The St. Tammany Farmer.

"The Blessings of Government, Like the Dew from Heaven, Should Descend Alike Upon the Rich and the Poor."

W. G. KENTZEL, Editor. COVINGTON, ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LA., SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1894. VOL. XIX.—NO. 28.

LAY OF THE MODERN MINSTREL.

I do not sing the martyred brave,
Who dared and died for liberty,
Nor those who breasted wind and wave
To win a world across the sea;
Nor yet the knights of olden days,
Whose name and fame were England's pride,
Whose valor poets vied to praise,
And every victory glorified.

I do not sing the fair and fond,
Whose charms both king and slave have sung,
Whose scepter, love, since being dawned,
Has swayed the hearts of old and young;
Nor is my lyre attuned to laud
The worth of wealth, or wit, or wine,
Which shallow sonneteers applaud
At ten or twenty cents a line.

I do not sing of snow nor spring,
Of flowery fields, nor moonlit glades,
Of birds that whirl on tireless wing
Through all the summer's lights and shades;
Of none of these: they're out of date;
I've laid them all upon the shelf;
My theme is one of greater weight—
I sing of nothing but myself!

—Arthur Grissom, in Halio.

THE BELFRY LIGHT.

A Touching Romance and Tragedy of the Sea.

"Now, who's that at the door this time o' night?" said Aunt Keziah, without stopping her needles.

But we spoke not a word; only Dolly, who sat on the stool beside me, clasped her hands on her blue-checked apron and her eyes looked large and bright in the firelight.

"Well"—Aunt Keziah peered over her spectacles—"why don't you get up'n see?"

Then Dolly turned her gaze on me, and I put down the wood I was whittling into a boat and went to the door.

As I unlatched it another knock sounded, and then a gust of wind swung it open and pushed me behind it, and at the same time blew in a queer, witchlike figure, who, with her long cloak flapping about her, seemed swept straight to the fire on the gale. She stood there, her black eyes snapping first at Aunt Keziah, then at Dolly, while I forgot to close the door.

"Why, Mother Sheflo, how did you get across the meadow this night? David, shut the door," said Aunt Keziah.

"With the wind! With the wind!" the little old woman spoke in a cracked voice; and as she reached to stand her stick in the chimney corner, Dolly shrank back almost off the stool.

"Well, it's a wonder you don't get your death, that's all," said Aunt Keziah, still knitting. "David, fetch a chair."

Mother Sheflo perched herself on the proffered chair. Her feet did not reach the floor. Her quilted hood showed loose strands of sparse gray hair, and her eyes blinked sharply as she seized my jacket sleeve with one hand, which I thought looked like a bird's claw.

"Nice boy, good boy!" she said, peering into my face. "He don't throw stones—no, no!"

I flushed hotly with guilt, and refused to meet her piercing eyes, for the day before I had thrown a stone at Captain, Mother Sheflo's cat, as I passed her cottage; and all the village knew that Mother Sheflo's cat was wondrous wise.

"No! no!" she repeated.

"No!" said Dolly, and then put her finger in her mouth.

Mother Sheflo's eyes blinked rapidly. "Bad boys stone Captain, and he knows 'em! Ay, he knows 'em all, every one! He follows 'em about! He knows a bit, does Captain! Nice boy, good boy!" The last words were addressed to me, and she smiled sidewise as she released my arm. I drew back, relieved, into the shadow of the chimney. Dolly was twisting her apron into a knot, but her great eyes were on Mother Sheflo. "Get my death, you say, Keziah Allan? Get my death?" croaked the old woman. "Not this night! There's death out yonder on the sea; there's life on land—life, life!" She began to croon to herself. Her skinny hands were locked together and her eyes were on the fire.

"You must ha' caught it, then," said Aunt Keziah, "or you'd never ha' got way over here in a wind like this."

"I ride! I ride!" muttered the old woman.

"'Tisn't a broom," said Dolly, putting a plump finger on the cane in the chimney corner and drawing it back suddenly.

"Ho! ho! Hear the baby!" Would you like to ride some night, my pretty one, up, up, up where the doves whisper in the belfry?"

Dolly shook her head with a frightened look and drew back nearer me.

"Ah! you're afraid the naughty boys will stone you for a white dove? Naughty boys, not good ones, like him!" She pointed a skinny finger at me, and in the shadow I felt her black eyes reading my thoughts, for that very day I had stoned a belfry dove, and the doves belonged to Letty, the parson's housekeeper.

"How they chatter and whisper, the doves that fly through the village, and carry away the words and doings of men! I know 'em! They've told me many a thing o' wild nights when I've gone to see if the lamp was set. Nights like this—the kind that washes 'em in, washes 'em in! Go look"—she nodded at me—"go see if the lamp is set in the belfry."

I went to the window and drew the curtain. A great wind shook the house. I heard the breakers battling far off, as I loved to imagine them in the night, making through the darkness the sounds of drum and cannon. Outside was solid blackness, save for one streak of light which shone straight outward—the light in the belfry tower.

"It's there," said I, returning to the chimney corner.

"So that's what brought you," spoke Aunt Keziah to the old woman. "I thought as much! Why don't you keep in your bed a night like this? The parson'll have the light set, never fear!"

"I couldn't lie quiet this night, not this night of Hallowmas, for thinking of 'em being washed in. The other was such as this, and the light went out—the light went out!"

She chanted the words, gazing into the fire.

