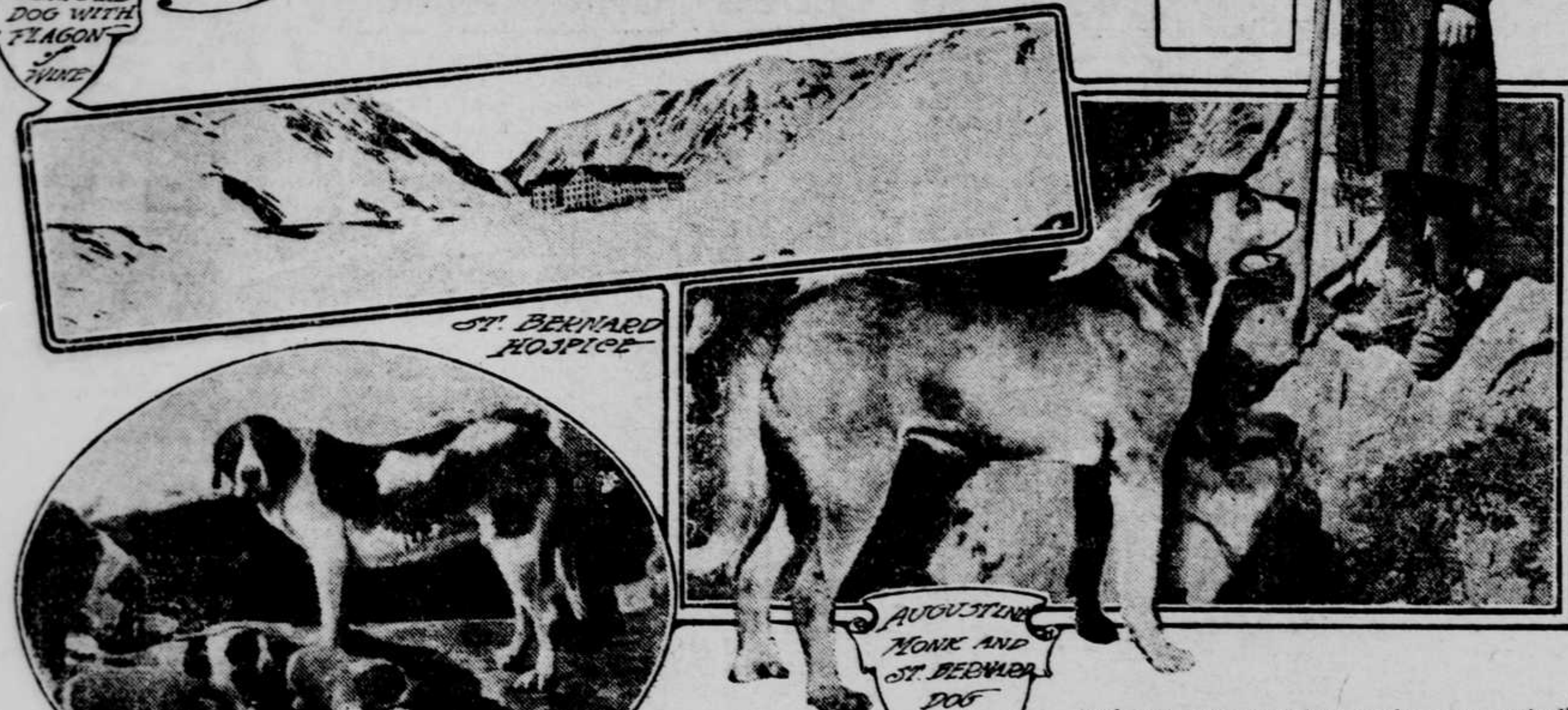
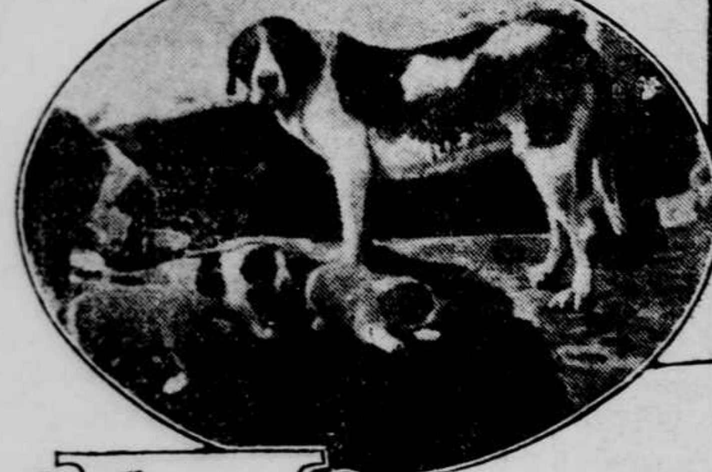
The Wonderful Dogs of St. Bernard

