

FOR THE FARMER

Saving Girdled Trees.

It is said upon good authority that when a tree has been girdled during the winter by mice or rabbits, it may be saved by cutting away the edges of the wound in the spring, till a fresh and healthy bark is seen. Then peel off strips from a limb of the tree, cutting them so as to fit the gap exactly, the ends of the strips pressing against the fresh edge of the bark. Confine by a bandage, and when circulation is active, the sap will pass through the bark thus grafted on, and the tree will grow as well as ever.

Another experiment has been made something after the same manner which has proven very satisfactory. Instead of using bark, five or six scions as large as a pipestem, and long enough to reach over the girdled place, are grafted into the tree. First notch, then spring the shoots or scions into, these notches and fasten the end with wax. The principle is that the scions grow rapidly and spread over the girdled surface. We have known of trees being saved in this way which had, to all appearance, been ruined by mice.

Blanketing Horses.

It is not unusual for overkind and very careful people, in very cold weather, to put on a heavy blanket under the harness of their horses when about to drive to town or to church. This practice, although intended as a humane one, is by no means to be recommended. While the horse is performing his work, there is no danger that he will suffer from the severest cold, or that his natural clothing will not be enough. Indeed, unless his work is very slow, perspiration will be excited, and the moisture thus arising would be retained by the blanket instead of being immediately dissipated into the air. The consequence is that the moment we stop our horse stands in the cold winds with a wet blanket over his whole body, the effect of the evaporation being to make him much colder than he would be if the blanket were then taken off.

The true plan is, in cold weather, never to blanket a horse while he is taking his exercise; and never allow him to stand a moment without blanketing with a dry blanket when his exercise has ceased. So true is this that the most careful and experienced owners and drivers of fine horses find it advantageous to remove even the heavy coating of hair that nature supplies for the winter season, so that there may be no accumulation of moisture about the skin in consequence of heating work; and to supply its place at all times, when the animal is at rest, by ample clothing.

Young Stock Best.

Many careful and pains-taking farmers have demonstrated the fact, that old animals, of any kind of farm stock cannot be profitably kept on the farm, as a general rule. We saw it stated that a gentleman who served on the committee of cost of production, at the late Chicago Fat Stock Show, said the fact was established, that profitable feeding did not extend beyond the two-year-olds. We find it convenient to keep our steers till three years old, but we doubt if there is much profit in keeping them greatly beyond this age. As to pigs, eight or ten months will give greater profit than if wintered over.

How to Raise Chickens.

There are so many different breeds of fowls that there is certainly an opportunity for all lovers of poultry to suit their own fancy. Yet it is difficult for a farmer to get just the kind that he wants. He desires a flock of hens that will lay plenty of eggs, produce good meat for the table, not try to sit all summer, or do too much running over the grain fields. We have found the Leghorns excellent layers, but they forage too much, go to the back end of the farm to scratch up the corn, and fly to the highest part of the barn to get on the wheat mow or grain stacks. Most strains of Brahmas are intolerable sitters. We have finally made choice of the Plymouth Rocks for a farm breed, although in some respects they may be surpassed by others. The fowls should be provided with a building for their exclusive use. With a well-planned poultry house the care of fowls is lessened, and the annoyance of having them scratching everywhere is prevented. Considering the value of a good flock of chickens, the profit in keeping them well, and the fertilizing qualities of the manure, it is strange that the fowls should be neglected as they are on many farms. The horse and cow-stables are cleaned every day, why should not the hen-house? Keep their house clean and odorless, if you would be successful with fowls. Have a good floor under the roost, which can be scraped clean every day. After cleaning, sprinkle sawdust over the floor. White-wash the inside of the building frequently, and keep the air pure. Keep lice away by placing tobacco leaves in the nest of the sitting hen. Pour a small quantity of kerosene along the roosting poles. If you do all this and cannot kill the lice, then kill the hens! In summer the chickens should have the run of a roomy, grassy yard, if they cannot be allowed at large on the farm. In winter feed plenty of green food, such as cabbage leaves, etc. Summer and winter give the hens milk, sour milk or buttermilk, and the eggs will be plentiful. Have an arrangement for watering, so that the young chicks will not be tempted to drown themselves in the water-trough where the horses drink.

When a rope is wetted, the diameter increases and the length decreases.

HISTORICAL.

The Romans used water clocks 160 B. C. In 1120 the striking clock was invented by a Cistercian monk.