"What put it out?" I asked, sitting down beside Dolly.

"Spirits! Bad spirits!"

"Humph! Owls and bats, more likely," said Aunt Keziah.

"They don't trouble it, you know that, Keziah Allen! It don't stay set unless I keep my eye on it, for the night they all washed in, it went out! The light went out!"

She crooned the words over and over, with her eyes upon the fire.

"It has gone out more than once when you were the first to notice it, that's the truth," said Aunt Keziah, her needles flying. "I don't believe you ever sleep o' nights!"

"Not nights like this. I can't lay quiet in my bed," said the old woman.

"Why not?" I asked, growing bolder.

"Spirits," she cried, with a sudden flame in her eye. "They're about such nights, boy, and they move the light, and in the morning they're all washed in—washed in on the sand!"

"Law, Mother Sheflo, there ain't been any wrecks washed in for a long time, and no spirits have been about in my day," spoke Aunt Keziah, soothingly. "I've heard tell of 'em often enough, but they must have left these parts a many a year ago. It's nothin' but the wind and the bats that puts the belfry light out."

But the old woman did not seem to hear her. She looked straight at the fire. Her fingers worked nervously and her lips moved.

"Tell about 'em," I said, and Dolly nodded shyly. Then Mother Sheflo uttered in rapid monotone the words she seemed to have been saying to herself. Her eyes were still on the flames. The wind shrieked in the chimney as she spoke.

"'Twas Becky and Mary Anna Steele and Marthy Allan—your mother, Keziah"—

Aunt Keziah nodded.

"All a-bakin' in the kitchen, a-gettin' ready for the weddin'. Big cakes and little cakes, an' hams, an' pies, an' chickens—rows an' rows of 'em. Marthy Allan a-reddin' up 'n' puttin' spruce and pine over the pictures, an' wipin' chiny, an' me in the winder. All day in the winder, lookin' 'cross the bay. Breakers like them a-roarin' now. Hear 'em! Listen to 'em! That's the kind! They'll wash 'em in! It was John Allan come runnin' up the path. I saw the wind bring him along. He burst in with the wind and spray, an' Marthy Allan dropped the best blue bowl.

"'There's a boat yonder,' he says—'*his* boat!'

"'Hush!' says Mary Anna, noddin' at the winder, an' John Allan throws up his arms and runs out, 'n' I after him, an' Marthy an' Mary Anna comin' behind. Ay, but 'twas gettin' dark, an' a monster sea was roarin'. We all stayed out a-waitin' for the boat. It got mighty dark, dark as night, an' we couldn't see a thing. I got a lantern out o' the kitchen an' climbed the belfry stairs unbeknown to 'em all. Ugh, but the bats hit hard an' screeched like all of 'em was doin' out yonder on shore! They hit my face and blinded my eyes, but I didn't mind. I set the lamp in the winder an' went down again—down, down. It shone far out to the boat. Ugh, how the breakers fought that night! He always could manage a boat, couldn't he, Keziah?'

Aunt Keziah nodded.

"Then all of a sudden the light went out—clean out, Keziah!" The old woman's black eyes flashed.

"So I've heard tell," said Aunt Keziah.

"All were screechin' for light. They might ha' reached 'em. John Allan said so. They wouldn't let me go out 'n the water with one. I'd ha' done it, but 'twas all John Allan a-holdin' me on shore. But they were all washed in with the mornin'. Aha, they couldn't hold me then! 'Don't let her go!' cries Marthy, a-hangin' to me. But didn't I fling her down, an' away I went to meet 'em all a-layin' on the sand.—Come early to the weddin'!—They wouldn't let me carry him, John Allan wouldn't, but I went along, an' my hair blowin' on his face. I put on my white frock, an' my wreath on my hair—pretty hair, Keziah—"

And again Aunt Keziah nodded.

"An' I laughed at Marthy Allan an' Mary Anna a-cryin' an' wringin' their hand. 'Twas a nice mornin.' Go look"—the old woman suddenly turned her eyes from the fire, with a return of reason in them—"go look if it's set;" and again I went to the window, and again saw the line of light streaming from the belfry tower.

"Yes," I said, "it's there."

"Ay, then I'll get home," she muttered, and, reaching her stick, she wrapped her cloak around her and hobbled to the door.

"Are you going to ride in the air?" asked Dolly, whose eyes were heavy with sleep.

"Aye! aye! Hear the pretty baby! Yes, honey, I'll go on a puff o' wind!"

"Maybe you'd best stop here," said Aunt Keziah. But Mother Sheflo was at the door.

"Captain's awaitin'," she said, and as I lifted the latch she gave me a tap with her stick. "Nice boy, he don't throw stones—no, no!"

The wind rushed in and swept her outward into the darkness. I heard the breakers lash the beach, and the door slammed.

"Did she really first set the belfry light?" I asked, once more by the fire.

Aunt Keziah nodded.

"Long before my time. They say it's saved many a vessel, too."

"What put it out that night?" again I asked.

"Your grandmother used to say nobody ever knew. Owls or wind, most likely. They say the ship might ha' kept off the cape rock if there' been a light, but before another could be set it went down."

"Oh!" I exclaimed, and thought awhile. Dolly's curly head had drooped forward, and in the firelight her cheek was the color of the big roses Aunt Keziah kept for her jar of leaves.

"What did she mean by a wedding?" I asked, presently. "Whose wedding was it?"

