The Democratic Advocate.

$2 PER ANNUM. WESTMINSTER, MD. SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1873. VOL. VIII.-NO. 31.

Select Poetry.

JUNE.

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, grasping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And let's his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest,—
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

The Traveler.

ARCTIC EXPERIENCES.

A WINTER IN A SNOW-HUT.

A correspondent of the *Baltimore Gazette* relates his experience in the artic regions, with Capt. Tyson, of the whaling Schooner Era, and a crew of thirty men, wrecked in the fall of 1867, in Cumberland Sound.

It was in the spring of 1867 that we sailed from New London, Connecticut, in the topsail schooner Era, bound for Repulse Bay, a small estuary at the head of Hudson's Straits, and situated several degrees inside of the Arctic circle. The object of my voyage to the extreme North was purely one of adventure, that of my shipmates the capture of the Arctic whale for his bone and blubber. Our vessel was truly a staunch little craft, and was withal as graceful, as trim and taut-looking as a New York yacht club cutter. On the wind she had heels too; and when she put on her seven-league boots, and hauled her sheets flat aft, there were few of her size that would venture to compete with her. To have seen the pretty little thing under a full spread of canvas in a stiff breeze, running up the coast of Labrador and taking the full benefit of an easterly gale, would have gladdened the heart of the most fastidious yachtsman. The Era made a fine run of it, and on the thirtieth day out we sighted the bleak cliffs of Resolution Island, and soon afterward, after a not very eventful voyage, entered Hudson's Straits. I don't know that up to this time our trials at sea exceeded those commonly endured by all mariners. It is true, however, that our supply of water had sadly diminished before we reached Cape Resolution, and visions of short allowance began to be somewhat alarming. Indeed, for cleansing purposes, fresh water was obliged to be *tabooed* soon after we left port. Performing one's ablutions in the "briny deep" may be all very well at Long Branch, Newport or Cape May, and no doubt it is extremely healthful, but when you are compelled to bathe in it alone, day after day, its saline qualities become to be far from enjoyable, and fresh water, or, as the Spaniard more aptly expresses it, *aqua dulce*, begins to be a luxury that was before indifferently appreciated. The experience of those thirty days at sea also taught me that "a life on the ocean wave" was unquestionably intensely romantic in a well furnished yacht, or when seated in a snug drawing-room at home with a charming voice to warble to you its poetic delights, but associated with unceasing deluges of sea water, long night watches, salt junk and hard bread, the romance loses all of its charm, and becomes too much of a stern reality to be at all attractive. We had hardly entered the straits before we encountered immense fields of "pack ice," setting out toward the sea, propelled by a remarkably strong current, and it was with the greatest difficulty and after days and nights of arduous toil that we were enabled to overcome the obstructions and emerge into open water. Nothing could be more thoroughly novel, at the same time transcendantly beautiful, than the picture presented then to our view. Mammoth mountains of snow and ice, formations probably of centuries, met the eye at every point. One that we passed very close to, I recollect distinctly. It was a monster mass of glacial ice, towering, in all its sublime loftiness, far above our maintopmasthead, while numberless rivulets poured incessant gushes of sparkling water in charming cascades down its terraced sides. The sun, warm indeed for that high latitude, shone with almost equatorial brilliancy upon the berg, which reflected its rays in a thousand gorgeous coruscations. The more I beheld this summer scenery of the Arctic, the more I became bewildered with its wild grandeur and wonderful beauty. That Northern land seemed to me to be stupendously majestic in its bold rocks and yawning precipices; large black headlands from which you gaze down fearfully at the waters rising and beating against the rugged ramparts hundreds of feet beneath you; where plash waves emerald green, laboring against billows that are as blue as sapphire, whilst from cliff to cliff the sea-birds never rest from flying, flapping their dripping wings in the bright spray and sunlight, plaining piteously their discordant shrieks and adding to the scene a touch of wildness that is strikingly impressive. Caves of rock and glacier abound—deep dark caverns that reverberate with charming distinctness the roar of the dashing sea. Clambering over rock and ice, far above the sea, passing from crag to crag, new glimpses of bay and fiord, reach and promontory meet you at every turn—high rugged rocks, upon whose ledges glistened with unsurpassed whiteness the everlasting snow. It was nature's intention that this should be a wild spot, but even in this vast solitude I discovered beauty that I least expected to witness, and as I skirted the shores on a bright day sometime after we had entered the Arctic Circle, I not unfrequently came upon a protected, secluded locality amid the snow and ice where the reflected rays of the sun had formed a delightful miniature garden, green with mosses and shrubs, or what pass for such in the paucity of Arctic vegetation. After several weeks buffetting with head winds and encountering an almost interminable succession of fields of thick-ribbed ice, we reached our supposed destination toward the latter part of August, and came to anchor at the upper end of Repulse Bay, in a cosy little harbor, which we found to be situated in latitude 69 degrees 26 minutes north, and longitude 86 degrees 22 minutes west. It was on the day after my arrival in Repulse Bay that I was presented to the late Capt. C. F. Hall. Then when I entered Captain Hall's *tupik*, or seal skin tent, pitched on an island not very far distant from our anchorage, I discovered the explorer seated, cross-legged, on a deer skin mat, with an Esquimaux on one side, and a huge native dog at his feet. Capt. Hall's quarters presented to me a more repulsive picture than any negro hut or Indian wigwam I had ever beheld.

