QUEER FACTS ABOUT SPICES.

Interesting Information Concerning their Growth and Cure.

Grocers who handle spices, and consumers who are familiar with their various flavors, have, as a rule, no notion of the shape and manner in which spices grow. Mr. William D. Bennett, the head of the spice department of a large wholesale firm, has made a study of spices and their growth, and for years he has tried to obtain growing specimens of each kind. He finally accomplished this by sending specially prepared hermetically sealed jars to the Government authorities of the Spice Islands, Straight's Settlements, and other countries where spices are produced. He recently had these jars returned to him containing remarkably fine specimens of growing nutmeg and mace, tapioca root, cayenne pepper, cloves, sago, and allspice. They form a collection which is quite unique in this country. The specimens are preserved in a liquid which causes them to retain their natural colors.

In exhibiting them Mr. Bennet said:

"The leaves of a clove branch resemble those of a peach, and the cloves come in clusters on little green twigs. They are not the fruit of the tree, but the undeveloped flower, the stem being the calyx, and the head the unblown corolla. The strength lies in the flower alone, although the green twigs are reported to be ground up and used as an adulterant. The clove tree grows from thirty to forty feet high, and is green the year round. It is found in the Moluccas Islands, in Sumatra, Straight's Settlements, in Zanzibar, Reunion Islands, and Cayenne. The poorest comes from Zanzibar. They are there cultivated by slaves, and the oil is extracted by boiling before they are exported. These are the cloves in common use, and they are of a dull gray color.

"The Amboyna or Molucca cloves are better, but are also mixed with inferior cloves. They are raised by the Dutch, who are pretty sure to cheat if they get a chance. At the spice market in Mincing lane, London, no Dutch product is accepted unless accompanied by a certificate of its purity. The products of the English colonies are invariably pure. This is shown in the Penang clove from Straight's Settlements. They are of a rich brown color, and sell at 45 cents a pound, to 20 for Amboyna, and 15 for Zanzibar. They are for medical uses and for the finest trade.

"The unexpanded flowers are gathered in December and quickly dried in the shade before they have a chance to lose their flavor. They are knocked off with long poles, and drop on mats spread underneath the tree. The Dutch formerly controlled the clove trade until it was introduced into Penang in 1798 by a Frenchman named Pinard, who smuggled seeds there from Amboyna. An attempt was made four years ago to raise clove trees in Texas; it failed.

"This largest jar contains a nutmeg branch bearing the fruit in various stages of development. The leaves are like pear leaves, and the fruit resembles a pear, and is about the size and shape of a peach. The flower resembles the lily of the valley very closely. The fruit reminds one of walnuts. It has an outside rind about half an inch thick, and this is first green, then yellow, and brown when ripe. It then breaks into halves, and inside is seen the brown seed partly enclosed by a bright scarlet, fibrous coat. This coat is the mace of commerce, and is readily removed. It becomes yellow when dried, and has a rich flavor distinct from that of the nutmeg. The nutmeg gets its brownness from its shell, which is a thin and brittle covering enclosing it very closely. The nutmeg is dried very slowly during a period of two months, and the seed then contracts, allowing the shell to be broken away easily. The clove inside has a marbleized appearance, with streaks of black and white. Cutting into it you will find the germ, which the Dutch tried to kill by boiling and baking before selling the spice.

"The tree grows from twenty to thirty feet in height, and is a native of the Moluccas Islands. It bears after the eighth year, and continues for seventy years. It has three periods of harvesting, in April, August, and November. The fruit is gathered by means of a long stick with a barb at the end. When unripe, the whole fruit is pickled like walnuts, or made into a sweet meat with brandy and sugar.

"Nutmegs from the Moluccas Islands are limed. The Dutch claim this is done with a view of destroying worms, but its purpose is to conceal imperfections, and possibly to destroy the germ. The Dutch tried to keep the trees under their control, but the roving pigeons spoiled their scheme. The birds fed upon the fruit, and it swallow the nut with the mace on it. Afterward it voids the nut in its shell, and it was sent to sprout where it fell. It is now grown in Mauritius, Penang, French Guinea, the East and West Indies, and other places. When taken as a stray the island is at once quarantined.

"The cinnamon tree, of which you see a section here, is a kind of laurel, and grows to a height of 30 feet. Its leaves are like pear leaves, and its flowers resemble bunches of elderberry. The spice is the inside of the bark, and the bark is taken from the tree and submitted to three scrapings, the first being the best. The thin shavings roll up into long sticks. Ceylon cinnamon is the best, and the Java cinnamon is the most pungent. The Chinese gather a very inferior article. The cinnamon gardens of Ceylon cover 12,000 acres, and are a large source of revenue to the British Government. The bark is harvested in May and November, and trees continue bearing over 200 years. The peelers are Chinese, who become very skilful by practice.