"Her own," said Aunt Keziah, winding her yarn; "it was *his* boat. That's when her mind went, that night. She set a light in the belfry every night for many a year, till she got so old the parson got her out o' it and had it done. She's got some sense left, but she likes to tell the story over and over. Now, go to bed, both o' you!"

But Dolly could not get awake, and I took her in my arms. Her head dropped on my shoulder, and, as I started up stairs slowly, she murmured:

"Goin' to ride up 'n' up with the doves." Resting a minute on the steps, I kissed her rosy cheek, and looked back at Aunt Keziah.

"I wish I had known about it before," I said.

"Why?" she asked.

"Before I threw stones at Captain."

"Oh, yes: the cat's all she's got now."

Aunt Keziah looked up, with the hearth-broom in her hand.

"David," she said, "you'd best remember always that when folks are cranky in this world, there's most times been a heap to make 'em so, only other folks don't think o' that part."—Outlook.

—Over three million dollars were contributed a few years ago to relieve the famine in Russia.

THE OYSTER OF COMMERCE.

A Big Business That Is Bigger in Maryland Than Anywhere Else.

The hero who was the first man to swallow an oyster would be astounded if he could read part of a recent bulletin of the United States fish commission and see what an important industry he started all by himself. This bulletin tells about the oyster business in Maryland, but, as Maryland produces one-third of the world's oyster product, the story of the industry in that state contains about all that is necessary to an understanding of the importance of the oyster commerce.

Of the 35,000,000 bushels of oysters produced in the world each year nearly 30,000,000 bushels are natives of the United States, and more than 11,000,000 bushels come from Maryland waters. The value of Maryland's product is nearly $6,000,000, that of the United States about $16,000,000, and that of the rest of the world's a little more than $12,500,000. It will be noted that a higher valuation per bushel is put upon foreign than upon United States oysters. This is because good oysters are cheap here, while poor oysters are dear elsewhere. When a lover of this delicacy calls for oysters in a London eating house he is asked if he will have the best, and when he says that he will he gets a sample of Holland's product. The oyster beds of Holland yield about 70,000 bushels a year, and they are valued in this computation at $440,000, or more than $6 a bushel. Maryland oysters are put down at a shade over 50 cents a bushel; but there can be no comparison between the succulent morsel of Maryland and the rugged old mollusk of Holland. The latter, as eaten in Europe, looks and tastes somewhat like an ante-bellum copper cent spattered with acid and sprinkled with pepper; and when the partaker tackles this so-called delicacy from Holland it seems to him that the chief difference between the oyster and the seasoned cent would be that the cent might kill him and the oyster might not.

True to his purpose of treating the oyster from a purely industrial point of view, the author of the treatise in question has not turned aside to give even casual attention to the fascinating question as to the identity of the first man that swallowed an oyster; but he sets forth facts which suggest the inquiry whether at least two investigators, working independently in the field of gastronomy, did not arrive at demonstrations of the edibleness of this mollusk of forbidding aspect. Pliny mentions an Italian oysterman of the name of Sergius Orata who cultivated beds in Lake Lucrinus about 1,900 years ago, and says as much as to say that the Lucrinuses were the saddle rocks of that day. The prehistoric shell mounds of this country show that the Indians were large consumers of oysters before any white man came. Thus we find that the noble American and the noble Roman were eating oysters, probably simultaneously, at a period anterior to any known association of the white and red races. That the early white comers to these shores did not bring with them the art of eating oysters and were slow to learn it from the Indians seems evident from a writing of John Smith, published in 1631, in which he says substantially that the colonists got nothing in the way of food from the waters of the Chesapeake. Half a century later it was written of the Kent islanders that one of their grievous hardships was having to eat oysters to keep from starving. A hundred years later began the oyster war that has raged up to this time between Maryland and Virginia, and it is probable that the outbreak of hostilities marks the beginning of the importance of the oyster industry in the United States. The Marylanders and the Virginians discovered that a good oyster was worth fighting for. It is impossible to speak of the present aspect of the contest, for, like the revolutions in Central America, it is kaleidoscopic. Nothing but the latest telegrams from the troubled waters can afford a view of the situation up to date. Meanwhile, despite the war, the development of the industry went on until, through the magnitude chiefly of the operations in Maryland, the oyster business took first rank among the fishery industries of the United States.

In later years the utilizing of the shells has been an important part of the oyster business. Nobody has yet answered the question that the fool propounded to King Lear—how the oyster makes its shell—though it is known that the shell is three-fourths carbonate of lime, and carbonate of lime is valuable. Because of this substance the shells are used in the manufacture of certain grades of iron, for chicken food (to be converted from oyster shells into egg shells), and for making lime to be used in producing coal gas and in other industries. Besides these uses oyster shells are utilized in restocking oyster beds, making country roads, and ballasting railroads. Instances of the latter use may be seen on three or four railroads in Maryland and in the Southern Pacific, near Morgan City, La.