The Guterfels, which was demolished by order of Napoleon I, was alluded to as early as 1256. In 1504 it was besieged for six weeks by the Landgrave William of Hesse, but without success. It remained in a habitable condition till the beginning of the present century, but is now only a picturesque ruin near the town of Caut on the banks of the Rhine.

A patent passed the great seal in the fifteenth year of James I, of England, "to allow to Mary Middlemore, one of the maydes of honor to our dearest consort Queen Anne (of Denmark), and her deputies, power and authority to enter into the abbies of St. Albans, St. Edmundsbury, Glassenbury and Ramsay, and into all lands, houses and places within a mile, belonging to said abbies, there to search after treasure supposed to be hidden in such places."

Samuel Parris, the first minister of Danvers, Mass., was born in London in 1653; died at Sudbury, Mass., Feb. 17, 1720. He was first a merchant and then a minister. It was in his family that "Salem witchcraft" began its terrible work, and he was the most zealous proponent of persons accused of the "black art." In April, 1693, his church brought charges against him. He acknowledged his error and was dismissed. He preached in various places afterwards, but was an unhappy wanderer.

On May 18, 1694, the following public advertisement was issued for the healing of the people of King Charles II, of England, who was sometimes known as the Merry Monarch: "Notice. His sacred majesty having declared it to be his royal will and purpose to continue the healing of his people for the evil during the month of May, and then give over till Michaelmas next, I am commanded to give notice thereof, that the people may not come up to the tower in the interior and lose their labor. Newes, 1664."

Two hundred years ago the thimble was invented by Nicholas van Benschoten, a goldsmith of Amsterdam, who gave the first one to Madame van Rensselaer on her birthday, Oct. 9, 1684, begging her "to accept this new covering for the protection of her diligent finger as a token of his esteem." At that time thimbles were worn exclusively on the thumb, and were usually made of gold, silver or iron. In 1695 John Lofting, also a Dutchman, introduced thimbles into England, where they were first used in large quantities.

Animals in the Prize Ring.

"When I was in Siam some years ago, said the traveller, "I was invited to a fish fight. The Siamese had a certain kind of fish that they trained, and so pugnacious were they that the combats were of the most violent description. The fish would actually tear each other to pieces in their rage. They are about as large as our small fresh sunfish, and are kept in aquaria and fed upon mosquitoes and other insects. They are known as the plakat. When a fight is to come off the bowls containing the fish are placed close together, the fish becoming thoroughly enraged at the sight of each other, just as roosters do. When finally aroused to the required pitch they are placed together in a large dish or aquarium, and the sanguinary contest commences. The natives become so excited that they wager their clothes, wives, and, in fact, themselves, on the result."

"The Malays are also inveterate bird fighters, training many small birds of various kinds to fight, and in Arabia small falcons are used for a similar purpose. The rival owners hold the birds, which are extremely small, in their hands, and when on the field stand fifty feet apart, at the word hurling the birds at each other like balls. The latter immediately clinch, and the battle is carried on in the air until one or the other is destroyed, the spectators following them about and encouraging them with cries and shouts. In the Spice Islands," continued the speaker, "they fight big crabs known as the birgos. They are extremely savage, and fight until they have torn each other limb from limb. One of the strangest battles I ever saw was between one of these creatures and a snake. The conflict lasted nearly four hours, and the animals both died. The body of the crab, that weighed about ten pounds, was completely crushed in the folds of the monster snake, but the latter's throat just below the jaws was so firmly grasped by the vice-like claws of the crab that it was suffocated, and after death the claws had to be broken to loosen its hold. In fact, in the East they utilize almost every kind of animals in the ring, while we, the cream of civilization, reserve this for the human animal alone."

How the Monkeys Tricked the Bees.

Two monkeys sat under a tree in an Indian forest. One monkey was seen to busy himself in smearing the other with red clay earth. When he had succeeded in entirely covering his companion, he disappeared into a neighboring wood, leaving the other a mass of clay, but for two small holes through which peered a pair of cunning eyes. Then the bedaubed monkey was seen to climb to the hollow of a tree where was a bee-hive. The bees buzzed about the intruder, but all they could do was to leave their stings in his clay coat. At length they swarmed away in despair, and the clever monkey helped himself to the honeycomb. Then the other monkey came out of his hiding-place and proceeded to pick off the clay covering from his brother. This done, they set to work at the honeycomb and finished it.

STRANGE, BUT TRUE.

A scheme is on foot for establishing turtle parks on the coasts of Provence, Algeria and Corsica.

