our scavengers at home, although not so industrious. On the approach of evening they would be called in like children from play, and the harbor master—who is also the jailer—would go through the form of locking them up until six the next morning.

Should a prisoner have any call in town, whether of pleasure or affairs, he has but to unhook the window shutter; and if he is back again, and the shutter decently replaced, by the hour of call on the morrow, he may have met the harbor master in the avenue, and there will be no complaint, far less any punishment.

But this is not all. The charming French resident, Monsieur Delarnelle, carried me one day to the calaboose on an official visit. In the green court a very ragged gentleman, his legs deformed with the island elephantiasis, saluted us, smiling.

"One of our political prisoners—an insurgent from Raiatea," said the resident; and then to the jailer, "I thought I had ordered him a new pair of trousers?"

Meanwhile no other convict was to be seen.

"Well," said the resident, "where are our prisoners?"

"Monsieur the Resident," replied the jailer, saluting with soldierly formality, "as this is a feast day, I let them go to the chase." They were all upon the mountains hunting goats!

Presently we came to the quarters of the women, likewise deserted.

"Where are our good ladies?" asked the resident; and the jailer cheerfully responded, "I think, monsieur, that they have gone somewhere to make a visit."

It had been the design of Monsieur Delarnelle, who was much in love with the whimsicalities of his small realm, to elicit something comical, but not even he expected anything so perfect as the last.

To complete the picture of convict life in Tai-o-hae, it remains to be added that these criminals draw a salary as regularly as the president of the republic. Ten sous a day is their hire. Thus they have money, food, shelter, clothing and, I was about to write, their liberty.

A Friendly Whale.

Pacific ocean whales are sometimes very friendly, especially off the coast of Los Angeles County Cal. On more than one ocasion they have astonished if not alarmed sailing parties who have been becalmed.

These whales are harmless, and their attentions are merely from curiosity; but to have several of them floating in close proximity is not altogether pleasant. What is supposed to be the same whale has recently earned a reputation for friendliness. During the summer months it frequently met a large steamer off shore and either followed it along or played about, entertaining the passengers by spouting. On one trip the whale placed itself ahead of the steamer and swam with it so deliberately that the captain was obliged to slow down and finally stop, fearing to run into the huge creature.

On another occasion the steamer had on board as passengers the Medical Society of California, consisting of several hundred physicians. When about half-way over, the whale appeared and at once displayed unusual friendliness.

It swam up to the vessel, and, turning, followed her along so near that the spray of its spouting came aboard and the eye of the monster could be plainly seen. The steamer slowed up for a few minutes occasionally as the whale became too friendly, and the passengers had a fine opportunity to see a whale but a few feet away.

Stomachic Treatment by Electricity

The application of electric current in the treatment of nervous diseases of the stomach has always heretofore been attended with both risk and discomfort. It was necessary to apply only small doses, which had to be under perfect control. Some experiments in France have demonstrated that this can now be done. The current is applied directly to the affected organ by means of a special electrode, which the patient passes into the stomach. This consists of a rubber tube 1mm. thick, which has at its lower end a vulcanite tip, and which contains a conducting wire. The patient first drinks two glasses of lukewarm water, and then the electrode is introduced and attached to the negative pole of the battery. From 15 to 20 milliamperes of current are employed for five minutes. The treatment has been so successful that French electro therapists now look upon it as one of the standard treatments for nervous disorders of the stomach and intestines.

Gladstone's First Speech.

Mr. Gladstone's maiden speech in the House of Commons was an unmistakable failure. He spoke so low that even those nearest to him failed to catch the drift of his words, and later on he had to rise on "a point of explanation," at the request of a speaker who complained of the want of clearness of the honorable member for Newark.

Canada's debt is now $316,029,502. That means about $65 for every man, woman and child in the country, and it costs about $12,000,000 a year to pay the interest and charges at the low rates now prevailing.

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

There is something praiseworthy in the employment of those legitimate means at everybody's disposal to earn a reputation of some sort; but to follow the dictates of a low vanity to the attainment of such an end is incompatible with the finer feelings and susceptibilities of our nature.

It is a truth which needs continual emphasis that the highest work for any one is that which he can do best. A weak lawyer, an inefficient physician, an incapable financier are vastly inferior as men and as workers to the skilled mechanic or the well-trained laborer who knows his work and does it with thoroughness and self-respect.