The boats employed by the Maryland oystermen are an interesting feature of the industry. They began with the dugout canoe, and some of the largest boats used in the business are still canoes in shape, though not dugouts. The first canoes were made of a single log, and were small affairs. Then three, five, or seven logs were joined together with wooden pegs or iron bolts. One way of making a Chesapeake dugout is to fashion the outside lines of the log or logs with an ax and plane until the regulation form of canoe is secured; then to bore holes, uniform in depth, in the boat from the outside and drive wooden pegs into the holes; then to turn the boat over and hew out until the inner ends of the pegs are uncovered. In this way the skin of the dugout can be made of uniform thickness. Some of these canoes last for many years. The Martha Washington, of a capacity of nearly eleven tons, was built in 1827, and two years ago she was still in use. The bug-eye is a big canoe, but not a dugout. The largest of them are about 75 feet long. They are sharp at both ends, decked over, and they carry triangular sails on two pole masts with a sharp rake aft, and a jib. Some of them are smart sailers. A good example of a large Chesapeake bug-eye has been lying on the beach in Gravesend bay during the past winter. Besides the types of boats mentioned, sloops and schooners are used by the oystermen, and steamboats by those engaged in oyster transportation.

When one sees an oysterman lifting his long tongs out of the water, he sometimes wonders if there is any limit to the length of the poles the man can handle in his small boat. There is; it is about 28 feet. Longer tongs are used on larger vessels, but they are worked by halyards fixed to the rigging. In deep water the dredge is used. It is a heavy iron rake, and is drawn up by means of a windlass on board. There are so many laws governing the use of tongs and dredges that the Maryland oysterman must be a lawyer as well as a sailor and a fighter.

The oyster trade gives employment to a large number of girls and women, who work in the "shucking" and canning houses.—N. Y. Sun.

VARIOUS MATTERS.

Some of the Latest Freaks and Frills of Fashion.

A curious novelty is a hat which resembles a butterfly shape. The crown is Panama black moire with a paste buckle in the middle, represents the body of the butterfly. The wings are black moire bows edged with real lace the color of the crown, and white strings come from under two bunches of violets which adorn the back.

The newest sleeves for evening wear are either formed of two puffs, one overlapping and the other caught up on the outside of the arm to form a bow, or are made of a series of frills, one over the other.

The "complexion veil" is a novelty of pale pink Russian net sprinkled with black spots and delicately perfumed. It is very becoming to pale blondes, yet there is nothing so pretty as the regulation black dotted net.

Some of the latest bonnets have immensely wide strings edged with lace, which form a scarf under the chin.

One of the whims of fashion is to wear a black moire ribbon, an inch wide and a yard and a quarter long, around the neck, and fastened with a gold slide. To this is attached a tiny watch or a fancy little gold bottle filled with a favorite perfume.

One of Worth's fancies is the use of foulard silk with a white ground and colored figures in combination with black crepon.

Among the new laces are those that are worked over the pattern with gold thread; others studded with jet and embroidered with colored silks and heavy laces, such as English silk guipure patterns of point de gene and Russian arabesque. These are used as flat borderings, and on waists for collars, berthas and vests. Lemon is the latest color in lace.

With the revival of checks comes the old-fashioned Louisine silks so durable and soft for summer dresses.

Wide ribbed pique is one of the fabrics for cotton gowns. They come in pale colors as well as white, and are made up by Paris dressmakers in very fanciful styles, trimmed very elaborately with lace and ribbon.

Miroir moire antique is perhaps the most beautiful silk for evening wear. It is delicate in coloring, and has a rich sheen which shows to advantage in the gaslight. Shot silks are much prettier than they were last year, and quite as popular.

A new and beautiful material for trimming dresses is satin muslin. The surface is glossy like satin, and the texture is light and almost as transparent as India muslin.

The most fashionable ribbons are moire antique with a satin stripe down the center, and plain moire ribbons spangled with jet sequins in wavy lines.

Seamless French waists are the correct thing for those who are slim enough to wear them.

Velvets are to continue in favor through the season, especially for trimmings, and dozens of yards of velvet ribbons are used on challie, foulard and China silk dresses.

New batistes come in tinted and white grounds spotted with small flowers and striped in open patterns like drawn work.—N. Y. Sun.

STRANGE NAMES OF TOWN.

A Few That Have Been Heard of and Others Yet Unknown to Fame.

The maps of the United States show that the first settlers of many of the towns and cities must have been at a loss for names. Everybody has heard of Red Dog and You Bet in California, and Yuba Dam has been accorded a line in history, but when it comes to Dog Tooth, of Illinois, Flea Hill, of North Carolina, and Fly Mountain, of Ulster county, New York, their existence would never be imagined unless noticed on a map or in a gazetter.

But there are many other places with names just as striking: Bobtown, Pa.; Bug Hill, N. C.; Chewtown, Pa.; Cut Shin, Ky.; and Fiddletown, Cal., for instance.

Or if these are not sufficient there are Fussville, Wis.; Daddy's Creek, Tenn.; Calfkiller, in the same state and Big Foot, in Indiana.

Ohio has a Belle Centre, Iowa a Calliope, Indiana a Lilly Dale, West Virginia a Little Wild Cat, Maryland a Maiden's Choice, South Dakota a Minnehaha, Wyoming a Miser, Pennsylvania a Nazareth, and Illinois a Prettyman.

There are others, such as Young Blood, Ill.; Young Womanstown, Pa.; Whisky Town, Cal.; Ty Ty, Ga.; Big Neck, Ill., and Black Jack flourishes in Mississippi, Kansas, Arkansas and Tennessee.

To reach Bliss one has to go to Wyoming county, New York, and the only state that has a Bird In Hand is Pennsylvania.—N. Y. Herald.

How She Got Even with Him.