The Spanish gypsies assert that they know the dance which Herodias's daughter performed before Herod.

Mr. Van Rysselbergh of Belgium has been successful in transmitting a telegraphic and a telephonic message along the same wire at the same time.

It is asserted that El Mahdi hired a German barber to produce the warts on his face which identify him as the prophet of the legends.

The Austrian executioner wears a very showy uniform, and rides up to the scaffold with a military escort. He always puts on fresh white gloves to perform his office.

A grotto in Hardy County, W. Va., has twelve successive chambers, rising one above the other, for a distance of about one hundred feet. It is called the Devil's Garden.

The tabrets or ornaments which the Alaskans wear in the cheeks and lips are often of immense size. The flesh is pierced in babyhood and the size of the inserted plug is gradually increased.

Four ponies were accidentally imprisoned twenty-five days without food in a coal mine near Airdrie, Scotland, recently, but they all came out alive and little the worse for it, except for the loss of flesh.

The Macleans of Lochbury, an ancient Scotch family, believe that before the death of any of the race, a phantom ancestor gallops along the rocky beach near the castle, announcing the event with wailings.

In China, when a man commits suicide, they immediately hang whoever, by offending or thwarting him, has been the cause of the rash deed, and give the goods of the offender to the family of the suicide, so that many gentlemen of failing health and slender means manage to get insulted by a rich man, hang themselves, and have the pleasing assurance that their families will be handsomely provided for.

A common Chinese tailman is the "hundred families' lock," to procure which a father goes around among his friends, and, having obtained from an hundred different parties a few of the copper coins of the country, he himself adds the balance to purchase an ornament or appendage fashioned like a lock, which he hangs on his child's neck for the purpose of figuratively locking him to life and causing the hundred persons to be concerned in his attaining old age.

In the Museo Borbonico, at Naples, is a kneeling statue of Atlas sustaining the sky. It is a very interesting monument of Roman art, and one of great value to the student of ancient astronomy. Of the forty-seven constellations known to the ancients, forty-two may be distinctly recognized. The date of this curious sculpture is fixed as anterior to the time of Hadrian by the absence of the likeness of Antinous, which was inserted in the constellation Aquila by the astronomers of that period.

Calf and other skins are made to resemble very closely alligator skins by a very ingenious process. A photograph having been made of a genuine alligator hide, a copy of it is produced in bichromated gelatine, which gives in relief all the curious markings; and from this latter relief representation a metal die is readily executed. This die is pressed heavily on the cheap leather, with the result of making it look so like the leather manufactured from the skin of the alligator as to deceive experts, unless it is handled and examined. Any suitable stain can be imparted to the factitious product.

A rink has been constructed at Indianapolis, the floor of which is composed of paper. It is made by pasting and pressing straw boards together under a powerful hydraulic press, in the same way as the discs of the paper car wheels are made. When these blocks are properly seasoned and dried, they are sawed up into flooring boards and laid, with the edge of the paper forming the surface of the floor. This surface is sandpapered until it is as smooth as one vast sheet of ice, and the adhesive quality of the paper prevents any slipping of the roller upon the floor. The floor is without joints, perfectly smooth and comparatively noiseless.

It has been decided by the authorities at the Indian Museum, South Kensington, London, to put up, in a place where it can be conveniently read, Dr. Leitner's key to shawl writing, as furnishing some clew to the full meaning of the shawls shown in that exhibition. Dr. Leitner was the discoverer in 1872 of the secret of the language of the weavers of Cashmere, and he has described the numerals and names of colors used in the manufacture of shawls at some length. The subject is of considerable interest in connection with the decay of what used to be one of the most flourishing industries in northwestern India.

Fishes With Red Forked Tails.

The Macon Telegraph describes a new kind of fish, which certainly presents some very odd features: "The largest ones are not more than two inches long, and the smallest so small it would require a microscope to distinguish it from an atom of green moss. They have large black eyes set prominently in the head, which is the largest part of the fish. The tails are red and forked. There is no numbering their legs, which seem to perform the office of fins while they swim on their backs. Several persons have examined them, among the number being some who have made fish culture a study, but none of them can tell us what they really are."

HORSES.

KIND TREATMENT.

In addition to the causes already mentioned which impair digestion, and therefore predispose to disease, unkind treatment is often a serious one. All horses are more or less sensitive, while some are as "sensitive as a woman" to the treatment they receive. An outburst of anger, accompanied by twitching and yelling, directly before, during, or soon after a meal, would absolutely prohibit or delay digestion in case of a fine-grained animal, and perhaps occasion serious mischief. Severe indigestion often results from this cause in the case of human beings—victims to their own or companions' temper. The horse appreciates kind treatment, and it pays to give him the kindest.