by Sterling Heilig

ST. BERNARD DOG WITH FLAGON WINE



ST. BERNARD HOSPICE



AUGUSTINE MONK AND ST. BERNARD DOG

THE KENNELS A LITTER OF ST. BERNARD PUPPIES

A FULL BLOODED ST. BERNARD DOG

ENTRANCE to KENNELS of the ST. BERNARD HOSPICE

I HAVE just quit forty of the most magnificent dogs in the world—as big as calves, as husky as bears, as intelligent as folks, as pedigreed as princes, as meritorious as saints, and as pure and plain-living as their masters, the Augustine canons, who, after fifteen years of a climate that is nine months ice and snow, break down completely, with swelled joints, impoverished blood and chronic rheumatism.

The dogs are as aristocratic as the kings who in the middle ages sent them collars of gold; because the first Bernards, their ancestors, were already on the spot, aiding travelers in an amateurish way, when St. Bernard de Menthon went up from Aosta and founded the Hospice, A. D. 962. Their ancestors, bear-fighting dogs of old Charlemagne's court, had been left with certain mountaineer chiefs, among other payment for aid and neutrality, by an earlier Bernard, uncle of Charlemagne, when he marched an army by this route A. D. 773.

Thus the great dogs of imperial court race were near the spot when St. Bernard and his companions built their famous refuge at the apex of the pass; and to understand their evolution—why the good monks began training them not to be like other dogs—they must have an idea of this majestic short-cut of antiquity from north Europe into Italy.

Nowadays the tunnels take you through by rail, in three-quarters of an hour, but before such modern engineering wonders it was different. Why has Napoleon's—or Hannibal's—passage of the Alps remained so striking? Because a great army, with its baggage, camp material, supplies, cannons and ammunition carts or yet more ponderous elephants, irrupted unexpectedly on the fertile plains of the south. They fell, really, from the clouds—the clouds hanging round the snow capped wall of mountains! Otherwise, Napoleon must have led his army round by the Mediterranean, interminable journey that would have surprised nobody.

Otherwise, Hannibal, wandering with his hundreds of war elephants from Spain up into France would have been obliged to wander back or stay there. Instead, he followed the Rhine valley to the entrance of the Great St. Bernard, climbed the grand old road, up to its snow and ice, elephants and all, and descended on the vines and fig trees of Capua, to the immense surprise of the Romans.

The first army to risk it was a Gaulish one, 150 years before Hannibal. The Romans used it as early as B. C. 105; and the monks preserve tablets that record the passage of various legions. After the foundation of Aosta, B. C. 23, it became frequented by travelers and traders—a Temple of Jupiter actually stood at the top, where now rises the gigantic statue of St. Bernard. Roman emperors improved the road, notably Constantine, A. D. 339. Later, barbarian hordes fell on the empire from its heights; but in the anarchy of the early dark ages it became one of the most traveled and securest routes of Europe, policed by mountain chiefs taking moderate toll—whence the big dogs of Charlemagne's uncle.

So, when St. Bernard founded his Hospice at the top, and collected a pack of the dogs' descendants—already evolved to precious mountain friends of man—it was to succor travelers at the critical point of a unique highway in the clouds. There were other short-cut passes, but none so improved by art and traffic. Even today, in spite of the railway tunnels, the Great St. Bernard is annually crossed by 17,000 poor pedestrians.