Philadelphia is preparing for the floral decoration of its public squares next year on a larger scale than ever. The city forester is buying eighty thousand hyacinth, crocus, tulip and narcissus bulbs for spring flowering. Four hundred trees of hardy varieties are also to be set out. The small "breathing places of the people" in the densely populated districts are to be made as attractive as possible; and few there are who do not applaud the idea.

One of the privileges of the English ship captain and his first lieutenant is that of paying for the painting and ornamentation of their ship out of their own private incomes. It is estimated that the officers assigned to the command of the immense battleships lately launched and in progress will be obliged to expend considerably more than their annual stipend in this way. "White elephants" are not, apparently, confined to Siam.

None of us have enough real sympathy in our natures. We cannot make it "go round." We exhaust it upon visible suffering, and have none left for deeper and sadder evils. We need to realize that where we cannot sympathize we have no right to criticize. No one is more truly pitiable than the wrong-doer, and no one is in sorer need of the influence of a kind heart and a wise mind to lead him upward. If we cannot extend these to him, we are powerless for good as far as he is concerned.

That industrious monarch, Emperor William, has found a new vent for his untiring zeal in the writing of an historical drama. Most men think they can write a play, and many try, and it is not surprising that William should thus attempt to do what any other man has ever done before him. The Emperor has the distinct advantage, moreover, of knowing that what he writes will be staged, and that the German people will not dare to treat the production with anything less than enthusiastic approval.

W. K. Vanderbilt has sprung into public notice again, this time from the rear seat of a carriage in the Far West. He had just finished a conversation with the famous Apache Chief, Geronimo, who is now engaged in "helping the squaws do fancy work," when Gen. Miles, who was his companion, called his attention to a clucking prairie hen. Mr. Vanderbilt, without a quiver of excitement, raised his "trusty gun" and fired and the prairie hen was no more. This extraordinary exhibition of marksmanship was duplicated twice before the journey came to an end and Mr. Vanderbilt's reputation as a destroyer of prairie hens was established. It is due to the enterprise of Gen. Miles that the interesting information has been promptly flashed across the continent.

"In America public works are executed without reference to art," was the remark of an eminent German who recently visited this country. Unfortunately there is too much truth in this statement, but there are evidences of a change for the better. Prof. F. O. Marvin, of the University of Kansas, recently read a paper on "The Artistic Element in Engineering" before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which is attracting general attention. There is no reason why a bridge, for instance, should not be beautiful as well as safe. The country has passed through the era in its social and industrial development when it could afford to consider only the utility of a mechanical work, and before many years probably mechanical engineers will be no longer forced, as they often have been, to design an ugly work because it is a little cheaper.

There is a popular notion to the effect that lead shot are made spherical by falling from a height. This is an absurd error, inasmuch as the only purpose of lofty shot towers is to give the shot a chance to cool and harden as they tumble. They are just as perfect spheres when they start from the top as when they reach the well of water 200 feet or so below. The usefulness of the water is merely as a soft cushion to receive them. Shot can be made from pure lead, but an admixture of arsenic causes the lead to form globules, like mercury. The molten mixture is placed in a big iron saucepan with perforated bottom, and the drops falling through are the shot. They must fall some distance in order to get time to cool and harden. A batch thus made, they are scooped out of the water, tumbled about in a revolving barrel with plumbago and finally put through a series of sieves, to sort them into sizes for market.

The discouraging question of "contagion by kissing" has broken out afresh because a young man in Columbus, Ind., insisted on kissing his sweetheart and thus contracted diphtheria. The result of this particular osculation has fortified the Secretary of the Indiana Health Board in another attempt to suppress the practice. He pays a tribute to previous failures when he says: "I am convinced of the difficulty the health board will meet in trying to taboo kissing among sweethearts." Surely the health board should not evince so great trepidation in suppressing a little thing like this, even if, as the secretary adds: "There seems to be an inherent tendency to indulge in it." If the board should find the "tendency" among "sweethearts" to be too strong to yield easily to restraints it might try to prevent people from becoming sweethearts and thus circumvent the "tendency" and leave it no place for lodgment. In any event, whatever action the secretary decides to take cannot fail to be of interest to all benighted people who have any of these kissing tendencies.