"This alspice, which you see as heavy bunches of berries, is grown on the Pimento tree in South America and the West Indies. The tree is thirty feet high, and has bunches of small red flowers, which perfume the air. The leaves resemble bay leaves. The berries are picked when green, and dried in the sun. A single tree will produce 100 pounds of the dried spice. The trees are not cultivated, and only grow wild. Berries grown in Texas were found to have no flavor. The largest quantity comes from Jamaica.

"Pepper," said Mr. Bennett, "grows in bunches like hops, on a creeping vine. It is planted at the foot of banyan or bread fruit trees, so that it may climb up among the branches. It grows best in a damp soil. The berries are picked by hand in January and July, just before they ripen. They are dried on mats in the sun, or in kilns with a slow fire, and this wrinkles the surface. Then they are placed in vats of sea water, which stands in the hot sun until it nearly boils. The light weight and imperfect peppers float to the top and are skimmed off. These form an inferior grade. The heavier ones sink to the bottom. To make white pepper they are trodden under foot until the dark outer skin comes off. Contrary to general belief the white pepper thus formed is less pungent than the black where the skin is left on. Pepperers unconscionably put on more white pepper because they cannot see the dirt that makes it taste stronger, while the black pepper is easily seen and less is used. The white pepper is specially treated in London, in order to improve its appearance, by coating it with gum and lime. This doubles the price without improving the quality. It is meant for the French trade, where the pepper is generally ground on the table.

"In this jar is a large root that resembles an exaggerate sweet potato. This is the manihot root, which furnishes tapioca. The outer skin is taken off, and the white pulp is shredded and macerated in troughs of running water. The starchy portion sinks to the bottom in a paste, which is then baked in an oven. This is tapioca, and the tests of mes from Rio Janeiro. The natives use these cakes as bread, and call it cassava. The juice of the root is very poisonous, and is used by the Indians to poison the tips of their arrows. An intoxicating drink called yah is also made from it. The root is not so poisonous when young, and the natives cook it and eat it like potatoes.

"Here is some of the pith of the sago palm from which sagoin is made. The tree grows from twenty-five to fifty feet high, and just before it flowers is cut down. The pith is dug out and worked in water until the starch is separated. It is dried in cakes, broken up and sifted until it takes the granulated shape used in commerce. The Germans make sago out of potato starch, but it is easily tested and the true article.

"The history of cloves, nutmegs, mace, and cinnamon," said Mr. Bennett, reads like a romance. It is found in the history of the Moluccas or Spice Islands of the Malay archipelago. In 1511 the islands were conquered by the Portuguese, but they were driven out by the Dutch in 1571. Early in the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company obtained control of the islands, and to secure the exclusive trade in spices they extirpated the spice trees on all the islands except Amboyna and Banda. Each year an expedition was sent out to destroy every clove tree, which the migratory birds chance to plant in the native soil, and it was death to plant a clove tree or sell a pound of cloves. The land became barren, and the natives, deprived of their subsistence, died of starvation. To sustain prices in foreign markets a large portion of the product of Amboyna and Banda was annually burned, and whole cargoes of spices were frequently destroyed. A Dutch writer says that he saw three piles of nutmegs burned, each of which was more than a church of ordinary dimensions would hold. These annual burnings continued until 1824, but a more liberal policy, induced by foreign competition, has prevailed since then."

FERTILE LAND IN TEXAS.

A Superior Climate—Best Country in the World for a Man Seeking a Home.

To the Editor of The Sun.—Sir: A letter dated Galveston published in The Sun recently must give your readers erroneous impressions of Texas. Our climate as in other countries, varies with the altitude of the land. The winter is longer and colder in the North and Northwest than in the South and Southwest, but nowhere does that season compare in severity and length of time with the corresponding months in either North Carolina or Virginia, which are both included in the Sunny South. Here in western Texas there has not fallen enough snow to cover the ground for several years. For the last two or three winters hardly a flake has been seen. Still the winters here are bracing. Farther north the snow falls every winter, and, in exceptionally severe seasons, lies on the ground for a few weeks.

The northers, fierce and uncomfortable enough while they continue, are nothing in comparison with the blizzards that sweep over Dakota and Montana. They are not worth talking about except on that great treeless plateau known as the Staked Plains.

So much for the winters. The spring and autumn months are delightfully pleasant all over the State. It is only when the warm season sets in that complaints of the climate are heard. In this part of the State the warm weather begins about the first of May, and continues until October. The hottest weather occurs in the last two weeks in July and the first two weeks in August. During that period it is indeed very warm weather. This year on some days the thermometer in the afternoon rose to 98 degrees. This great heat, however, does not last long—eight or ten days at the utmost, and during the interim, mentioned. At all other times in summer the heat is tempered by a strong breeze from the Gulf of Mexico. While I write the breeze is so strong as to compel me to place weights on the papers on my table to prevent them blowing away. Very seldom is the heat so great as to prevent white men from laboring in the fields or towns. In a lifelong residence in the South I have never known a native to suffer from sunstroke. The negro, of course, is never incommoded by heat.