In the early days, the richer the travelers, the more substantially they showed their gratitude. During the middle ages the monastery became very wealthy. Kings and emperors made it grants. Passing nobles and rich merchants settled annuities on it. And princesses embroidered collars in cloth-of-gold for the big dogs—already of ancient descent from Charlemagne's court—concerning whose unearthly intelligence and goodness all kinds of stories were rife.

Personal friends of mine had an adventure with the dogs last May. Hearing it to be a sporting "English" trip to go sleighing over the Great St. Bernard after a considerable melting of the snows makes the thing possible, they started off, very Parisian trio—retired fashionable ladies' tailor of the rue Royale, Paris, his wife and his mother-in-law, weight and girth increasing in the order mentioned.

At Martigny, in full bloom of peach and cherry blossoms, they took a four-horse carriage up the already dusty road, through the ravine of the Drance, the rocky gorge, the tender spring buds and the woods, the tunnel, and on up through Sembrancher—where the stopped to cool with beer—past ruined chateaux and over old stone bridges, the Drance away down below, often invisible, and all delightful springlike, and their hearts sang as they went up, like the skylark. * * * They exclaimed in wonder as they began to get views of Mt. Velan with its glaciers and snow fields merging into an all-snow world beginning up there, just above them—so different from the scene in August. On the great curve beyond Liddes village, they felt chilly. Beyond the Torrent de la Croix they struck snow, and at Bourg St. Pierre the sleigh was waiting for them.

The sleigh had been engaged by telephone; and by the same means the good monks would have a hot dinner and fires all ready in their bedrooms. Jingling gaily across the Gorge of the Valsorey with its deep snowbanks unmelted, they chatted of Napoleon's superhuman difficulties in getting 30,000 men, cannon and camp baggage over that historic sticking pot in the same month of May, the year 1800. They were doing it beautifully in a light three-horse sleigh without baggage; but the modern road, hewn in the rock, avoids the old steep, slippery route, scarcely marked by jagged stones sticking out of the ice. It must have been a 25 per cent. incline.

They had struck nothing worse than 7 per cent.; and through the forest beyond it was often almost level, the snow well packed. A favorable moment! Beautiful sleighing! Exhilarating adventure! Up! up! Five per cent., six. They jingled through a long defile and up into vast boulder-strewn pastures shrouded in white, like great ghosts. How different from a common diligence trip in August, with hurrahing tourists! They still affirm that a three-horse sleigh can take three restaurant-fattened Parisians and a beer-swelled driver up inclines of 7 and 8 per cent. with strength and beauty, had not a blizzard struck them just before the Cantine de Proz.

"Five more miles to climb," they said there, "better hurry! We shall telephone the canons." This is where they always telephone for help to come down from the Hospice, in bad weather; but their fat sleigh man had swigged his birsch-and-hot-water placidly, refused an extra horse and man, and started them off with confidence. This is why they were soon floundering in a blizzard that darkened the sun like night, at the entrance to a black defile, past "precipices" that "turned their stomachs." With a jolt, the sleigh stopped.

"Must wait," said the fat sleigh man, blanketing his horses.

"Where are we?"

"At the Pas de Marengo, three miles below the Hospice."

"Drive on!"

"Go back!"

"Armand, he'll take us over a precipice. I can't see two yards ahead!"

To all of which the driver, lifting the falling-top, covered them with rugs, and lighting his pipe, answered briefly: "They'll come."

"Never will I forget that half-hour while the sleigh was being snowed under in the black twilight of that blizzard," says the mother-in-law of the world-famed rue Royale concern. "And never was I so glad to see human beings as those three splendid big dogs that advanced to us formally, gravely out of the twilight. I cannot think of them as dogs. They were more than persons. They seemed supernatural creatures come to save us, perfectly safely, perfectly easy! Our confidence was complete. We understood their meaning, when they ranged themselves three abreast, just far enough apart for us two women to walk between, leaning on their backs! Armand took an outer edge. The driver showed him."