A most unfortunate precedent has been established at the Ohio State University in the refusal of the faculty to reinstate a student because he gave his entire time to the football team. The faculty issued the extraordinary ultimatum that "college work must come first." It would be interesting to know how this faculty acquired this unique delusion. Educational affairs have strangely degenerated if the routine of college work is to be permitted to interfere with the successful prosecution of the elusive football. A young man who is intent on acquiring the latest data as to the proper way of inserting a "flying wedge" should not be expected to bother his head about the "dead languages." There is nothing in common between a "touchdown," a "five yard gain," and a "break at the center" and the calm elucidation of problems in integral calculus. What are boys sent to college for anyhow, if not to find out how to make a "run around the end"? If they have time left after a thorough training in football and the other college sports to take up a few studies to relieve the monotony there would be no objection raised, but to suggest gravely that "college work must come first" is a travesty on all the accepted college customs.

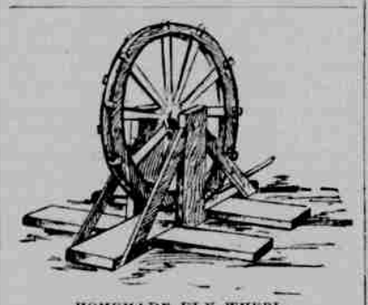
Witnesses journeyed from San Francisco to London to swear that Mrs. Walter Castle, under arrest in the latter city for shoplifting, has been, for years, afflicted with kleptomania. Seventy-five persons, either by deposition or oral testimony, declared that she has, on numerous occasions, been apprehended in the act of pilfering costly articles in the great shops of San Francisco. Her wealth and social position in that city saved her from prosecution. If stealing is a mental infirmity in the rich, why should it be crime in the poor? We are not denying that crime is a disease of the mind or nerves; an impulse as irresistible to the class of neurotics afflicted with is at the craving for alcohol is irresistible to the unfortunates who have inherited that form of disease. But we must cease to discriminate between people afflicted with the disease of kleptomania. We must cease to call kleptomania a crime in one person and a disease in another. Either we must send all of them to the prisons or we must send all of them to the sanitariums. It is impossible not to sympathize with the husband of this woman in the shame and distress that have befallen him. But it is equally impossible not to condemn him for taking a woman of such known eccentricities abroad. He is a man who has been largely successful in business affairs. He has accumulated a great fortune in trade. But he has shown himself sadly deficient in that common sense that would have saved him from the disgrace of himself and family.

Gems from North Carolina.

North Carolina is prolific in gems. No other district of like extent in the world yields so many different kinds of valuable minerals. A list embraces diamonds, emeralds, beryls (pale green, blue and limpid white), chrysoberyls, tourmalines (black and green), garnets (almandine, cherry red, pale ruby colored, pyrope and wine colored) hyacinth zircon (white zircon is sometimes substituted for cheap diamonds), sapphires, rubies, oriental topaz, oriental emerald, cats' eyes, rutile (used in some conditions under the name of "arrows of love" stone), amethyst, jasper, hiddenite or green spodumene; white, citrine, smoky and rose quartz; moss agate, oligoclase, sunstone and moonstone. The gems, the gold and silver and fine timber lands make North Carolina in natural resources one of the richest of all the States in the Union.

Fly Wheel for Farm Use.

A fly wheel is often serviceable on the farm, for helping keep the churn in regular motion, or the hand separator, or the grindstone, where one must grind by using a treadle for foot power. In the latter case, a fly wheel will cause the stone to run very evenly. Our sketch shows a cast-off, heavy, farm cartwheel, mounted and ready for business. Small strips of hard wood screwed to the rim keep the band from coming off. The plan of setting up the wheel is plainly shown in the illustration. Where the rim of the wheel used is of sufficient thickness, the old iron tire can be removed and a very thick, but narrow, tire put upon both edges of the rim, leaving a chance for the band to run between them. In the case of a cast-off cartwheel this plan would answer admirably.—American Agriculturist.



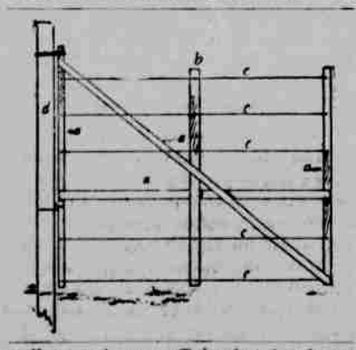
HOMEMADE FLY WHEEL.

Fall Plowing the Garden.

