

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

It's a poor farm that can't acquire a mortgage.

Money talks, and the nations of the earth are listening to the United States as never before.

Referring to that kissing of General Shafter, it's a sure bet that none of the girls succeeded in embracing him.

A lot of colored folks holding up and robbing a coal train doesn't necessarily mean the African is not in the woodpile on occasion.

Why does it not occur to some dull folks who complain that others sit down on them right along, whether they don't make them tired?

Carnegie's giving \$250,000 for a Washington library carries the moral that in making a big collection of books a good one to start with is a check book.

It takes nearly all a conscientious citizen's spare time to solve the geographical pronunciation puzzles which the government evolves out of the annexation problems.

It is now said that the celebrated Keely motor was run by air. The wonder is that there was enough air left to run the machine after the inventor got through with the stockholders.

To some people the sight of that 5-year-old negro "exhorter" wabbling and twaddling on a church platform would be quite as distasteful as the brutal exhibition in the prize ring.

While waiting for the curtain to go up on the peace conference performance Great Britain is passing away the time building two more 14,000-ton battleships at a cost of \$5,000,000.

One of the London journals asks Frenchmen to sink their differences and subscribe for a submarine boat to guard the channel. Sinking differences in a submarine boat is an admirable conception.

Insurance men will be surprised to learn that there is such a thing as an incendiary microbe. M. Jean de Loverdo is the scientist who makes this surprising discovery. The microbe causes spontaneous combustion. Perhaps this is the genuine and original "firebug."

A monster locomotive was constructed in a Pennsylvania shop recently in twenty-one hours and thirty minutes. Two locomotives of ordinary size were demolished one day not long since in an adjoining State in less than one second. Our powers of destruction still surpass those of construction.

The president of the New York S. P. C. A. recently read a paper admonishing his society not to be too precipitate in trying to establish reforms in Cuba and the Philippines. His idea seems to be that to stop all the cockfights and bullfights at once would be an inhuman proceeding. Paradoxical as it may seem, he is probably right.

Among the differences between the army and the navy, none is more fundamental or produces more obvious and important results than that relating to promotion from the lowest to the higher grades of the respective services. The private soldier can aspire to any rank and, with ability, industry and a fair share of luck, he can easily enough attain the pay and power of a commanding officer. The man-of-war's man has no such privilege. No matter what he knows or does a commission is beyond his reach. Which of these systems is the better is not a question for lay decision.

"The United States," says Mulhall, "leads in agriculture, with products greater than Russia and the United Kingdom combined, in manufactures, with a product greater than the aggregate output of the manufacturing of the United Kingdom, France, Austria-Hungary and Belgium combined; in machinery, with a steam power greater than the United Kingdom, Austria, Hungary and Italy combined; in mining, with a product greater than the United Kingdom and France combined (or nearly one-third that of the entire world); in railroad transportation, with a mileage forty per cent greater than that of all Europe; in forestry, with products greater than that of all Europe, and nearly one-half of the total products of the world; in fisheries, with a greater product than the United Kingdom, Russia and Germany combined."

The judge who has established officially the proper hour for the cessation of sparking may have done well, but the hour will not be accepted by the young people, nor will all young men leave just as the clock strikes 11. There is a power higher than the judge, viz., the old gentleman who appears at the head of the stairs occasionally with a remark to this effect: "Daughter, are you still up?" or "Is that the milkman at the back door?" He can overrule a judge, and if he says 10 o'clock, 10 o'clock it is, in spite of all the judges in the State. After all, 11 o'clock appears on the face of things to be a proper hour for the front door to be closed. A young man who cannot say all his love speech in three hours, during three or four nights in the week, needs a stimulant. If this stimulant is to be looked upon as law, how are you to enforce it? Are special policemen to be employed, men who have official information as to the

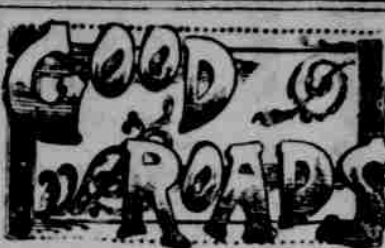
houses where sparking is in progress? Are they to beat a tom-tom at 11 o'clock and cry in unwelcome, strident tones, "Break away?" Or is he to arrest the violators, one and two, and call a patrol? It will not do. This business cannot be regulated except by law, and what law says goes every time, and if not, the young man goes, and rather rapidly. The judge is second to law every time when the duration of sparking hours is up for discussion.