The dinner was in progress—it was a dinner given in honor of some very important new acquaintances. Just before the guests arrived the master of the house had been intensely rude and annoying to his wife, and she had not forgotten it. There was a moment's pause in the buzz of conversation round the beautiful table, gleaming with lights, blushing with roses. Then the wife leaned forward and in a voice soft, but loud enough to attract the attention of the whole company, said sweetly: "By the way, James, what was that story you told me to lead up to in the middle of dinner?"—Philadelphia Times.

—The Greek colonies, commercial rather than military in character, soon became independent of the mother country. The Roman colonies remained in the closest possible connection, being governed from Rome through military governors.

—Physician (to shivering patient)—"If you'd follow my prescription you'd be warm in less than no time." Patient—"I know it, for I threw your prescription into the fire."

—You can be sure that Gabriel's trump catches you long on the market, if you buy the truth and sell it not.—Young Men's Era.

WENT FOR HIS WAISTCOAT.

There Was Money in It but It Required Nerve to go After It.

Reading an article in which were described the experiences of two men in a railroad wreck, where a car rolled over and over down an embankment into a river, reminded a New Yorker of a similar accident.

"There isn't anything in the world that I know," he said, "that makes a man lose his senses so completely as being tumbled over and over in a falling car, and yet I met a man once who seemed the personification of coolness in just such a situation. As soon as our car left the track we were all shot from our berths in various directions, being tumbled up and down and around as the car kept on turning somersaults. Like the people I read about, we landed in the water, and when the car came to a standstill, after its terrifying bumping and crashing, I was so frightened that I could scarcely move my arms to keep my head above water.

"Near me, however, was a man who kept his head.

"'Don't splash around so, he said. 'You'll cut yourself. The car is full of broken glass, lamps, wrenched rods and rails, and you'll hack yourself to pieces.'

"But I thought I was drowning, and I shouted my fears to him.

"'Oh, no,' he said, 'we are not drowning; we'll get out of this easily.'

"But it was not so easy to escape as my cool friend assured me. The whole inside work had been shattered, and there was nothing by which we could climb to the windows, which were high above us, as our car was overturned, lying on its roof.

"We made so many efforts to jump up, always falling back into the water, that I became exhausted. My friend, however, kept on encouraging me.

"Finally, with his assistance, I managed to clutch a window frame, and I got out. He followed me shortly afterward.

"The first thing he did when he had climbed outside was to examine himself for cuts and other wounds.

"'Well, I guess I am alive,' he said, with a laugh.

"After we had sat there for a while, watching with shivers the wreckers working out to us, my friend declared that he was going to crawl back into the car.

"'Great heavens!' I begged, don't do that; we were lucky to get out once. You might get pinned there or drowned by the rising water.'

"'I have a waistcoat in there,' he answered, 'and in the inside pocket there's over one thousand dollars. I am going back for that waistcoat. My berth was an end one, and I might be able to find it.'

"In the face of my protests he crawled back through the window, and when he dropped down with a loud splash I was as 'rattled' as if I had been there again myself. I could hear him puffing around in the water down there for a long time, while he fished for his waistcoat. Finally his wet head came through the window once more, and I was never more glad to see a man.

"'I got it!' he said, with a triumphant laugh. 'Pretty wet, but the bills seem to be here. Watch is gone. Too bad, too; it was given to me, but one can't expect to save everything out of a railroad wreck,' he added cheerfully.

"He was a cool man, that fellow, and nothing could disturb his good humor."—N. Y. Tribune.

THE COTTON PLANT.

Information Just Disseminated from the Agricultural Department.

The agricultural department has been enlightening the world on the subject of the cotton plant. It finds that there are about fifty members of the cotton family, but at the most only eight of them are of commercial value.

One of these marketable varieties is known as Egyptian cotton; another is called Sea Island or black-seed cotton, while a third is the upland or green seed cotton. These are the most important three of the eight valuable varieties. The early homes of the first two are known to be in Egypt and Persia, but the origin of the green seed cotton, from which nine-tenths of the staple of the south is produced, seems to be veiled in doubt.

Prof. Well, of Alabama, tells a pretty little tale about it for which, like few good story-tellers, he does not care to vouch. The tale goes that early in the nineteenth century the United States minister to the court of Mexico noticed this species of cotton in that country, growing wild. It was also cultivated by the Mexicans, and the result was so good that he thought it could be successfully grown in the United States.

The Mexican government refused permission to transport seeds, but at a subsequent state dinner, it is said, the minister was told, during a discussion of the growth of cotton, that there could be no objections to his exporting dolls to the United States. A cargo of dolls stuffed with cottonseed came over forthwith.

Whether the plant originally came from Mexico or was indigenous to the soil of the south, one thing seems certain—the present green-seed cotton has so changed within the past one hundred years, because of the soil and the climate, that it may well be called a native of the country.

In 1861 cotton was raised in ten states—Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, North and South Carolina and Georgia, and only between twenty-seven degrees and thirty-four degrees north latitude. Within the last few years the cotton belt has extended as far as thirty-seven degrees north latitude. While the major part of the increase has been in the states already mentioned, comparatively small and infrequent patches are to be found in Kentucky and Virginia.

The first cotton bloom opens early in June and the first boll forms early in August; during these months, then, if one is to have a good crop, there must be plenty of sunshine, with moisture enough to keep the soil from becoming hard and dry, but not so much as to make the stalk grow to the injury of its flower and fruit.