The coast counties in the south and southeast are the negro's paradise. There, at small outlay of money and labor, he can easily make enough to supply his wants, while, if he be industrious and frugal, he will in a few years acquire a competence. In a large portion of that region, subject to overflow during the rainy season, the climate, except in winter, is not adapted to white men. The negro, however, seems to thrive on malaria and mosquitoes. So great, however, is the fertility of the soil, and so generously does it repay the labors of the husbandman, that the white owners of the plantations prefer to brave the perils of swamp fevers rather than abandoning their lands. Those who can afford to spend the sickly season in the highlands enjoy excellent health, but the dwellers in the lowlands are martyrs to malarial fevers. They live in a great cotton and sugar country. Its capabilities in the production of those staples have hardly begun to be tested. The finest sugar lands in the world are there, while two and three bales of cotton to the acre have been raised. In other parts of the state land that will produce one bale of cotton to the acre is considered first class.

Corn grows well everywhere, except on the plains, and there the prairie grass grows so well that it is the sugar belt. Close observers think that the plains of west and northwest Texas rival California and Nevada in the production of wheat. In only a few of the newer counties in the West has the experiment of wheat raising been tried, but it has been found exceedingly productive. From a paper published in Abilene, on the T. and P. Railroad, a town of 5,000 inhabitants, where, only a few years ago, there was only naked prairie, I glean the following concerning the crops in that region:

Robert Taylor (Canadian) Eastland Comanche, and Brown counties, average 15 bushels of wheat and from 40 to 100 bushels of oats to the acre. It was not a favorable winter for wheat, the wet spring causing it to rust, some localities. But Mediterranean and spring varieties have been tried with a good crop, while the best crop was never so good and cure very sound.

We used to pay from $1 to $2 a barrel for Western potatoes; now we get a better article of home production for $1.50.

Corn, oats, sorghum, and millet all do well in the west. Now, remember, that in that country agriculture was until recently only an experiment. Stockmen found it to their interest to devote the best lands to grass, and raised for horses, sheep, and cattle, but gradually the truth became known, and the cowboy is yielding to the farmer.

The State holds in trust for the common schools thirty millions of acres of land. The school trust lands are sold to actual settlers at $2 per acre, in tracts not exceeding 640 acres to one person, on thirty years' time, the rate of interest on deferred payments being 5 per cent. Grazing lands are sold in quantities not exceeding three sections at prices ranging from $1 per acre upward, on the same terms as to time and interest as the agricultural lands. In the latter case full payment can be made and patent obtained at the end of three years, if the purchaser so desires. Private lands can be obtained on favorable terms, there being no lack of land.

Believing as I do sincerely that Texas is the best country in the world for the poor man seeking a home, I have rapidly jotted down the foregoing points in the hope that the toiling masses of the East may have their attention directed to this favored land, and by investigation, and inquiry from the best attainable sources, test the truth of these statements, and finding them true, come here to "grow up with the country." An industrious man in a few years will make enough from the surplus of his crops to pay for the land. I know of an instance in Haskell county where a man paid for an eight-hundred-acre farm with the proceeds of one crop of millet. This, too, was the first effort at farming in that county.

Why go to Dakota to be frozen to death in the winter and scorched to death in the summer, when a finer country and a glorious climate will welcome you, and a plenty of churches and schools, holds out its hands in welcome? As to the assertion of the writer aforementioned that the climate of Texas was unsuited to the immigrant from Northern Europe and the Northern states of this Union, that is contradicted by the presence of over 100,000 Germans, who, like ducks to water, if needed, Norwegian Danes, Poles, and Bohemians, and thousands of people from nearly every state of the Northern and Eastern part of the United States. I could, if necessary, give the names of residents of this city and county who are natives of Northern states, representing every portion of that section. These men could not be induced to live elsewhere. One of the Democratic representatives from this county to the last Legislature was Dr. L. B. Johnson, an Ohioan, who served in the Federal army during the entire war. Let the doubters, if such there be, write him.

FRANK ROCHE.

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug. 20.

THE CHINESE DON'T GO.

They Seem to be Coming in Greater Numbers, and San Francisco Mourns.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 15.—The committee that took Col. Denby, our Chinese Envoy, through Chinatown, failed to get together to carry out the proposed mass meeting to express California's sentiments on the Chinese plague. It is now too late, as Mr. Denby sails for Hong Kong next Tuesday, the 18th inst. It was ascertained that Denby would not speak himself at such a meeting, and it was doubtful whether he would even attend it, so the project fell through. He probably saw enough of Chinatown and heard enough public opinion on the subject to understand California's position.

Col. Denby has been feted, dined, and wined enough to satisfy himself at least as to the quality of Californian wines. Wm. T. Coleman gave a fine dinner to him one evening last week, and one day he was taken around the bay on the Government tug McPherson by a number of prominent millionaires, among them the Mercantile boys. At another dinner he was entertained by Mr. Wilson and such prominent persons as Judges Field and Sawyer, Senators Fair and Jones, John Russell Young, D. O. Mills, Whitelaw Reid—who still tarries among us—Wm. T. Coleman, Chas. F. Crocker, Lloyd Tevis, &c. Were present, Col. Denby was in fine spirits, delighted with the millionaire element at least, before he leaves, if he is not with the Chinese question.