This may not inappropriately be called the age of copper. Time seems to have turned backward in its flight, and the metal which gave its distinctive character to one epoch in the history of primeval man has been elevated once more to a place of supreme importance. The renewed distinction has taken place because this is also the age of electricity, and copper is the best metallic conductor of electricity which the earth yields in sufficient quantity for modern uses. One of the remarkable industrial developments of the age is the increased production and employment of the metal. The United States alone, which supplied but one-seventh of the amount required in the markets of the world a few years ago, now produces much more than one-half, and that half is double the world's gross production at that time. Immense fortunes have been made by the men who have developed and own the copper mines of this country. There are at least three mines which are to-day valued by tens of millions of dollars, and one of them has paid nearly sixty million dollars in dividends. For months past there has been eager, at times almost frenzied, speculation in the Boston stock market in copper mine shares. It is based on a more solid foundation than are most speculations, because there seems good reason to think that for a year or two to come the demand for copper will be larger than the supply, and that the price of the metal will be maintained.

The London Spectator has an interesting article on "Catching Cold," evidently written by a physician. In conclusion he asks himself, "Shall we ever be able to avoid colds altogether?" That is a conundrum we would all like to hear answered authoritatively in the affirmative. This writer is optimistic and says: "Probably we shall; probably ere long our bacteriologists, having discovered the hostile microbe, having learned his habits, traced his life history and tracked him to his lair, will be able to show us how we can get the better of our foe, so that in the oft-recurring struggle he, not we, will succumb, and we shall soon cease to fear him." But while we are waiting for this much-to-be-desired deliverance from the cold microbe what can we do to abate this all-pervading disease which men, horses and cats appear to be especially heirs to. There are places where it is impossible to catch cold, for the simple reason that there are no colds to catch. For three years Nansen and his men were exposed to all sorts of conditions favorable to catching cold. This led Nansen to tell the writer in the Spectator that "of course there is no doubt that cold is an infectious disease. We had none during our journey, and we all got it (very badly) too at the very moment we reached Norway." Some people believe that the majority of illnesses begin with a simple cold, and the doctors say that some people are more or less correct. Coddling will not prevent colds. It only renders the coddled more susceptible to infection when the inevitable exposure to the frosty germ comes. No one can be made immune from colds so far as medical investigation and science has proceeded. But everyone can render himself or herself less susceptible to infection by the hardening process—to wit, sleeping in cold bedrooms, keeping the temperature of our houses below rather than above 70 degrees, dressing warmly, eating blood-making food, and taking plenty of exercise in the open air. But no matter what precaution you take the cold microbe will catch you even "if you do watch out."

**PATTI'S FIRST ADMIRER.**  
The Diva Had an Offer of Marriage When Twelve Years Old.  
Patti is writing a book. It will be her memoirs, and so far she has got only to the end of the first chapter. This first chapter contains the following interesting information:  
"My first admirer, M. Jose de Rios, declared himself in 1855, at Puerto Rico, where, at the age of 12, I was giving concerts. I was sitting on the balcony waiting for my turn to sing, when this tall, handsome young fellow first came under my notice.  
"I don't know why he should have found any attraction in me, for I was a plain little girl, with sallow skin, two black plaits hanging down my back, and eyes that in an uncanny way seemed much too big for my face. He was most kind to me, and in those days, when we had little of the world's goods, his consideration made a great impression on me. I had by this time lost my mother, and when M. de Rios asked my father for my hand I had little idea of even the meaning of marriage. On account of my tender years his offer naturally met with a refusal. For five years I lost sight of him, and then, when I was 17, he came to Bath, where I was giving a concert one evening, and renewed his suit in propria persona, when I refused for myself."

**Married Men's Watches.**  
The Newburg, N. Y., News says that a local jeweler has invested in a stock of "married men's watches." The peculiarity of these watches lies in the fact that they are furnished with an alarm attachment which a man's wife can set at the exact hour when she wishes him to start for home. The alarm going off at that time will remind him that his wife expects him.