Up they advanced, dragged, sustained and cheerfully encouraged by the dogs alone, as they affirm, for a mile and a half, the driver leading his horses behind, and keeping mighty close. He left the sleigh and valises—it was no moment for fancy work. When the good canon and his two brown brothers, with reinforcements of four more dogs, came hurrying after the canine first aid, it was possibly a little earlier than they remember. The two miles or more of 10 per cent. climb up the long windings, over the dreary Comb of the Dead and through the avalanche gallery, seems to them a fantastic dream of blizzard and darkness. The two men held the mother-in-law straddled on one of the horses, with the greatest difficulty. Armand and madame, dragged along by a big dog under each armpit, "just loved the noble creatures."

Only when they arrived at the Hospice did they realize that they had no pajamas. Their clothes were soaked and frozen. In a short time they were led to two big bedrooms with two big wood fires blazing * * * and a big brown brother calling through the keyhole that they would "find a change of gowns on the chair-backs." They were monks' gowns, of scratchy, thick brown woollen stuff that "tickled" the two ladies so that they "ate their soup and went to sleep laughing." * * *

The next afternoon—the driver having rescued his sleigh, sent up their valises by porter, and himself returned to Bourg St. Pierre long before—they went down the 2, 6, 8 and 10 per cent. slopes of the Italian side in a regular service sleigh and dashing style and taking the terrific descents of 18 to 25 per cent. with "sleigh brakes that hold safer than an automobile." Although they found the Pass alive with service movement, mostly local, they consider themselves great sports and "advise no one to repeat the exploit." As to the dogs, they will "send them a present of 500 francs every year." As the first year has not yet elapsed, it remains to be seen if they turn out more grateful than the average tourist; but I believe they did leave $10 in the alms box.

It is a painful subject. To merely see the dogs on the spot and learn of their deeds is worth any man's $10, even in August. And, quite apart, is the question of board and lodging.

The Hospice consists of two vast agglomerations of buildings in the bottom of a cup-like space surrounded by the terrific snow-covered peaks. Yet it is the top of the pass, so high that everyone is incommoded in breathing after a little exertion—no one knows why; but the amosphere is more rarefied and colder than that of any other pass, altitude for altitude, by a technical 500 meters. True, it is higher than the Simpson or Mt. Cenis; but it is lower than the Stolvio or Great Glibler—all of which I have done, in auto, with none of the inconvenience in breathing experienced around the Great St. Bernard Hospice.

Without the Hospice, the 17,000 poor pedestrians would find it a wretched, even dangerous plight. They regularly sleep at night and eat two meals gratis.

Without the Hospice, 6,000 well-to-do pleasure tourists, who annually "do" the Great St. Bernard in July, August and September by way of diligences, service-breaks and private carriages would find it a much less "romantic and delightful adventure," with perhaps some painful inconveniences.

For one thing, they would have to pay. When a break-load arrives, they ring the bell in the ancient porch and are welcomed by one of the abbes or canons as guests of a chateau. Automobiles not being permitted on the Swiss side, the all-horse locomotion of this pass makes a stay over night at the top practically necessary. With old-fashioned courtesy the tourists are conducted to their rooms by an abbe, and after meals are shown round the church, the kennels and museum, quite as guests in a country house. Never a hint of pay. Every tourist knows—it is universal conversation and all guide books tell it—that each tourist ought to put into the alms box at least what he (or she) would have to pay at a hotel.

All tourists similarly know in advance that the Hospice has grown poor in modern times by continuing to feed, warm and lodge 23,000 mingled rich and poor annually—the grants, rents and annuities that once made it rich having shrunk and dwindled. This being so, what do you imagine the 6,000 gay and arrogant tourists last summer put into the alms box? Less than 1,000 would have paid at a hotel! That is to say, an average of one tourist in six paid up honestly. The rest sneaked it.

This is not why the dogs have a far-away, almost disdainful look. They do not know why they are almost hard up for their soup and biscuits. Once they wore gold collars; now they go about contentedly in leather dotted with brass nail-heads. They do not even know that rich tourists have tried to buy them for large sums—which the good canons gently refused; they would never send their dog friends down to pant and pine in the thick, hot air of the plain. They disdain nobody. They simply do not like our smell—the smell of overheated, overfed, gross tourist bodies, burning oxygen and letting off poisonous gases like a furnace.