One of the good objects of the weather bureau is to show just where these climatic conditions exist, and thus encourage the farmer to raise cotton where it will grow the best, and discourage him from wasting labor on it when the crop will not repay the work involved.—Kate Field's Washington.

—Danesfield house, the Scott-Murrays' family seat, between Marlow and Henley, which is one of the most attractive places in the valley of the Thames, in England, has been let for six months to Mr. William K. Vanderbilt.

THE LAST CARGO OF SLAVES.

How an Alabama Captain Brought Them from Africa on a Wager.

An interesting historic episode, of which so little is known as to make it decidedly a novelty, was the sketch given at the meeting of the Woman's Anthropological society on the last load of slaves ever brought to this country from Africa. The paper was by Mrs. Caroline Dall, who has been months preparing it, as the facts were difficult to obtain, and Mrs. Dall even went so far as to employ two persons to visit the spot.

In 1857 a bet was made by the captain of a river steamboat in Alabama with four northern men, passengers on board, that he could bring over, within two years, a load of slaves from Africa, in spite of the strictness of the laws against it. The captain secured a vessel and crew, and one afternoon in the autumn of 1859, hardly two years before the war broke out, as he was seated on his piazza, a mounted messenger told him that the vessel had arrived. Taking another boat he started to meet the ship, took off the living cargo, paid the crew and sent them away, scuttled and sunk the ship and sailed up the river to a place of safety, where the negroes were to remain until the planters who had agreed to take them should be able to do so. The federal officers, getting word of the affair, started in pursuit, but the captain was on the alert. Handing a bill of a generous denomination to a trusted friend, he told him to see that the men on board the government vessel had plenty to drink. He himself got up steam with the bacon with which his boat was being loaded and steamed up the river, took the negroes on board and went farther up stream. The federal officers, delayed by the incapacity of their crew, gave up the search and left, and as the planters did not dare to take the negroes they were never separated. After they were freed they settled a few miles above Mobile, in what is known as "Little Africa." These negroes are Dahomeys, finer both mentally and physically than the Dahomeys at the world's fair, and superior to most of the negroes of the surrounding country. They are the only pure blooded negroes in the country, not, however, the only ones who have never mixed with the whites, but the only ones who have never mixed with the other blacks, and to-day "Little Africa" has distinctive race characteristics not to be found elsewhere in this country.

The subject is an interesting one ethnologically, and a more thorough study of it will be carried on. A fact worthy of notice is that out of one hundred and sixty-four persons who were brought over only two died on the voyage.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

MEXICAN AGRICULTURE.

Where Steers Are Employed to Do the Plowing.

At the Casa Camadra are two old log houses, and in them live some squalid, yellow-hided humans who are to farm a little stretch of bottom land this year. They require work steers to do their plowing, and Mr. Bell has brought up half a dozen vicious old "stags," which are both truculent and swift of foot. The Mexicans insist that they are not able to handle them, and Mr. Bell orders his punchers into action. I strolled out to the corrals to see the bulls "gentled." After a lot of riding and yelling they were herded and dragged into the inclosure, where they huddled while seven punchers sat on their ponies at the gate.

I was standing at one corner of the corral, near the men, when out from the midst of the steers walked a big black bull, which raised its head and gazed directly at me. The bull had never before in its stupid life observed a man on foot, and I comprehended immediately what he would do next, so I "led out" for the casa at a rate of speed which the boys afterward never grew weary of commending. No spangled torero of the bull-ring ever put more heart and soul into his running than did I in my greatcoat and long hunting spurs. The bull made a "fo'lorn hope" for the gate and the gallant punchers melted away before the charge.

The diversion of the punchers made the retreat of the infantry possible, and from an intrenched position I saw the bulls tear over the hill with the punchers "rolling their tails" behind. After an hour of swearing and hauling and bellowing, the six cattle were lugged back to the pen and the bars put up. The punchers came around to congratulate me on my rapid recovery from a sprained ankle, when they happened to observe the cattle scouring off for the open country. Then there was a grunting of ponies as the spurs went in, some hoarse oaths, and for the third time they tore away after the "gentle work oxen." The steers had taken the bars in their stride.

Another hour's chase, and this time the animals were thrown down, trussed up like turkeys for the baking, and tied to posts, where they lay to kick and bellow the night through in impotent rage. The punchers coiled their ropes, lit their cigarettes, and rode off in the gathering gloom. The morning following, the steers were let up, and, though wet and chilled, they still roared defiance. For agricultural purposes a Mexican "stag" would be as valuable as a rhinoceros or Bengal tiger, and I await with interest the report of the death rate at the Casa Camadra during spring plowing.—Harper's Magazine.

—The death of David Dudley Field, the eminent New York jurist, recalls the remarkable story of four famous brothers, all of whom led useful lives. Cyrus West Field, one of these brothers, who died in 1892, was the projector of the Atlantic cable; David Dudley Field distinguished himself as a lawyer and acquired a national reputation by his codification of the laws of New York. Other brothers are Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field and Dr. Henry M. Field, the editor of the Evangelist. They were sons of a poor, but distinguished Berkshire clergyman, who managed to give three of his sons a collegiate education, of which they made excellent use.—Philadelphia Ledger.

—There is an exceedingly able woman in Boston who can report a speech delivered rapidly in German, she first translating the speech into English and then recording it in stenographic characters. Such celerity of thought is only approached by the tradition respecting Kossuth, who is said to have thought in Hungarian, translated into Latin, and retranslated and uttered at a rapid rate the choicest English, born of a study of the Bible and Shakespeare.—Boston Congregationalist.

