

WITH THE WORLD'S BEST WRITERS

ACCIDENTS ON THE RAILWAYS.

Granting that there is a greater mileage of railroad in this country, the proportionate travel is probably greater in England than here. What, then, is the explanation of the fewer fatal accidents, or, rather, the almost total lack of accidents in that country as compared with the frightful mortality on our American roads? The exact solution is probably not easy, but the most natural explanation that will come to the mind is that the British roads are better managed and that they are held to a much stricter accountability by the authorities. Another reason also is the total absence of all grade crossings in England and the universal employment of the best of safety devices and signals, the block system being practically universal.—New Orleans Picayune.

OUTWITTING THE SANDS.

In his article "From Coast to Coast in an Automobile," in the May World's Work, M. C. Krarup describes how the motor car was gotten over a sand hill. The means devised for this emergency consisted of two strips of canvas, six feet wide and twenty-four feet long. Where the sand is round-grained, loose and dry the driving wheels of a car can get no hold, but spin around as in water or slimy mud. Our strips of canvas, laid on the ground for the wheels to run over, held the sand together, and then the motor power was sufficient to drive us ahead. In this manner the two strips, each laid down three times, took us over Wadsworth hill, much to the astonishment of a number of citizens who had assembled there with a team of horses and stout tackle to help us.

TO KILL DANDELIONS.

In regard to the trouble owners of lawns and grass plots have in keeping them free from the pestiferous dandelion, a benevolent citizen who has experienced lots of this trouble writes to the Oregonian to say that many people bring more of this trouble on themselves by trying to exterminate dandelions by cutting the plant off just below the ground. A great deal of this is done early in the spring by people collecting young dandelion plants for "greens," they being an excellent and wholesome pot herb. This, it is said, does not kill the plant, but causes each root to throw out several shoots, and thus multiplies the number of dandelions.

The correspondent mentioned writes to impress his fellow sufferers that if when they cut off the dandelion plant below the ground they will drop a pinch of salt or a teaspoonful of coal oil on the root left in the ground it will effectually kill it. This may seem a troublesome job, but to one who is set on keeping his grass plot clear of dandelions it will in the end save a lot of trouble.—Portland Oregonian.

CURE FOR CONSUMPTION.

Motor-car exercise will cure consumption, says Dr. Blanchet, of Lyons. He speaks from personal experience, having recovered his own health by regularly covering about a hundred miles a day in an open motor car. He avers that by this remedy the cough of tuberculous patients is gradually abolished, or greatly diminished, and healthy sleep and appetite produced. It is most essential that the body should be duly protected from cold. The elements of the cure are the long stay in the open air and the increased atmospheric pressure due to the rapid motion, which expands and strengthens the lungs.—London Mail.

CAN "GOOD" MEN CORRUPT?

The ease with which good men, and men who are reckoned honorable in respect of their private lives, find excuses for doing wrong in their public action has been a marvel to the ages. It will continue a marvel for long years to come. But it is not nearly so marvelous as the perversity of human nature that enables men to imagine they are moral and devoted patriots and faithful Christians while they are bending their talent and influence to increase their riches by bribing legislators to do for them what they would never do except for a corrupt consideration or through fear of a dominant influence.—Boston Herald.

LOSS FROM TYPHOID.

The Michigan physician who puts the annual money loss to the United States from typhoid fever at \$50,000,000 is far from setting forth the full truth. He reaches his estimate by assuming \$1,000 as the average value of the lives sacrificed and he omits all account of the money spent in the care of non-fatal cases. The real value of the lives lost—so far as such value can be expressed in money—might more properly be rated at \$5,000, and at least \$100 on the average must be spent on victims who recover. On this calculation, assuming that the Michigan physician is correct in his number of cases, the annual loss to the country from typhoid is nearly \$300,000,000.—Providence Journal.

DIFFERENT MACHINE GUNS.

The first machine gun of any note was the Gatling. The original Gatling had ten barrels placed in a circle, with a breech mechanism so arranged that by turning a crank these barrels were successively fired, the cartridges being placed in a small hopper situated on the top of the gun.

The Hotchkiss was a similar gun, having a similar arrangement of barrels, but a totally different mechanism. The Hotchkiss system, however, was used for a larger type of ammunition than the Gatling. The French mitrailleuse had thirty barrels. They were all loaded at the same time and all fired simultaneously. The recoil was so great that it had to be mounted in the same manner as a fieldpiece on a heavy carriage, requiring six horses. The apparatus was clumsy, difficult to operate, and had a comparatively slow rate of fire.

The Nordenfeldt gun consists of a series of barrels arranged side by side, like organ pipes. The Nordenfeldt gun generally has five barrels, and the mechanism is worked by a lever, the cartridges falling down from a hopper on the top of the arm into position, where the mechanism thrusts them into the barrel, fires them and extracts the empty case. This gun is of great simplicity, and for a time went into extensive use.—Harper's Weekly.

A FILIAL SON.

M. Curie, the discoverer of radium, not long ago declined the red ribbon. This at first was taken as showing extreme republicanism. He refused because his father, a meritorious doctor, who has always practiced in the poorest part of Paris, is still undecorated. M. Curie would be pleased and proud to enter the Legion of Honor after his father had become a member. At the same time he does not see how with any fairness he could be decorated if his wife were not similarly honored.—Paris Letter to London Truth.