### Minnesota Declares for State Aid.

Complete returns of the Minnesota State election show that the State aid amendment to the Constitution has been passed by the people by a vote of 70,043 to 38,017. The returns have only recently been completed, owing to the unsettled condition of the northern and eastern portions of the State. This is the first time that a popular vote has been taken in any State upon the good roads question, and the result is a most emphatic endorsement of State aid as a solution. The Farmers' National Congress, which met at Fort Worth, Texas, early in December last, passed strong resolutions in favor of State aid, and commending the efforts of the League of American Wheelmen toward its introduction. The Minnesota vote is another notable endorsement of the work of this organization.

The constitutional amendment was introduced at the 1897 session of the Minnesota Legislature by A. R. Choate, of Minneapolis, as the representative of the L. A. W., and its passage by that body was the result of his persistent and diplomatic work in behalf of the measure. This left it to be submitted to popular vote for its final passage. A strong educational campaign for good roads was carried on by the L. A. W. throughout Minnesota during the past summer and fall with the active assistance of the Bureau of Road Inquiry at Washington and the press of Minnesota. A large edition of pamphlets, explaining the State aid system of road-building and its advantages to farmers, was distributed, and numerous articles and editorials upon the subject appeared in the papers in various parts of the State. The resulting vote for the amendment is alone two to one in its favor.

The Minnesota Legislature will now take the necessary steps to put a system of State aid into operation, such as is now in force in New Jersey and in New York. Farmers, especially, will appreciate this, as it will enable them to obtain durable highways without being obliged to bear the entire expense, as they do at present. In New Jersey and New York, the cost of roads built by State aid is divided between the State, the counties and the local taxpayers in the towns. Many towns availing themselves of the New York law are securing funds for road-building purposes from outside sources, equal to four or five times that which they raise themselves. Country taxpayers have learned that State aid largely provides a means by which the large city taxpayers and corporations owning valuable franchises from the State are made to share in the expense, and that it remains optional with the farming districts to avail themselves of this assistance, or not, as they may choose. This explains the popularity of State aid in Minnesota and the large vote in its favor.—L. A. W. Bulletin.

**A City Pays Mud Damages.**  
The following, from a West Superior (Wis.) paper, tells its own story, which, by the way, is an interesting one to taxpayers and "city fathers":  
"At the last previous Council meeting Mike O'Donnell had a claim against the city for the sum of \$20, that amount being claimed by Mr. O'Donnell for having his horse mired up to its neck on 18th street near the normal school. The Aldermen rather laughed at the claimant presenting a bill to the city for having a horse mired, and the Council voted to fight the case through all the courts if necessary.

"The case was brought to trial this morning in the Municipal Court. A jury consisting of Stewart Robinson, Frank Felker, James Scott and James Seljor was impaneled and after hearing about ten minutes' testimony on the case a verdict was brought in for the plaintiff in the sum of \$35, which is \$15 more than he offered to settle the case for. Besides this the costs in the case amount to \$18.87, making a total cost to the city of \$53.87. The horse is all right now, notwithstanding the fact that it took two others to pull it out of the sticky red mud. Under the direction of the Council the case will be appealed to the next higher court."

**Rubber is Scarce.**  
Assuming that the United States will subsidize a company to lay a cable from the Philippines to San Francisco, the first landing place would be in the Hawaiian Islands. The next possession of the United States is the Island of Guam, in the Ladronez, which is about 3,100 nautical miles west of Hawaii. From this island to the mainland of Luzon, in the Philippines, is about 650 nautical miles. The longest cable now operated is that from Brest to New York, which is 3,060 nautical miles in length. The cost of cables increases with their length in a geometrical ratio; the difficulty of working them increases about as rapidly. Remembering that the cost of the New York-Brest cable was greater than that of any other cable ever laid, it is readily seen that the construction of the American transpacific cable, involving the link between Hawaii and Guam, may well be approached with caution. The solution of the difficulty is in the acquisition of an island of the Caroline group.

In connection with the Pacific cable a very interesting question arises. Whence is the gutta-percha for this gigantic cable to come. Every whisper of the construction of a transpacific line sends the gutta market at Singapore up by leaps and bounds. The ruling price of the gum is the highest

that has ever obtained. It is stated, on what authority it is hard to say, that the visible supply of gutta is insufficient for the task, and that if this cable is laid it will be the last—the last with a gutta-percha insulation, at least.—Engineering Magazine.