Their friends, the abbes, brothers and clean-smelling wood choppers of the heights are plain livers, trained down, all muscle, their very clothes free from the grease and microbes of the festering plain. How, then, if they avoid us, are they willing to bound off through snow and night and hunt out—what they smell so easily, so far away—the strong-scented denizen of low altitudes in distress?

In men it would be called professional ardor. In these dogs we call it atavism. Since St Bernard de Menthon collected the pack in the year A. D. 962, almost a thousand years have elapsed. Generation after generation, back through the centuries, the same patient training, exclusive companionship of wise men, absence of outside foolishness and distractions, have made it a race of dogs apart. There are plenty of St. Bernards up and down the valley; but they are degenerates from the overflow.

The dogs of the Hospice, for example, take their orders only from the abbes, or canons, not the brown brothers ("marronniers") who live with them, feed them, and for whom they have the greatest affection. Yet before starting on an expedition, an abbe has the chief dogs up before him, one by one. It passes in absolute silence, very queer. When the pure-minded, strong-souled, trained-down, unworldly man looks into his eyes, what passes into the subconscious being of the clean-living, high-bred, human-companioned animal of the thin air and lonely heights?

Two Hospice dogs have crouched beside an exhausted wayfarer, snuggling close to him on each side to keep him warm while the third dog ran back, to lead the "caravan" of rescue to the spot.

Such a trio of scouts have barked continuously in the ears of a weakening, stumbling traveler to keep him awake. Two trudged so close to him on each side as to warm and hold him upright—while the third butted him along from behind a good five minutes before dashing back to bring the caravan.

Any visitor in snow time is given the privilege to wander off and hide behind a drift—as far as he pleases, covering his tracks at pleasure. Then an abbe will take a new bunch of six dogs from the kennels, merely show them your handkerchief in his uplifted hand—of course they get the scent—and off they go, circling, barking, as at a game. After two circles of the Hospice, at the most, running with their noses in the air like a French deer hound, they have your trail and follow it straight to where you are waiting to be rescued. Then you get your second surprise. Instead of digging you out and offering you a drink of brandy and water from the canteens round their necks, they stand in a circle, laughing. You know how a dog laughs?

Technically, the pass is "open to circulation" between the melting and reappearance of the snows in July, August and September. During this period, when the road is alive with traffic over good dry earth, and rock, the rescue work is limited to hunting up adventurous tourists or tipsy "work-seeking" laborers who have strayed or fallen. In bad weather, and as soon as there is snow, the telephone makes rescue work a routine. From St. Rhemy, on the Swiss slope, a telephone message invariably notifies the Hospice of the passage up of each vehicle, band of pedestrians or solitary adventurer.

SPECIAL FEAT. NO. 5—2415 SHEETS

REQUISITES FOR NEAT AND RAPID WORK AT KILLING TIME

Method of Farmer Who Thoroughly Understands the Business—It Is Necessary to Have Good Scraper, Sticking Knife, Hog Hook and Convenient Place to Labor in.

(By W. HANSON, Illinois.)

In order to do neat and rapid work at hog-killing time, it is necessary to have a good scraper, sticking knife, a hog hook and a place that is convenient for working.

For scalding, a barrel is commonly used, and it is all that is needed unless the hogs are very large. If very large hogs are killed, a scalding tub will answer the purpose for scalding much better than a barrel.

I have one which is made of two-inch planks for the sides and ends, and sheet iron for the bottom. It is six feet long and three and one-half feet wide, with a depth of two and one-half feet.

Two hooks are fastened near the top on one side, with a pair of trace chains to run under the hog, to facilitate the turning and withdrawing from the tub.

It is placed over a furnace, which is made by digging a trench in the ground, and when in use I place pieces of wood across the bottom, in order to keep the hog from coming in contact with the iron bottom and getting too hot.

I find that the proper temperature for good scalding is from 180 to 190 degrees, and if a barrel is to be used, the water should be boiling when dipped out of the kettle, as the barrel will cool it some.

If a scalding tub is used, the water should be cooled by adding a bucket of cold water before the hog is put in.