Weeds

Man has almost always looked upon the weed as a mortal enemy of the husbandman. He would deem himself fortunate if he could carry on his tillage with never a weed to contend with. Yet the name "weed" is largely meaningless, for it is merely a term applied to the plants for which we have at the present time no particular use. Yet it may be assumed that each weed has in it some value to the human race that is yet to be discovered. Many of the weeds that now encroach on our cultivated domain will some day be so changed by the hand of man that they would not be recognized by us to-day. In some it will be the blossom that will be enlarged and developed, just as we have now developed the flower of the cabbage to the cauliflower. In others the root will be the part that will be developed, as we have from their wild and insignificant forms developed beets, carrots and turnips.

Thus, as to the future of weeds, and we can safely predict what the outcome will be from our knowledge of the history of the past. For we all realize the fact that many of the choicest things that come to our tables, whether in the form of food or for ornament, were within the history of man, but weeds that were thought below his notice. Asparagus was a riparian plant growing in the sandy margins of the rivers or by the seashore. Celery was a strong weed with nothing to recommend it till some man found how to make it grow tender in the shade. Left to grow naturally it is of little or no use to man. The beach pea that rambled along the sands and rocks of the Mediterranean shores became, under cultivation, the beautiful sweet pea of our flower gardens and of which we now have a thousand forms. How unlike some of these are the forms out of which they were developed?

A few years ago the country was stirred by the advent of the Russian thistle, which threatened to put millions of acres of land out of cultivation in the Northwest. A panic seized some of our most conservative agriculturists and the legislatures, both state and national, were appealed to for immense sums of money to be spent in checking the dreadful invader. But the legislatures refused to appropriate any considerable sums of money and told the farmers they would have to fight this new weed pest in the best way they could.

But before long it was found that this weed, growing best on alkali lands, was greatly relished in a young state by the farm stock, and that it made good pasturage. We now never hear anything about the Russian thistle except that here and there it is being made up into hay.

But apart from this occasional service to man there are other benefits that come from weeds. They are the first to take possession of waste places and plough up the ground with their roots to make way for the coming of grass. The dry soil, under the fierce glare of the summer sun, loses much of the humus it has in the exposed surface layers. This loss is now known to be very great, or would be great, did not the weeds take possession and cover the ground with their enveloping tops. Under this shade the ground keeps moist and the humus is conserved. The work of the bacteria goes on in this protected soil, and it was long ago demonstrated that nitrates were formed under the shade of these very plants that the farmer considers his foes.

The writer once heard Professor Bailey say that he had just bought a 200-acre farm that was covered with weeds. The previous owner sold him the farm at a low price because it was so very weedy. The professor laughed as he remarked that he preferred the

weeds to nothing, as it was merely a question of plowing them under when he got ready to use the land. Meanwhile they were improving the land for him. Weeds do not impoverish the land, as they fall down and decay on the very soil where they have been growing. It is safe to say that the soil that will bear a good crop of weeds will bear a good crop of some other plant.

The thrifty farmer will have little trouble with weeds, except when he sows them in the crops of grain that he is raising. The areas that are cultivated by hand hoeing or by the plow can be kept free easy enough. The weed is a friend that the farmer would find it hard to get along without.—Farmer's Review.

Improving Swine

The improvement of swine must come as it comes in all other breeds of animals, both by selecting and feeding. Feeding is probably first, as no matter how well an animal may be selected if he is not fed properly the things that have been gained by selecting will be lost. What is the use of a man trying to breed up a strong-boned animal if, after having selected one that shows the proper conformation, he goes on feeding him nothing but corn from pighood to maturity? It is evident that this kind of feeding would be a permanent check on further development along the line desired. And if this selection should be continued for generations and the feed remain bad, little or nothing could be gained. In the past much of the work of improvement has been along these lines and has therefore been uphill work. Some of our farmers have tried to select their breeding swine year after year with the hopes of getting an improvement in stamina, but have continued to feed materials that went to destroy stamina, and they have found it to be difficult to improve their animals in the least.

The first requisite therefore is to begin a right system of feeding, one that will develop a strong bone and firm and abundant muscles. This can be done by limiting the amount of corn that is fed and increasing the amount of foods rich in protein. By such a course not only will the muscular systems of the animals be improved but the breeding qualities will also be improved, and the number of pigs in each litter will be increased. The opposite course of feeding leads to degeneracy and impairment of breeding qualities.

Then comes the selection each year or each breeding season. With the proper method of feeding selection becomes a very effective method of improving the animals. Within a few weeks after farrowing the pigs will begin to show characteristics that should be propagated. A few will be thriftier than the others. A few will grow more rapidly than their fellows and they will show better formation of body viewed from the pork makers' standpoint. These are the ones that should be chosen for the future breeders, and should early be put in a lot by themselves and fed with the idea of making breeders of them. At the time the others begin to receive corn in quantities sufficient to make them lay on fat, these should be receiving only a little corn, just enough to balance the protein feeds they are receiving. It is obvious that no pig should be selected for breeding that has been in anyway stunted in development. The pig that was not able to take care of itself in the general scramble for its mother's milk has not enough stamina in it to make a good breeder and it is not desirable to transmit that lack of stamina to an offspring.

The common tobacco dips are very efficacious as a dip for riddings hogs of lice.