This everlasting Chinese business still keeps public attention, and every now and then excites San Francisco to a high pitch. So many Chinese are now here, that suspicion has been aroused that there is a time-honored plot. Whether this increase comes from an open door known as British Columbia and Puget Sound, which is an easy entrance, owing to the small guard at that place, or whether it is right through our own door-lock, under our noses, authorities differ. Probably both. The action of the town of Eureka in the northwestern part of California in expelling their Chinese population, under threats of wholesale murder and crime, probably added several hundreds to our Chinatown. For several weeks our Federal courts have been busy in detecting cases of recently arrived Chinese on the Pacific mail steamers, who undoubtedly had bought the certificates they presented from some one in Hong Kong as the description of facial and bodily peculiarities did not tally at all with the holders. Many of them have thus been remanded to be returned to China. They were probably only part of an army of frauds that have lately passed the examination of Custom House and Court. Many Chinese having acquired wealth here have gone home to enjoy it, and, not intending to return, have sold their certificates. It is the only possible explanation of the suspicionally large number of legitimate new arrivals. Collector Hager, Surveyor Morton and his assistants deny that there is any increase here now, but assert a decrease. They claim to have stopped about 200 frauds who tried to land during the last four months, and assert that up to July 1, from their records, 31,000 have departed and only 13,000 arrived or returned.

CHURCH AND TOWN IN CONFLICT.

An Effigy on Ridgefield Common Over Which there is Unusually Strife.

DANBURY, Aug. 29.—The relations between the Congregational Society of Ridgefield and the town itself have recently become very greatly strained, and in a manner which would have been deemed impossible by the organizers of these civil and religious societies. Nearly two hundred years ago the town of Ridgefield was incorporated, and almost the first thing the settlers did, as members of the civil body, was to organize a church and build it on the common. The same people constituted both organizations, and the law of the church was the law of the community. New Ridgefield has become a desirable place for a summer residence, and many New York people have taken advantage of its pure air and romantic views. The church on the green, though an almost unaltered and quaint relic of Revolutionary days, has become much too small to accommodate its congregation. The society determined, therefore, to tear the building down, or remove it, and to erect a large granite building of modern architecture, provided money enough was subscribed. A number of wealthy members of the congregation contributed a handsome sum, provided the new building was erected precisely on the site of the old one. This the society agreed to do, and began at once to make preparations to tear down and rebuild.

But the Congregational church and the town of Ridgefield no longer consist of identical individuals. There are several other churches, and its members are citizens. These opposed what they regarded as the decidedly cool way the Congregational church proposed to make use of town land without asking any permission. Excitement was fanned to a blaze. A town meeting two or three of them were called, and as a result the Congregational Society was very sharply informed that it would not be permitted to rebuild on the green. Then the lawyers were consulted. The pious and impious people of the town were heated, and the church was very militant. The lawyers advised that the town could not refuse to allow the church to use as its own land that it had held by immemorial use. The church proposed to do as it chose, and build on the old site.

Then a few days ago the lawyers thought some more about it, and advised that while the town could and prevent the church from using the land it has always occupied, it could prevent it from using any more. Thereupon the town triumphantly informed the church that while it could rebuild on the old site, it couldn't use an inch more of land than it had always occupied, and the town seems thus far triumphant for the church cannot be enlarged without more room, as the project of using the old site and modelling the church inside after the plan of theatres, with two or three galleries, is not well received. For some days the church committee have been in a rather despairing frame of mind, but within a day or two seem encouraged, saying that they have about decided on a measure which will be satisfactory. The matter has caused very bitter feelings, and has estranged some families that have been for years most friendly.

HOT DOG DAYS IN RUSSIA.

Fairy Plays and Other Sr. Petersburg Festivities—A Monk who was Candidly Drunk when Glory Awaited Him—Warm Times.

ST. PETERSBURG, Aug. 10.—The activity of the Russian officials, to all appearances, reaches its highest point in dog days. Now, as in former years, there are scores of different commissions and committees, sub-commissions, and sub-committees travelling in all the parts of the country presumably for the public ends. They seem to revise various branches of the administration and to study on the spot different questions of national importance, such as epidemics, epizootics, the laying of new railways, the digging of new canals, the improvement of rivers, the protection to some new industries, the struggle against grasshoppers, the Siberian marmots, the sectarians, and the Nihilists, the opening of new ports, and no end of other big points. It ought to be highly gratifying to the Czar's subjects to see his officials earning their bread by the sweat of their brows. But the trouble is that they the subjects know very well that that unseasoned display of the official activity is merely dog-days junketing at public cost. Every year as the vacations approach the tchinovniks here vie with each other in inventing the public questions that should be studied on the spot.

"Say, Ivan Petrovitch," one official said to another, "where are you going this summer?"