To insure a correct heat of the water, use a thermometer. Small quantities of lye, ashes or lime will have no effect in removing the hair, but will cause the scurf to come loose more readily.

A hog hook is almost indispensable, and if one is to be made it should be made in the form of a hay or bale hook. In fact, I find that a hay hook answers the purpose very well.

In handling the hog, stick the hook in the flesh of the lower jaw, just behind the fork of the jaw bone. However, the hook may be stuck under the tendons of the hind legs.

Keep the hog in constant motion while being scalded, and draw it out to air occasionally. When the hair and scurf slip easily from the body the scalding is completed.

In scraping and cleaning the hog, I clean the feet and head first, then the legs, and last but not least, the body.

I hang the hog with a rope and pulley, as it is more easily hung in this way than any other. But it may be hung with the ordinary gambrel, a stick which is sharpened at each end and inserted under the tendon strings of the hind legs.

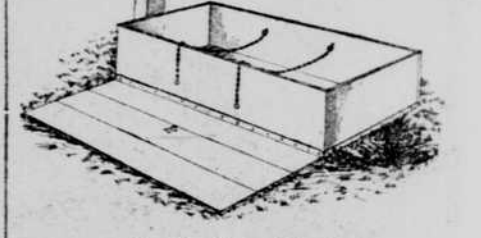
A short singletree will be found to answer for a gambrel-stick. If there is sufficient help at hand, the hog may be hung on a pole put up for the purpose.

After the hog is hung up, rinse it down with scalding water, remove the entrails by running a sharp knife lightly down, marking the belly straight, cutting to the bone between the thighs and in front of the ribs, which bones I split with an ax, being careful not to cut beyond them.

Open the abdomen, and after a little use of the knife one will seldom cut the entrails in removing them.

However, I have a few short strings at hand to use in case any of the entrails are cut.

After removing the entrails, liver and heart, spread the carcass apart



Hog-Scalding Tank.

with a stick and rinse it down with cold water. When cooled sufficiently, remove the leaf fat and kidneys and cut it up.

I usually salt down on a bench or in a box as soon as it has cooled enough to trim, but I never put any salt on the ribs and backbones if the weather is cool.

The amount of salt I use is ten pounds to every one hundred pounds of meat. In addition to the salt, I also use two pounds of granulated sugar and two ounces of saltpetre mixed.

Rub the meat once every three days with one-third of the mixture. While it is curing pack it, in a box in a cool room, where it will neither become warm nor freeze.

Two barrels may be used, changing the meat from one to the other each time it is rubbed. After the last rubbing let the meat lie in a box for a week or ten days, then take it out to smoke. When taken out of the box dip each piece in a kettle of boiling water and let it remain half a minute, after which sprinkle a little powdered borax on the meat side, and hang.

Smoke it four or five days with hickory chips or corn cobs, then dip and sprinkle it with borax again, and put it down in clean hay.

The hot water destroys any fly eggs that may have been deposited, and the borax prevents flies from depositing fresh ones.

Meat treated in this manner may be left hanging all summer and will remain in the best condition.

CISTERN THAT CLEANS ITSELF

Method Is Shown in Illustration That Carries Off Refuse Settling at the Bottom.

Cisterns are usually made of brick and cement mortar in the form of a jug. The water is let in at the top by conductors from the eve troughs of the roof of the house or barn. The soot, dust, leaves and other foreign matter on the roof and in the trough are washed into the cistern, writes Dr. J. A. Kirkland in the Wallace's Farmer. This settles to the bottom,

Self-Cleaning Cistern.

making a heavy deposit of slime and filth, and the water, which is always drawn from the bottom by the pump, comes up dirty and foul smelling. If the cistern is built as the illustration represents, it will be automatic in cleaning, as it will overflow from the bottom, thus carrying out the stale water and sediment that have accumulated below.

The cistern should be built in the ordinary way and cemented fully to the top. The conductor pipes should enter through the cover, a drain pipe leave the cistern just beneath the neck, or about three feet below the surface. Into this is cemented a galvanized gas pipe which extends downward to within about two and a half inches of a depression in the bottom of the cistern.