OVERDRIVING—OVERWORK.

Overdriving is a relative term. The horse that never travels more than one mile at the top of his speed, is overdriven if pushed three miles at a high rate; while another, or the same, gradually worked up to it, may make five. The ordinary driving-horse that makes only his five to ten miles a day, and that at a leisurely pace, is overdriven if sent twenty-five miles at a stretch and at, say the rate of eight miles an hour; while another, or the same, perhaps, after proper preparation, may make that distance in two and a half hours, and, with an hour's rest, return at the same rate, without being overdriven. Again, a horse that is driven every day, from twenty to forty miles, and kept in condition, will go seventy-five miles in any one day, at a rate depending upon the quality of the animal, and without straining, and may even make the return journey on the following day without harm if he is a powerful fellow by nature; but, following any extraordinary effort there should always be a day of absolute or comparative rest—sufficient rest, at all events—though a little "walk-round" may usually be an advantage, unless the animal chances to be disabled. In this case a little extra hand-rubbing will be beneficial and care must be taken not to overfeed; for if there has been a real depletion of the vital forces by reason of too hard usage, it must be borne in mind that the digestive system is a shaver in the hurt, and that rest alone, with the treatment—the "passive exercise" (hand-rubbing)—suggested, or perhaps a very limited diet for one day, will be the best means for restoration. In nine cases in ten, when a horse is taken sick soon after extraordinary work, it is the result of feeding him too soon or too much before he had become sufficiently rested. Whenever a horse has been pushed to extremes, driven to or nearly to exhaustion, the time allowed for recuperation before feeding, should be correspondingly lengthened. For instance, while he may eat his dinner immediately following a leisurely drive, he being free from heat or weariness; under the pressure of a day's journey which has well nigh exhausted him, it would be an act of mercy to withhold all food for twelve hours. In fact, to feed sooner than this constitutes, in some instances, "cruelty to animals," and is attended with great risk. In all cases of exhaustion from overwork, the best stimulant, the best "tonic," the best nutriment, is—rest. Even an over-dose of this remedy is safer than an under-dose, which can be said of no other "medicine."

Spring House Cleaning.

It is much better to clean one apartment at a time rather than to have the whole house stirred up in confusion all at once. Then, in case of casualties or unexpected company, there is a chance to be comfortable. There is nothing more disagreeable than to have a house all in commotion, carpets up and curtains down, and everything in disorder, and there is no need of it. It is bad enough to have one room disarranged at a time, but that is far preferable to having it stirred up from garret to cellar, and things brought into contact that were never neighbors before. When the mud is well dried up and the weather warm, May air and bright sun warms the atmosphere, you can finish your house cleaning with ease. Get your whitewashing all done up, stoves cleaned, but not set away—never do that. There are plenty of damp, cold days all through the summer months when fires are indispensable for comfort and health, and it is very unpleasant to have the whole family huddled around the kitchen cook-stove in order to get warm. It is a most preposterous fashion, this custom of taking down the stoves as soon as warm weather comes on, and common sense would dictate the folly of such a thing if one would only stop to think how many rainy, damp days come during all the summer months. A little fire would change the atmosphere of a room, and prevent mildew gathering on the walls, and be conducive to health and comfort generally.

In house cleaning, never lay out more work than you can accomplish with ease before dinner—it is as long as a person ever ought to devote to such hard work, and by judiciously following this rule you can get through with as much work as if you had scrubbed one whole day and was sick the two following days to pay for it. Another thing, a woman should never do the whitewashing, or nail down carpets, or re-paper the walls; it is not their work, and it is far cheaper for a man to either hire it done or to do it himself than it is to pay doctors' bills, not to take in account the suffering and pain that is almost sure to follow such labor for a woman.

The Paris Academy of Sciences has declined to award its prize for researches concerning cholera, presumably because none of the results achieved within the year have been sufficiently certain and definite.

ENGLAND AND RUSSIA.

Approximative Military Strength of the Two Countries.