"To the Caucasus. I am in the commission investigating the mineral springs."

"Lucky for you. You'll have the Tcherkassian girls and the Kakhetinsky wine. And I am to investigate the shallows of the Volga."

"Good for you, Peter Ivanovitch, you've got the Tartar girls and the Koumyss."

Some of these junketing trips are, nevertheless, described in the newspapers at great length as if they really meant business. Just now, for instance, all the journals of this capital are describing the Czar's trip to Finland.

On the shore of the Finnish Bay, in a picturesque spot, there is a little town, Wiborgstrand. The Czar and the Czarina made up their mind to go there and see the sights. They wanted to go there by railway and to return back aboard of some man-of-war. To please such guests the Finns have built a railway from Abo to Wiborgstrand a distance of sixteen miles. When everything was ready, in the *Official Messenger* there appeared an item stating that his Majesty was going to review the armies of Finland. Now those armies consist of nine battalions all told. For weeks the Finnish soldiers were making triumphal arches, fashioning fir trees, and stacking with fir branches, and covering the platforms with red cloth. At last the Czar, in company with scores of Generals and courtiers, went on his Finnish journey, or, as the papers style it, "his triumphal march." The Finn women presented to the Czarina a little boat of their own make, and the men have in various ways shown their loyalty. As soon, however, as the Czar was gone, the Senate of Finland voted unanimously to raise the tax on Russian goods imported to Finland, in order, as it were, to cover the expenses of the imperial trip.

Among other official trips of this season is worth noticing that of Bishops. In the city of Kazan there met twelve Bishops, each accompanied by half a dozen learned theologians. They held daily meetings in the city and discuss means of bringing the Mohammedan Tartars and the old believers to the bosom of the orthodox Church, and of strengthening faith among the people. A Bishop suggested education as the best means for that end. But the rest of the theologians were unanimous in saying that Tartars and old believers don't like a life the best educated people of St. Petersburg are living," remarked one of them.

During these dog days the St. Petersburgers live as merrily as in any other season. The fairy play is the race of the day here. In all the northern fashionable parks gardens, and theatres, they put up such fairy play. "The Journey to the Moon," for instance, has been played here about one hundred times. Another play of the kind, the "Golden Apples," has been presented about seventy-five times. One critic expressed his surprise at the success of these fairy plays. "Which, as he said, "have no sense whatever."

"Sense!" answered a critic of the *Novoe Vremia*. "We do not care for sense at all! Show us beautiful forms, graceful movements, expressive pantomimes—that is what we want. We are tired of sterile dialogues. See what toes of steel has Mme. Jouvy, and did you ever see such a personification of grace as is Mme. Zukki? How charmingly, fairy-like she goes up to the moon!"

Once a new play failed to please the public and a theatrical critic remarked to the manager: "Show us more leagues and the skirts and prolong the dances."

The play, improved on this suggestion, had a great success. Now the theatre-goers in Arcadia and other dog days places of amusement will not hear any dialogues, nor will they see any skirts. They will see charming scenes and hear a fairy-like music, dances and songs, and notice ingenious disguises, wonderful transformations, and suggestive pantomimes. The play, "Our Hero Victors," is all pantomime.

Competition in Russia is just now very lively. The Czar's brother, Grand Duke Wladimir, is watching the military manœuvres, participating in the soldier mess, and he distributes personally the cook prizes of silver spoons with small sums of money. Then the Czar's uncle, Grand Duke Nicholas, oversaw a curious race at a distance of a hundred versts of miles between reindeers, troikas and a racing train, the former winning. Another competition is, Grand Duke Michael is noting which of seven batteries will the quickest demolish its target, while the peasants of the neighborhood are thanking God for a good crop. It is well known here that the residents of seven villages near Revel, Esthonia, have for years been in the place, live exclusively on the bursts, cannon balls, and bombshells they pick up on their fields. Yesterday on the Neva River there took place a boat race between ladies who belong to the Ladies' Yacht and Skating Club. A few days ago, near Krasnoyarsk, there was a race between Russian and Finnish sailors, the latter competed for the prize of the Ministry of Marine, a sixty-ton yacht. A Russian yacht won the prize. As to horse races, we have them almost every day.

The spirit of competition seems to have permeated even the clergy, in the shape of who have legined the sword. The monks of the Kieff Convent are now fighting in the courts, they declare in holy images, and recently two monks fought a kind of match in a church. On the trial one of them excused himself as being drunk. I am told, however, that these dog days are unusually hot here.

HOW BANKS ARE SWINDLED.

The Trick by which a Bankrupt Merchant Made Fifteen Thousand Dollars.

"Banks are constantly being imposed upon," said the cashier of one of the largest national banks in this city the other day, "and the public knows nothing about it. Why, if I was to tell you that the son of one of the largest dry goods merchants in New York had presented two forged checks to this bank within the past month, got money on both, and escaped arrest and publicity, you would hardly believe it; but it is so. His father made good the amount. Almost every week some one manages to defraud us some way, and it is only once in six months we ever report the case to the authorities. In the first place, it hurts a bank's reputation to get caught too often; but the principal reason for our silence is, it wouldn't pay us to complain. In nearly every case the culprit is a friend or relative of some influential customer. That is the way he manages to secure his credit, and the customer nearly always 'talks turkey' when we go to him about the matter.