THOUGHT MICROBES.

Sorrow and Disappointment as Diseases for the Doctors.

It is claimed by some of the more advanced of modern writers that excesses of all sorts are produced by a morbid condition of the mind, brought about by the presence of microbes in undue numbers. From tuberculosis to temper, from murder to melancholia, these theorists declare that microbes are the cause of all conditions anywhere outside of the normal. And maybe the day will come when these people will be found not so far from the right as scoffers now profess to believe. Those who dive deep into the hidden mysteries of existence find many quaint and curious things not seen by average eyes. There is an invisible, intangible, mental as well as a material microscope, and they who understand its handling and adjustment learn much of interest, much that is suppressed because of the storm of ridicule that it would provoke, and which for this reason they care nothing about exhibiting to the outer world.

It is no secret to many persons of extreme temperament that a thought microbe can be so increased and multiplied that it dominates not only the entire mental but physical system. There are cases where the memory takes possession of the individual; a sudden flash lights the fire of thought; a suggestion opens the door of the past, and all conditions are right for an absolute overwhelming of the entire being with this living tide. And many doctors would at once diagnose the malady as malaria, nervous fever, depression of the vital forces, or in some cases inflammation of the brain. This state of affairs, simple enough at the outset and characterized by a little fever, a slightly accelerated pulse, a trifling flush of the cheeks and like indications increase with rapidity until the sufferer is in a condition bordering on mental distraction. The doctor comes in, prescribes draughts and a fever regimen, reduces the diet, orders cooling applications and goes away much worried lest the patient runs into brain fever or some new complaint with an unpronounceable name and a fatal termination. Had this professional adviser of the sick and suffering the power to use the mental microscope, it would take him but a short time to discover that the malady was not in any sense physical or dependent upon any of the bodily functions. He would find hordes of bacilli, disappointment microbes, unsatisfied ambition germs infinitesimal in themselves but in the aggregate forming an immense army of devouring adversaries slowly consuming the life forces of their helpless victims. Just what they feed upon no one has as yet been able to determine; but that they speedily sap the vital forces, those who have suffered in this way know but too well, although they may not know the cause.

If, instead of morphia, tonics and anti-malarials and anodynes, they could take the suffering one from present environments, start a new train of thought, awaken other interests stronger for the moment than the invading forces, and bring back the departed delights or some that would to an extent fill their place, the dealing out of drugs would be superseded by an entirely different form of practice.

But the day of this enligtenment has not yet come. May be in the far-off hereafter our doctors will be philosophers as well, and instead of confining themselves strictly to the material, they will search for the hidden sources of the sorrow and care, that more than any other cause destroys the best and brightest members of the human family.—N. S. Stowell, in N. Y. Ledger.

GOLD IN ARCTIC REGIONS.

Voyage of the Gabriel in Search of the "Northwest Passage."

More than three hundred years ago, in the reign of Elizabeth, the idea of reaching China by sailing round the northern coast of America was revived, and Martin Frobisher, one of the most celebrated navigators of his day, received the support of the queen in fitting out two small vessels to search for the "northwest passage." The larger of Frobisher's barks, named the Gabriel, was of only twenty-five tons burden, and the other, the Michael, of twenty tons. With these ridiculously small vessels, loaded with provisions calculated to last twelve months, the daring navigator set sail from London on the seventh of June, 1576.

On the twenty-first of July he entered the strait which was afterwards named after the great explorer Davis, and sailed north, until his way was blocked by an enormous ice-field stretching from mainland to mainland. Anchoring his vessel to a mass of ice near the Greenland side, Frobisher went on shore to look about. Here he fell in with a body of natives, who at first showed signs of hostility, but the captain soon reached a friendly understanding with them. In exchange for bells, looking-glasses, bright coins and nails the Esquimaux brought off to the ship quantities of salmon, seal meat, and skins of animals. Another extract from the log-book reads: "The natives, to shew their agilitie, tried mannye masteries upon the ropes of the shippe, after our mariners' fashione, and appeared to be varie strong of their arms and nimble of their bodies."

The seeming friendship of the natives was not to be relied upon, however, for several days following five of the crew went on shore to trade with the Esquimaux, and failing to return, strict search was made for them, but they were never again seen. As the tribe disappeared at the same time, it was believed that the seamen had been murdered for their clothes and arms. While endeavoring to trace the missing ones, Frobisher came across a great quantity of black stone, which was so heavy that he brought a piece on board as a curiosity.

The captain now decided to return to England, as the winter was rapidly drawing near, making it necessary to escape at once from the strait unless he proposed to incur the risk of having his ship frozen in the ice. On the second of October the Gabriel arrived in the Thames amid great rejoicing, for she had been given up for lost. The "black stone" was given as a polar curiosity to a wealthy patron of the captain, who exhibited it to a friend, a refiner in London, and by the latter it was claimed to contain a "goodlie quantitie of pure gold." Great excitement followed this announcement, and a new voyage was quickly planned, the object of which was to bring back a cargo of the precious ore.—Harper's Young People.

—"Did Madge marry a man of regular habits?" "Mercy yes; he has allowed her to support him from the very first."

HOUSEHOLD BREVITIES.