The garden is the richest part of the farm, and also the part where it is most important to have an early and well-fertilized seed bed. There is of course some waste of fertility caused by fall plowing, as it exposes a larger surface to be washed and blown away in winter. But the loss is less in the garden than it is on wide fields more exposed to the winds. If the garden is plowed it should be left as light and rough as possible. This is best secured by very late plowing, either just before the ground freezes, or better still, after the frost has penetrated an inch or more deep, leaving a crust to hold up the furrow. In a dry winter the soil will freeze through and through a number of times and be in excellent tilth in the spring. The only failure of this plan comes when the winter and spring are very wet, and there is no underdrain to carry off surplus water. But even then the plowed surface left as rough as possible will dry out as quickly as a naked surface left flat, as it is after harvesting garden crops, and yet porous enough to absorb all the rains and melting snows that fall upon it.—American Cultivator.

A Farm Gate.

I have used several gates made as the one shown in the accompanying illustration. They are light, cheap and give good satisfaction. Construct it any desired height and any reasonable length. The end pieces, brace and one piece running horizontally, a a a a, are 2x4 pine; the upright, b, is a 1x6 board; c c c c c are wires tightly stretched; d is the gate post and e, a chain used instead of a top hinge. Such a gate answers all ordinary purposes quite as well as a heavy affair that is almost certain to sag and get off its hinges.—Joel Mann, in Orange Judd Farmer.



Farm Implements.

It is doubtless true that it costs more in these days to stock a farm with tools and implements than it did in olden times, when prices of most farm products were as high, if not higher, than now. Yet, despite the cost, the new implements do so much better work that farmers find them a necessity. All the more, therefore, they should take good care of them when bought. More tools rust by exposure to wind and rains than are worn out in actual use. The saving of money by keeping implements housed is the most profitable economy the farmer can practice.

Wood for a Year Ahead.

Every farmer who burns wood even partially for heating and cooking should as early in the winter as possible cut and pile enough wood to last a whole year. This will save many complaints during the summer, and be much easier done now than in warm weather. Besides, dry wood burns without the waste of heat, always lost in turning its sap into steam. When using green wood, chips and small limbs will dry out more quickly than will the body of the tree, especially if the small limbs are split.

Graining Poor Cows.

It is rather discouraging to a farmer who has bought a new cow for milk and butter to find when he begins to feed her that her feed goes to inside fat rather than to milk and butter. But it is always well to face unpleasant facts, and make the best of them. If some dealer has stuck you with that kind of a cow it is better to know it, and keep on feeding until the cow is fit for the butcher, than to reduce feed and lose more, keeping the cow thin in flesh by poor feeding, and thereby losing money several years instead of one.

Dangerous Stones in Meadows.

Late in the fall is a good time to clear meadows of stones that are likely to injure next year's mowing. More or less of these are thrown out at every mowing time, when the wire rake runs over the land to gather the hay. A thin stone small enough to get into the mower knives often does more damage than a much bigger stone that the driver will see and avoid or that the knives will jolt over or throw one side without injury.

The Carrie Strawberry.

This is a seedling of Haverland, originated in 1890 by M. T. Thompson, of Henrico County, Va. It has been tested from Canada to Texas and found to be as productive as its parent, also larger, firmer and of better color, not being quite so light color with a little more foliage and is a long season berry with a better flavor than Haverland. It is a pistillate variety, ripening about the time of the parent. Its shape is conical, scarlet color and is wonderfully productive and promises to supersede its parent.—Farm and Home.

Horticultural Hints.

Put an extra covering on the vegetable pits after the ground freezes.

Mulch strawberries as soon as the ground freezes.

Never let manure come in contact with the roots of any plant or tree when planting it.

Clean off the asparagus beds and give it a good coat of well-rotted manure. Next spring sprinkle well with salt.

"Heeling" is a term used to designate the temporary burying of the roots of trees or plants in earth or other material.

When planting our trees for windbreak always plant evergreens. They are a little bit slow at first, but they will pay in the long run.

The trouble with farmers as a rule, is, that they do not pay enough attention to little things, such as the vegetable and small fruit garden. These little things pay.

Dairy Dots.

Always strain the milk as soon as drawn.

Quantity of milk is no criterion to go by as to its value.

A traveling dairy school is doing good work in England.

The demand for poor butter is always oversupplied, hence it sells for poor prices.

There isn't one cow in fifty but what might do better in milk yield if she had more to eat and drink.

It does not pay to raise scrub stock. Sell the scrubs and get well-bred animals. This is a good year to make the change, while prices are low.

If cream is kept at 75 degrees for eight hours, and is then allowed to cool gradually for four hours, it will usually be ripe for churning.

There are about 17,000,000 cows in this country, or one to every four inhabitants; one cow, however, furnishes the milk, butter and cheese for more than four persons, as large quantities of dairy products are exported.