"Use as much precaution as we can, we have to trust some people. Of course we can, as a rule, protect ourselves against professional sharpers and strangers by requiring identification, but there is no way of preventing our customers from defrauding us by a too-close scrutiny of their checks. That might drive away good business, and we have to take our chances as to the paper being all right.

"Some years ago," continued the cashier, "I was the paying teller of a bank in a large Western city. Among our customers was a wholesale merchant named Henderson, who did a very large business with our bank. He was in the habit of drawing large sums to meet his bills, which were heavy, and all these passed through my hands. Among Mr. Henderson's business associates was a man named Hirtz, who had lately come to that city from the East. He was a commission broker, and sold Mr. Henderson a great many goods, for which he received Mr. Henderson's check on our bank. One day Mr. Hirtz brought to the bank a check for $15,000. It was the largest check he had ever presented. I hesitated a moment about paying it, examined it very carefully. It was evidently Mr. Henderson's signature and there was no question about the bearer being Mr. Hirtz. I asked the bookkeeper how much money Mr. Henderson had to his credit. He had $16,000. So I paid it. Mr. Hirtz took thirty $500 bills and left the building with the money carefully concealed in his inside vest pocket. This was on Saturday, just before bank closed. Monday afternoon Mr. Henderson sent a check for $6,000 to the bank. I sent back word that his account was not large enough to cover that amount. In a few minutes Mr. Henderson appeared at the bank himself. He was evidently very angry.

"What do you mean, 'said he,' by sending such word to me?

"I mean," said I, "that you only have $3,000 to your credit.

"That is not so," said he; "I have $18,000 here, and if these figures are not correct I shall make this bank some trouble."

"You did have $18,000 last Saturday, but Mr. Hirtz drew out $15,000——

"Mr. Hirtz did nothing of the sort," interrupted the merchant hotly. "Mr. Hirtz did not draw a cent of money on my account."

"Is this your writing?" I asked, producing the check Mr. Hirtz had given to me.

Mr. Henderson was amazed as I laid down the paper before him.

"That certainly does look like my check," he said. "It certainly does. But it is a forgery."

"Now it was my turn to be astonished. If I had paid a forged check of that size I could count my chances of holding my position with a cipher. We took the check to the cashier and examined it together, and then we compared it with his other signatures. It was so nearly the same that we could hardly tell them apart. The only difference was that it was not written in the ink Mr. Henderson usually wrote with. We sent down to Mr. Hirtz's office, but it was closed and his clerk did not know where he had gone, but believed he had left for New York. He had made his escape. This strengthened Mr. Henderson's statement, and after a few days we made good the amount and my resignation was demanded. I told our President that I thought there was some mystery about the matter, and I had the check framed for my own use. A month later Mr. Henderson surprised the business community by failing for the benefit of his creditors to the extent of a bankrupt. I determined to ferret out the mystery, and for considerable time I searched the country for any news of Mr. Hirtz, but all to no avail. Finally I came to New York and secured employment in the bank where I am now.

"About a year after I was getting in my private office. I was surprised to see Mr. Hirtz. I recognized him before he did me.

"How do you do, Mr. Hirtz?" I said.

"The man trembled, stammered, and finally, recognizing me, turned and tried to escape, but I caught him by the collar and held him fast. He made no struggle, but sat down.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"Have you sent to the penitiary.

"If you will let me go I will confess the whole thing.

"What good will that do me?

"You won't help justice any by convicting me," he replied. "I didn't forge that check."

"Who did, then?

"Mr. Henderson.

"Mr. Henderson?

"Yes. I was a poor broker in that town when I first met Henderson. He gave me a good many orders, and finally asked me how I would like to make $1,000. I told him I would like it.

"All right, said he. "You present my check for $15,000 at the bank, draw the money, bring it to me, and I will give you $1,000. Then you go to Europe for six months. There will be no trouble, no worry, no risk, and you will be $1,000 better off.

"I did as he suggested, gave him the money, and left that night.

"What did you do with the man?" we asked.

"Nothing. He had papers in his pocket which proved that he had told the truth. Mr. Henderson was ruined and Hirtz was a bankrupt, and as he really didn't mean to do wrong I let him go. Henderson had beaten the bank out of that much money, just like robbing it. I have no doubt other similar crimes have been committed, but I never heard of them."

A BLACK BASS STORY.

Stirring them Up with Electricity, and Making them Hungry with a Tonic.