—Parsnip Pats.—Prepare as for fritters, mold into pats, omitting the milk, and fry in butter till brown.—Housekeeper.

—For the dressing table, all sorts of pretty covers are offered. Those of dotted Swiss, or mull, with lace insertions and edgings, laid over tinted silk or sateen, while very simple, are about as satisfactory as the more elaborate conceits.

—Frog's Legs.—Let them lie half an hour in lemon juice weakened with water. Bring them to table drained. Roll in flour and fry in plenty of sweet butter. Cooked in this way the delicate flavor is not lost in spices.—Christian Inquirer.

—Indian Pudding, Plain.—One quart of milk, one and one-quarter pints of corn meal, one-half pint of molasses, one teaspoonful each of ginger and salt. Scald the milk and pour it on the meal; cook for ten minutes, stirring occasionally; add the molasses, ginger and salt. Bake in a slow oven until done. Serve with cream.—Good Housekeeping.

—Allow one tablespoonful of sugar and one teaspoonful of hot water to each banana. Pare the banana and cut in halves. Place them on a shallow dish. Melt one tablespoonful of butter in hot water and pour it over the fruit. Mix a little salt and spice or lemon juice with the sugar, sprinkle it over the top and bake twenty minutes, or until brown.—St. Louis Republic.

—Savory Soup.—In two quarts of good soup stock add one good sized onion, two carrots, one large turnip, two or three stalks of celery, a few sprigs of parsley, one leek (leaves and all), a dash of red pepper, a level teaspoonful of salt and a little white pepper, one-third of a teaspoonful of curry powder and two lumps of sugar. Cook an hour and a half, then strain and thicken very slightly.—Boston Budget.

—Mother's Bread Pudding.—Cut a small loaf of baker's bread into thick slices; remove the crust, butter the slices, lay in a buttered pudding dish, with stoned raisins, chopped citron, cinnamon, allspice and brown sugar between the layers. Pour over a pint of milk and let it set over night. In the morning beat four eggs light, add a pint of milk and pour over the pudding. Bake one hour in a moderate oven. Serve with liquid sauce.—Good Housekeeping.

—Tenderloin Steak with Oysters.—Moisten the bottom of the chafing dish with butter. When very hot lay in the tenderloin, which should be an inch thick and nearly free from fat. Sear one side and turn. Turn often. In five minutes remove to a hot plate and season with salt. Put one pint of oysters in the pan without any of the liquor. Stir until the edges curl. Add one teaspoonful of butter, creamed with an equal amount of flour, salt, pepper and one tablespoonful of lemon juice. Let it thicken. Pour over the hot steak and serve at once.

PURIFYING THE BLOOD.

Constant Care of the Body Versus Spring Medicines.

The custom, which is so prevalent at this time of year, of administering to one's self remedies which are particularly directed toward purifying the blood, has, besides its popularity, an excuse in rational hygiene.

It is to be expected, in other words, that the human system, like every intricate piece of mechanism, will in time become clogged with the results and accumulations of its own work. The friction of its several parts, and the wear and tear of constant usage, are productive of debris of various sorts, just as in the case with machinery of any kind; and men are excusable for believing that at least once a year they may with propriety seek to eliminate the refuse matter which has accumulated.

And so the sarsaparillas of various makes, especially where they are prescribed by the family physician, may be said to be worthy of their popularity and the confidence which is reposed in them.

It is doubtful, however, if the necessity for the use of "spring medicines" is especially urgent with those who have continually, throughout the year, maintained a proper regard for the requirements of the body.

Among those who have the care of engines, or other machinery, it is considered a breach of duty to permit the accumulation of the most minute particles of rust or dirt of any sort. On the contrary, the greatest pride is taken in the shiny appearance of the bearings and all the different surfaces of the machine. How much more, then, ought we to be constantly solicitous that the human organism shall not be hindered by the accumulation of useless debris!

It is possible to do this surely and safely by attending day by day to the secretions of the body. The waste matter of the body, as we all know, is got rid of by four great channels—the lungs, the intestines, the kidneys and the skin.

By carefully watching the work of this branch of the human mechanism, insisting that each part shall faithfully perform its own peculiar work, we shall insure better results from the general system, besides lessening to a marked degree the necessity for any periodical or spasmodic attempts at purifying the blood.—Youth's Companion.

French Waists.

Pongee silk shirt waists of the natural ecru shade are imported by the best modistes to wear with blazer suits in the summer. They are made in the simplest manner, with fulness gathered at the neck and waist in front and back, and are mounted on a fitted and boned lining of silk. A box plait two inches wide is down the front, with a row of brier-stitching done in navy-blue silk near each edge, and holding button-holes for three pearl buttons, which are regular shirt buttons. A turned-down collar of the pongee doubled has a single row of stitching, and is mounted on a neck-band so wide that three buttons are required to fasten it. The bishop sleeves, nearly a yard wide, are very long, and have a fitted lining, to which they are taken up in a plait at the elbow to give the proper length. They are gathered to straight cuffs of pongee four inches deep when doubled, brier-stitched in a single row, and fastened by three buttons. The edge of the waist goes inside the dress skirt. A navy-blue necktie and a ribbon belt with a pearl buckle complete the waist for wearing with blue sacking or serge suits. For those who prefer washable materials for similar shirt waists, Madras ginghams and linen batiste are used in the ecru pongee color, which is sometimes called "linen-color" in the shops.—Harper's Bazar.