### DOUBTS AS TO EXACT DATE.

Difference of Opinion as to When Ohio Became a State.

There is some doubt as to the exact date upon which Ohio became a State. Ohio never was a separate "territory," being a part of the Northwest territory. In 1801 the people living in the portion of the Northwest territory now embraced in the State of Ohio called a convention to frame a State constitution for the district which had set up a claim to statehood under the provisions of the fifth article of the ordinance of 1787. That convention met at Chillicothe on Nov. 1, 1802, and on Nov. 29 completed its work. The constitution thus framed was not submitted to the people, but was declared ratified by the convention itself.

On Feb. 17, 1803, the United States Congress passed an act admitting Ohio into the Union as a State, said act becoming operative upon the assembling of the first State Legislature at Chillicothe. The first State Legislature met at Chillicothe at 10 a. m. Tuesday, March 1, 1803, and both houses immediately organized.

Thus there are three dates about which opinions may differ as to the exact initial period of Ohio statehood. They are Nov. 29, 1802, when the constitution was perfected and ratified; Feb. 17, 1803, when Congress passed the act admitting Ohio, and March 1, 1803, when the Legislature assembled and organized. The latter date appears to have the greatest claim, in view of the language of the act of Congress and the organization of the Legislature. The two houses of the Legislature met in joint session at 11 a. m. March 3, 1803, to open and declare the result of the ballot for Governor. Edward Tiffin was declared elected, receiving 4,564 votes. There were no ballots cast against him. At 1 o'clock p. m. the same day Governor Tiffin was sworn in at a joint session of the two houses of Legislature by Judge Meigs.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

### New Use for Catfish.

In Portland, Oregon, according to the Oregonian, the familiar catfish figures as a hardy pioneer and a valued adjunct to the street department, all because the terra cotta sewers and drains, especially those in the lower part of the city, frequently get choked. If the sewer is not broken, it can be cleaned by passing a rope through it, to be pulled backward and forward until the obstruction is loosened and removed. The deputy superintendent of streets has had a great deal of such work to look after, and the worry connected with getting the rope through has gone far toward thinning his hair. He has at last discovered a quick, sure and easy method.

He goes to the river, catches a catfish, ties a string to its tail, drops it down a manhole into the sewer, and it at once starts for the river, and forces its way through any obstruction not as solid as brick, dragging the string after it. Then the deputy goes as far down the sewer as he deems necessary, and picks up the string, which he uses to draw a wire through the sewer, and with this a rope is pulled through, and the sewer is soon cleared.

### So'mon in All H's Glory.

A donation party was given to a good country clergyman in part payment of his small salary, the principal result being twenty-seven bushels of beans and a large variety of second-hand clothing for his five children.

The patience of the clergyman's wife finally gave out. On the next Sunday she dressed all her five children in the donated second-hand clothing, and under her direction they marched up the aisle just as the good pastor was reading that beautiful passage, "Yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The next donation party was of a different character.

### Low Valuation.

A few words will sometimes express a man's opinion of his neighbor quite as well as a much longer statement.  
"Do you regard Elias Woodruff as one of the important people in Canby?" asked a summer visitor, referring to a member of the State Legislature, whose home was in the little town.

"I hear he can talk up to the folks on politics," answered the Canby farmer, to whom the question had been addressed, "so I reckon he's some use to the State, mebby; but in Canby we don't count him of any more value than a couple o' rods o' side-hill."—Youth's Companion.

### The Rothschilds.

A curious thing it is that in every country the Rothschilds assume the typical appearance of its people, says the New York World. Lord Rothschild of England much resembles Lord Salisbury, Baron Alphonse de Rothschild of Paris is a perfect Frenchman in appearance. Walter Rothschild, son of Lord Rothschild, is a fair-haired young giant (the original Mayer Anselm was red-headed). Wilhelm Karl Rothschild of the Frankfurt house, son of that Charles or Karl who went to Naples for the house, is a typical German.

### Famous Scotch Cripples.

Two of the most famous living Scotchmen are cripples—Lord Kelvin, who is the greatest living Scottish scientist, and Dr. James Macgregor of Edinburgh, who is said to be the greatest living Scotch preacher.

In baseball circles the upper ten comprises the winning nine and the umpire.