One afternoon of last week a little gray-haired man, with mild blue eyes and clean-shaven face, sat upon the mill dam of one of the chain of ponds which check the flow of the Whippany River in Morris county, New Jersey. He held in his hand a fine split bamboo rod, while at his side was a polished mahogany box with wires running from its corners, and a brass crank projecting from its side. It was evidently an electric apparatus, and one of the wires dropped straight down into the water, while the other led away along the side of the pond to its upper end. Near the box was a two-gallon demijohn and a graduated glass such as chemists use for measuring liquids, while at his left was a can containing a score of hideous water insects known as bugs for bait, grasshoppers, and a basket in which half a dozen bass were lying upon a bed of oak leaves. At intervals the old gentleman carefully attached a helgramite to his hook, and deftly cast it into the pond with a turn of his left wrist, and at the same instant vigorously turned the crank on his box. For ten minutes he cast the bait and turned the crank at frequent intervals, and then, with an expression of disappointment, put aside his rod and turned to the demijohn and removed the cork. Then, carefully wiping the glass with his handkerchief, he poured out about a fluid pound of of a yellow liquid which he cast out upon the pond. A moment later he was struggling with a large bass, and his whip-like rod bent nearly double as he skillfully handled the reel and walked slowly toward the shore, with his wrinkled face lit up with the keenest pleasure.

"He got a whopper," said a barefooted boy who had been watching his manœuvres for half an hour. Turning to the youth with a triumphant glance, the old gentleman said:

"It was the tonic that fetched him."

After a struggle of three or four minutes' duration the angler landed a three-pound bass, and as he flung the fish panted away its life on the green took the youth's breath away.

"The tonic is a success; a great success. The catfaya was what it needed. Less iron, more catfaya; that's the thing."

"Did I understand you to say that you caught that bass with a tonic?" asked a stranger who stopped to view the captive.

"Yes, sir, not directly with a tonic. I do not put a tonic on the bait, but administer it through the medium of the water in the pond. It is a most important discovery, and will revolutionize the art of angling. Bass are sluggish in August and will not take food readily, but the tonic stirs up their appetite and they take the bait voraciously.

"What is the electrical apparatus for?"

"Ah, that is another triumph, answered the little old gentleman. "It is one of my most important scientific discoveries. In that box is a powerful magneto-electric machine with which I can reach the deepest recesses of the pond and awaken the sleeping fish with a thrilling shock of electricity. It is a most remarkable success. Most extraordinary."

"You have caught three bass I observe."

"Yes, three beauties and I have been here only about five hours. As soon as I receive my inheritance from Spain I shall patent both inventions. I am staying out here for my health, and am giving full sway to my genius."

"Come, Doctor, it is time to return," said a burly-looking individual in a blue suit who had just arrived on the scene, and the old gentleman, with his assistance, wound up the wires and packed away his tackle.

"He is pretty well fixed and we have to humor him," said the man in blue to the stranger as he followed the old gentleman up the hill leading to the carriage.

AN OTHER HUNT WITH WELSH TERRIERS.

From the London Field.

At the early hour of 3½ A. M. on Saturday last a brownish-haired, low-set, weather-beaten man might have been seen walking smartly down the streets of Carnarvon, stopping occasionally beneath the old porch of some house to give a peculiar plaintive whistle. An attentive listener would hear this sound—for a signal it certainly was—replied to, and the disturber would pass on to another and another until, his round said duty over, he was seen smartly away, and is soon lost to view. Fifteen or twenty minutes after this a cluster of men were eagerly talking together, and from the tone of their conversation and their appearance, a casual observer might imagine they were a gang of hoodlum workers organizing some scheme for assaulting an injured comrade. This would be more readily believed after a more prolonged observation, for some of them apparently carry hay forks brightened for the occasion. Such thoughts passed through the mind of the writer, soon to be dispelled by the huntsman or dealing hand of the crew of other hunters, with their spears and Welsh terriers. The master of this little pack of terriers now came up, and after calling the dogs on one by one to see if they were all present, for it was anything but particularly light, he told us we were not too early, as we had a walk of some five miles before the duck could be put out. We passed through the town of Caernarvon, up the hills to Waunfawr, and as we neared our destination the prospects of a run and the pure mountain air, after a sharp walk, had a most exhilarating effect on me. The whole five miles was one continued ascent, except an occasional dip through some wooded dell or other rippling mountain stream. At low, numerous trees, passed silently like a shadow above our heads; a dipper, disturbed, flew out from beneath an ancient looking bridge covered on one side with spleenwort (Asplenium), particularly striking and pretty. The moist in the valley of Beddwygarnion was lifting as we arrived at the bridge, and the sunshine peeping through the trees made things comfortable.

Now for the dogs. The little dark beauties are busy at work, fearless to a fault; they swim into every fissure as they work down stream. How artistically they try each tree root. There goes Fan. See how she guides from rock to rock—into the shallows, out to view, to appear again in a few seconds and try some likely spot. There goes Old Venture, a perfect artist, at work on the other bank—a fine, strong, healthy specimen of a Welsh terrier, a coat wiry and strong, and waters like a rat. See him now in mid-channel, trying the rocks. It will take some good and Italian to come up every month or so and hurry four and five at a time. He takes them away and educates them to climb lightning rods, water spouts, and verandahs to windows, where remains may be had. Then he retains them, to organ grinders, for the rings, the affectionate, dumb, little creatures, but they do not live long in this climate. They get the consumption. Monkeys bring from $10 to $25 apiece. Most of them are brought north by sailors."