The impending war between England and Russia makes the following details as to the respective military and naval strength of the two countries of unusual interest. Latest official British return give the army an effective strength of about 182,000 of all arms—viz., thirty-one regiments of cavalry, twenty-four batteries of royal horse-artillery, seventy-six batteries of field artillery, ninety-six batteries of garrison artillery, seventy-two regiments of infantry, (or 148 battalions), two divisions, one troop, and forty companies of engineers, besides commissariat and transports, medical staff corps, etc. India absorbs a very large portion of the British army, nearly 69,000 of all arms—viz., Bengal, seven regiments of cavalry, forty-two batteries of artillery, a company of engineers and thirty-one battalions of infantry; Madras, two cavalry corps, sixteen batteries of artillery, a company of engineers, and six battalions of infantry; Bombay, one cavalry corps, nineteen batteries of artillery, a company of engineers, and nine battalions of infantry; total, cavalry, ten corps; artillery, seventy-seven batteries engineers, three companies; infantry forty-nine battalions. Including this army in India, 69,000, the 113,000 regulars in Great Britain and Ireland and in the colonies, the first and second class army reserves, the militia yeomanry and volunteers. England's army-roll shows about 600,000 men. The total of enrolled militia is 113,787; of the enrolled yeomanry, 11,488. The foregoing total of 600,000 is exclusive of the native Indian regiments and of the armies of the dependent Indian states.

The efficient strength of the navy of the united kingdom is shown in the subjoined official return, annexed to the navy estimates of 1883-84, the figures having been compiled to November, 1882: Sea-going armor-plated battleships, cruisers, and special ships, eighteen; frigates and corvettes, twenty-three; sloops and small vessels, seventy-three; or a total effective for general service of 114; reserve ships, including 9 armor-plated, 132, or a grand total of 246. The efficient iron-clads, and of iron-clads which, in 1883, were still on the stocks (11), number, all told, 64, with 609 guns. Of the 11 unfinished in 1883, nearly all are now ready for commission.

The first lord of the admiralty stated in the House of Commons that the total strength of the navy, including reserves and pensioners, was 86,000 men. The active list showed 57,000 men, to be increased this year to 68,000.

The nominal strength of the Russian army, according to official returns, was as follows in 1883: Peace footing, 691,445, war footing 2,080,918.

To these numbers must be added 111,982 horses and 1,844 guns in time of peace, and 368,206 horses and 3,788 guns in time of war. If various special categories were added, the total peace footing of officers and men would be about 770,000 and the war footing 2,200,000; and if the militia (untrained and levied only in time of war) were added, the total available war forces of Russia would amount to about 3,200,000. A census of horses taken in 1883 in fifty-eight provinces of European Russia gave a total of nearly 15,000,000 as fit for service in case of necessity.

Mishaps to Conjurers.

An amateur conjurer, unless he is careful to prove at accidents, may be unfortunate enough to excite the laughter instead of the applause of his audience. A gentleman, who was performing in a hall, once made himself ludicrous by simply breaking a thread. He had borrowed a hat, intending to take out of it a number of gaudy and apparently solid cloth balls.

These balls owe their spherical shape to a spiral spring in their interior. This admits of their being pressed flat, so that twenty or thirty of them can thus be packed together and carried about the person without difficulty. They are held down by threads, which are snapped by the finger when the performer has placed them in the hat in order to perform his trick. One unfortunate gentleman, who was giving an entertainment, had the misfortune to get some of the threads broken while the balls were still in their place of concealment,—long before he had come to the hat trick,—and balls enough to fill a large bucket immediately expanded in his tail-pocket with astonishing effect.

A French conjurer was once engaged in the performance of an elaborate trick, in the course of which a pigeon is thrown up in the air,—or appears to be,—and with a loud explosion, changes into a balloon. The balloon was opened with a snap by springs, which at the same time broke a glass tube containing an explosive mixture of chloride of potash and sulphur. The pigeon, with balloon and springs, lay folded up in a small compass, ready for use in the inside tail-pocket of the poor man's coat. Starting quickly towards the front of the platform, the tail of his coat came sharply against the corner of a table, and the audience were both startled and amused at seeing his coat-tails blown off with a bang.

A 5-Year Old Girl who Chews Tobacco.

Hattie Ketchum, the 5-year old daughter of Andrew J. Ketchum, a farmer and tobacco grower, living about one mile south of Weedsport, N.Y., is helplessly addicted to the use of tobacco, and has been since she was 2 years old. When between 1 and 2 years of age the girl was afflicted with colic, and at the suggestion of a friend tobacco smoke was blown into milk and given her. This remedy proved effective, but created an uncontrollable desire for tobacco, and by various subtleties the child has ever since found means to satisfy her craving for the weed.