## THE FARM AND HOME.

### MATTERS OF INTEREST TO FARMERS AND HOUSEWIFE.

Some Reasons Why the Boys Leave the Farm—When to Begin with Vegetables in the Garden—Always Be Up with the Market.

The following is extracted from a paper read at a Farmers' Institute recently:

"How few real homes we find on the farm. How often what we call home is a place to hang up your hat, get three meals a day and lie down to sleep; a place where father and mother and children stay. How few of these stopping places do more than satisfy our daily physical wants, and utterly fail to supply our mental and better necessities. Is it any wonder our boys and girls make comparisons with the homes they imagine exist in the towns and cities? Home in its real sense is an inspiration to all boys and girls. If it exists on the farm it is an inspiration to a nobler, better manhood. If it is not on the farm, there grows up with the boy a resolve to get away from his crude environments and try to find what his head and heart so yearns for. Home must be where love and confidence predominate. A boy is a queer study. His prattle and rattle are evidences of enterprise. In indicates a want of judgment and a need of kindergarten inquiry to discover the inherent abilities of the boy and guide him into those lines. It is the general practice to curb all ebullience of the vigorous mind and hands of the boy, and make him do as we do whether he wants to or not. The twenty-one years to his majority is a tedious term to a farm boy. The farm boy imagines from what he sees of city young men that they must have a very much better time, and he is tempted to try it."

### When to Begin the Garden.

The beginning with a garden should be really in the fall, as such plants as spinach, kale, salsify, dandelion, cross, etc., can be seeded down in the fall, covered with mulch and brought on the table very early in the spring. A patch of turnips left in the ground in the fall will provide the best kind of early "greens," and the same may be done with cabbage stalks, which, if planted in the fall in a compact bed, will take up but little room and throw out sprouts early in spring, before any other green crop comes. Later on radishes, lettuce and rhubarb will be in order, as they are hardy and can be had before summer crops are seeded.

Asparagus comes almost by the time frost is out of the ground. Half an acre in a garden which has been heavily manured will provide an enormous supply of vegetables. Peas and onions, as well as early potatoes, may be had with but little difficulty, if the ground is sandy and warm, but to secure early crops the cultivation must be deep and thorough and the land well drained, not by having a heavy surface flow, but by the water going down quickly. Warmth is secured by the air following the downward flow of the water into the soil.

### Be Up with the Market.

It would be of advantage to our farmers if they were to visit the markets of our great cities and acquaint themselves with the requirements of the trade, they should become acquainted with the methods of business, and should study the reasons for the adoption of particular systems of handling produce. A system is the result of growth. It is not a special creation, fully developed and organized, and thrown into being without some good cause for its existence. It may have grown to an abuse, but even then there is some reason for it.—Farm and Factory.

### Business Tact in Farming.

While it does not pay farmers to suddenly change their crops whenever prices go too low for profit, there are often ways of overcoming these low prices, and perhaps manufacturing the crop into something that will give a good return for all the labor expended upon it. When there was everywhere a superabundant apple crop, the farmers who had evaporators hired enough help to put up their apple crop in the very best form for a period of scarcity. Hence when there was a light apple crop through the country the result was that the evaporated apples were disposed of at a profit. There are often times when grain damaged by harvesting, or which for other reasons sells below what it costs, can be marketed by feeding it to stock. It is in such ways as this that business men learn to change losses into gains, or at least to mitigate their losses.

### Rut Farming.

The farmer that allows himself to fall into what is termed rut farming will fall of the greatest success, because a rut farmer does things in the same old way, simply for lack of energy or knowledge. Each position affirms the fact of his negligence, hence he falls under the ban of natural law and must to a greater or less extent, as the case may be, fall behind. The law of the survival of the fittest was never more evident than when applied to agriculture. Successful agriculture will not admit of trifling.—Rural World.

### Floors for Henhouses.

A henhouse floor should never be made of boards. There will be sure to be some cracks between them, and they make the best possible breeding place for lice. Rather than have board floors we would have one with earth, underlaid with stone to secure drainage, and covered with sifted coal ashes. The most satisfactory of all floors is one of cement. This will not rot out like a board or plank floor, and it will not have cracks to encourage the breeding

of vermin. On a cement floor under the roosts no litter should be allowed. Thus the excretions may be kept free from matter that cannot be rotted down, and if put into a large box with sifted coal ashes sprinkled over them they will be rotted down by spring, so as to be in good condition for drilling with grain or for sprinkling in the rows where early peas are planted. There is nothing better to give peas a vigorous start early. It will also make them several days earlier, and thus secure for them a better price.