ROBBING MOCKING BIRDS' NESTS.

An Industry Pursued by the Little Colored Boys Down South.

"The mocking bird season is over," said a William street dealer in birds, monkeys, dogs, and other pets. "It ended about the last of July. Most of our supply comes from Georgia, where it is against the law to capture them at the only time they can be captured or are worth the taking. The little darky boys down there do a fine business snaring the birds after they are big enough to get about and robbing nests before the little ones are big enough to fly. They get about fifty cents for every bird, and smuggle them on board north-bound steamers and coasting vessels. Every little darky lad has to work on his own basis, as bird dealers down there would not risk openly violating the law against mocking bird abduction by acting as middlemen in the contraband trade. The boys begin catching the birds in May and June, soon after they are hatched out, and from that time on until nearly August we have a painful stream of them flowing northward. Many die on the passage for want of proper food, as the mocking bird in this part of the country feeds on insects. We sell very few birds for cash over there; it is mostly an exchange business. Besides Georgia many mocking birds are caught in Louisiana and Florida. In those last-named States there is no law against capturing the birds, and we trade directly with dealers who buy of the little darky boys in the interior.

"We are doing a good business in monkeys now. The ring-tailed Brazilian variety is in great demand, as the and the Italian organ grinders are out in force together. We have one cust-tmer, an old Italian, who comes every month or so and buys four and five at a time. He takes them away and educates them to climb lightning rods, water spouts, and verandahs to windows, where remains may be had. Then he retains them, to organ grinders, for the rings, the affectionate, dumb, little creatures, but they do not live long in this climate. They get the consumption. Monkeys bring from $10 to $25 apiece. Most of them are brought north by sailors."

SHARK STORIES.

Man Eaters in Whose Stomachs Watches and Other Things are Found.

From the New Haven News.

"One peculiarity of the shark," said Capt. Guilderslaye yesterday, "is that he never will swallow a negro. White men and almost anything else he readily devours, but a colored man never. There's an old tradition among seamen about man-eating sharks. When one has been killed the sailors look in his belly for gold watches and other valuables. You see the shark swallows anything which comes in his way, and we used to find all sorts of things in his maw. Once on board a steamer the crew had been killing beef, and threw overboard a side and horns. Not long after they caught a shark, and sure enough they found that he had tried to swallow the refuse. He got the hide part way down, but could not get away with the horns. There was a scientific man on board and he thought he had discovered a new species of shark with horns.

"I remember once when I was mate on a ship from Calcutta. We were becalmed, and I saw a shark swimming around the ship, so I slung over a piece of beef, about three or four pounds of pork on it. The beast didn't appear to be hungry and wouldn't bite, so I gave it up and went below. While I was down in my room the Captain sent word from the poop deck that the shark was close by the hook which I had left overboard. I picked up my rifle and went on deck. The fish was over twelve feet long and was making for the hook when I fired right into his mouth. He gave a flip over on his side and never moved a muscle. We lowered a boat, threw a painter around him, and hauled him in. The boys cut him open, and instead of the good watches they found a lot of young sharks. Well, we killed the shark, you see—and I ordered the youngsters to be counted and thrown into a barrel. Well, sir, that barrel was chuck full of man eaters about ten inches long and there were just seventy-one in all. That's a fact, and I can show you in my log book the exact latitude and longitude where we killed the old cuss. The boys fried 'em and eat 'em, and found 'em pretty good, too. I saved out one, put him in alcohol and gave him to the Gentlemen Anglers' Society."

WESTCHESTER'S PICKLE HARVEST.

Acres of Ground Devoted to a Crop that Pays Poorly for Very Hard Work.

Some of the cucumber fields of Westchester county are many acres in extent, while there seems to be scarcely a farmer who has not devoted at least an acre or two to cucumber growing. Where the ground planted is not too low, the alternating showery and sunshiny days of the past few weeks have greatly benefited this crop. The hillsides and meadow slopes are everywhere patched brightly with the vivid green of the close-clinging, luxuriantly-running vines, and day after day, weather permitting, the stooping figures of men and boys are to be seen groping laboriously along, early and late, through the fields. It is hard, back-aching work, too, requiring a keen eye to select the appropriate vines at a glance, while brushing the concealing leaves apart with one hand and plucking the vegetables with the other. And the worst of it is that it is poorly paid labor. Experienced youngsters cannot make more than 50 cents a day at it with the hardest kind of application, while the growers themselves, who this year obtain only $1 a thousand from the salting establishments, have to get a great crop to be certain of anything like satisfactory returns from their outlay and labor.

"I have over and over again said to myself," observed an old farmer, "that I would never waste any more time and patience over 'cukes.' The price