It will readily be seen that as soon as the water rises above the drain, it will begin by force of gravity to flow from the bottom up through the galvanized tube and leave the cistern from the bottom, thus sucking out the foul water and sediment from below and leaving the clean, fresh water at the top. I invented this device and have had one of these cistern in operation for seventeen years. The water has always remained pure and sweet, and without any attention whatever to cleaning. There is no patent and the additional cost of this simple and sanitary device is about two and a half to three dollars.

Unique Selling Plans.

A Long Island gardener has been shipping hampers of assorted vegetables to New York families. A uniform price of $1.50 a hamper (holding more than a bushel) is charged the year round. The plan is successful, although used on a small scale.

A New England gardener has built up a fine trade in supplying consumers in several cities. Deliveries are made by wagon. Families are supplied regularly and printed matter is distributed soliciting further trade. His business is well organized and this grower is prospering and says, "I now have more business than I can handle."

GUARD AGAINST WASTE IN FEED

Farmer Must Systematize Feeding So That Good Roughage Is Not Refused by Cattle.

Feed has grown to be so high priced that wasting it seems like squandering gold; yet the careless feeder wastes an enormous amount of feed every winter when a little watchfulness and sound judgment would save it.

When stock are fed a tempting grain feed before or at the same time they are given their roughage ration they invariably become somewhat dainty as to what they eat, picking out but the very best of the roughage and rejecting all the rest.

When this habit is once formed stock will often go hungry rather than eat what has been picked over and which really is very good feed. Therefore, one must systematise his feeding in such manner as to guard against the habit being formed.

This should in no wise be constructed as meaning the feeding of foul or musty roughage, but at the same time we do advise one to feed so as to derive the greatest possible profits, consistent with the good health of the herd. For this reason we should feed the roughage before the grain or at a time when we know the stock to be hungry enough to eat all the roughage containing a certain amount of nourishment and we consider that the system saves us a great quantity of food supplies every season.

Avoid Relationship.

In breeding turkeys, relationship must be avoided. If the cock bird has considerable wild blood in him, the offspring will be stronger. Where inbreeding is practiced, after a few years the young will be liable to have crooked breasts and other deformities.

Best Draught Horse.

An experiment station says that the closer a draught horse is to the ground the better both for service and endurance.

Most Deadly of All Snakes

Poison Emitted From Fangs of the Echis Carinata Invariably Fatal —Is Found in India.

The most venomous of snakes is said to be the Echis carinata of India. It is about eighteen inches long and of a gray color. The creature is death itself, and carries in its head the secret of destroying life with the concentrated agony of all the poisons.

The Echis carinata is tolerably common in India, being found in nearly every part of the peninsula.

Fortunately, however, for man, it is not, like the cobra, a house-frequenting snake; for its aggressive habits would make it infinitely more fatal to life than its dreaded relative.

This king of the asps does not turn to escape from man as the cobra will, or flash into concealment like the koriat, but keeps the path against its human assailant, and, pitting its own eighteen inches of length against its enemy's bulk, challenges and provokes conflict.

A stroke with a whip will cut it in two, or a clod of earth disable it; but such is its malignity that it will invite attack by every device at its command, staking its own life on the mere chance of its adversary coming within the little circle of its power. At most, the radius of this circle is 12 inches. Within it, at any point, lies certain death, and, on the bare hope of hand or foot treaspassing within its reach, the Echis throws its body into a figure-of-eight coil. Then it attracts attention by rubbing its loops together, which, from the roughness of the scales, make a rustling, hissing sound, erects its head in the center, and awaits attack.

It is said that no one, having once encountered this terrible reptile, can ever forget its horrifying aspect when thus aroused, its eagerly aggressive air, its restless coils, which, in constant motion one over the other and rustling ominously all the while, stealthily but surely bring it nearer and nearer to the object of its fury.—Harper's Weekly.

Natural Mistake.

"Is Mrs. Walsingham at home?"

"No, I believe she has gone out for the day."

"Are you Mr. Walsingham?"

"No; I've just got out of a hospital, so your mistake is perhaps no more than natural."