### To Keep Apples.

To keep apples sound, laying them on a dark, dry shelf is one method. But when so kept many will be found to lose their beauty and shrivel. If packed in boxes or barrels with dry sand, however, the flavor and soundness are not only preserved, but their original beauty and firmness are also maintained. Sawdust or bran are liable to get damp or moldy, and thus injure the fruit. Peas may also be preserved in this way, but as these undergo a slight fermentation, after becoming ripe, the effect of which is shown in a kind of greasiness on the skin, they should be left a week in the storeroom before the method of preserving here pointed out is commenced.—London Journal.

### Management of Manure.

The sooner the manure spread on the land is decomposed the sooner the plants can utilize it. When a large mass of undecomposed straw or corn-stalks are hauled to the field they are in a condition beyond the reach of the plant roots. When the manure heap is well managed, and all the ingredients "rotted," one-half of the battle is won. It is a saving of time because the farmer who desires a quick start for his corn in the spring cannot afford to wait for the manure to rot in the fields. Good management of the manure heap means that the manure must be decomposed in the heap without losing any of its advantages. Every farmer knows how to do so, but the majority allow large portions of the valuable ammonia to slip away from them.

### Now in the Forest.

In a dense growth of trees snowfall lies more evenly than it can anywhere else, and even to this day the depth of snow in the woods is in country districts the only recognized measure of the depth of the snowfall. There is a great advantage to the trees in having this uniform depth of snow all around them. It prevents deep freezing of the soil, and in many cases prevents it from freezing at all, as there is always a bed of more or less decayed leaves under the snow. In most cases when a forest becomes so thinned that winds will blow the snow in heaps, some of the older trees will begin to die out. The ground freezes deeper and they no longer get water enough.

### Place for the Incubator.

A cellar is an excellent place for an incubator, because it is usually of an even temperature, especially if the cellar is one that will preserve roots and fruits; but the atmosphere should be pure, which will be the case in winter. Any place will answer for the incubator that is of an even and regular temperature. If the incubator is in a room where the temperature changes no harm will result, provided the operator watches the lamp flame, and does not allow too much heat to accumulate. The hot-water incubator (no lamp) must be operated in a warm place, if possible, in order to avoid loss of heat at night.—Poultry Keeper.

### Early Chicks.

Early in the spring the hens will begin to sit and young chicks hatched. It is important to keep the chicks warm until they are feathered. They are hatched at a temperature of 103 degrees, and when exposed to an atmosphere of a temperature of 50 or 60 degrees become chilled, from which they seldom recover. Bowel disease, which is ascribed to faults in feeding, is more frequently the result of lack of warmth. Late in spring, when the weather is warmer, the chicks can have more liberty, but in winter, when the early ones are hatched, shelter and protection from cold draughts will be necessary to prevent loss.

### Oil from Sunflower Seed.

In 1842 a Russian farmer named Bokareff conceived the idea of extracting oil from the seed of the sunflower. His neighbor told him it was a visionary idea and that he would have his labor for his pains. He persevered, however, and from that humble beginning the industry has expanded to enormous proportions. To-day more than 7,000,000 acres of land in Russia are devoted to the cultivation of the sunflower. Two kinds are grown—one with small seeds, which are crushed for oil, and the other with larger seeds, that are consumed by the poorer people in enormous quantities.

### Clover and Corn for Hogs.

When wheat was low in price a large proportion of the crop was used for feed. Now the farmers have gone back to corn, but the quality of the pork is not equal to that which was made from wheat. In feeding corn some farmers claim that when the corn is ground and mixed with clover which has been cut fine and sealed more pork and better pork can be made by the combination than with corn.

### The Sheep and Dog Problem.

There has been legislation enough to protect sheep. The problem is how to keep the dogs in check. Dogs can easily go through a barbed-wire fence, or will dig under it, hence there is no inexpensive way to protect sheep. As sheep graze in the evening, after the sun goes down, as a protection against heat in summer, they cannot be confined at night in a building, and it will not pay to employ a watchman, unless the flock is very large.