Captain Hall then told me that he felt fully capable of enduring the utmost amount of hardship, and accommodating himself to the exigencies of the most loathsome life imaginable, arguing that the adaptation of the Caucasian to the habits of the Esquimaux, was the only sure method to escape the great Arctic curse, scurvy. I found a more agreeable and fully as reliable preventive in constant exercise, and the excitement of the sport of harpooning, capturing and killing the mammoth Polar whale. Perhaps the element of constant danger enhanced the charm of this peculiar avocation.

Our stay in Repulse Bay was of short duration, in consequence, as the commander of the Era termed it, of the scarcity of blubber; and the 1st of September found us retracing our tortuous track through the pack ice of Hudson's Straits, towards the open sea, where we arrived after two weeks of incessant toil, and after having a much more dangerous and difficult passage than we experienced a month previous. Reaching the open sea, the vessel was headed northward, and on the 5th of October, 1867, we dropped anchor in the harbor of Nyantilick, a small inlet of Cumberland Gulf, and situated in latitude 69 degrees 15 minutes west. Our life was now almost exclusively spent in the open boats, and though it was an existence of uninterrupted toil, the hardships as yet were comparatively light. We had long since discarded the clothes of the white man, and being provided with native garments, the suffering from the cold, which daily become more intense, was not so great. By the middle of October the ice commenced to form so rapidly that we were forced to relinquish the duty in the whale boats, just previous to which, however, we were fortunate enough to catch I think, the most enormous fish I ever saw. The monster was towed to the shore, and at high tide was hauled, by means of immense tackles, far up on the rocks, and there at every ebb of the tide went through the almost interminable process of being peeled of his blubber, the natives and dogs (the latter we had brought from Hudson's Straits), disposed of the carcase. As soon as our operations in the open boats had ceased, our vessel was towed out of her harbor at Nyantilick and carried about seven or eight miles out into the gulf, where she was moored stem and stern under the lee of a small island bleak and barren as all of them were, which was called by the Esquimaux Umanockjuak. This removal was made in order that the ship might be more convenient to the scene of operations in the summer when the whaling was resumed, the ice breaking up at least a month sooner in the open gulf, would thus enable the vessel to move into open water, which could not have been accomplished had she remained in the close harbor of Nyantilick. Under the lee of the island, then, the Era, the brig Isabella, and the schooner Quickstep first prepared to go into winter quarters, on the 5th of November, 1867. The ice all around us had then become one solid mass, and was fully twelve or fourteen feet thick. No open water was visible as far as the eye could reach out into the gulf, and we were beginning to feel ourselves secure, having banished from our minds all thoughts of a thaw, or a gale from the southward strong enough to break down the barrier of ice that protected us. On the 9th, however, at midnight, the wind suddenly hauled to the southward and westward, and commenced blowing frightfully. Early one morning coming on deck I saw at once that danger was imminent. At 1, A. M. it was blowing a lively gale, and the ice had already began to break up around the ship. The tremendous pressure of vast fields of heavy ice against the little vessel very soon caused her to part the heavy port cable to which we had been riding with 60 fathoms of chain. The ship at once swung around, snapping her bow and stern lashing as though they were mere shreds of silk, and carrying away a portion of the upper works of the Isabella, which vessel we had run down. After sustaining no further injury from the collision, the two vessels were lashed together, but hardly had this been accomplished, when it was discovered that a strong hawser, which now alone prevented the two ships from dashing upon the rocks, and which was made fast around a ledge of rocks ashore, had chafed apart. We were in great peril, and I hardly think there was a man among us who did not freely appreciate his danger. Volunteers were called for to secure the hawser and refasten it ashore. The bland was fully five hundred yards distant, the ice was in motion all around us, the night was as dark as Erebus, and those who offered their services knew well that what was to be done would be dangerous in the extreme, and that it must be done quickly and effectually. I was of the party; we had reached the shore and accomplished our task, and were retunring when we were hailed from the ship to come abroad at once, as the ice was moving rapidly from around the vessel, and was carrying her out to sea, having parted again the hawser we thought we had so thoroughly fastened. I think those five hundred yards to the ship on that dreadful night were the most rapidly accomplished I ever traveled over in my life, and my feelings while on the moving ice, in the pitchy darkness, and the vessel not discernable through the driving sleet and snow, I confess, were anything but pleasant.—Luckily we stumbled over the parted hawser, and following it from floe to floe, reached the ship just in time to be pulled up over the side as she moved out into the bay, dragging her best bower and a hundred fathoms of chain with her. The scene on deck was a most appalling one. The confusion upon the decks of both vessels as they moved off from their moorings, lashed side and side, the dreary moaning of the wind through the rigging, the crashing noise of the breaking spars, the heavy booming of the immense fields of ice as they struck the sides of the ships, and made them quiver like aspens, the mournful howlings of the poor dogs, pleading piteously to be taken aboard from the floating masses of ice around us, the piercing screams of the natives ashore, who thought that we were about to go to the bottom, added to the hoarse yells of the officers issuing their orders, made up as perfect a picture of terror as could possibly be imagined. We were adrift in the ice pack, with rugged, rock-bound shores all around us, the sea running mountains high, and threatening destruction to everything before it. Every man remained upon deck until it was seen that it was beyond the power of human skill to prevent the vessel from soon becoming a total wreck, when, thoroughly resigned to our fate, we went below and waited, with a strange but awful feeling, the dread moment when we were to be consigned to an Arctic grave. All that night the two vessels drifted together, amid immense masses of ice, through narrow inlets, among myriads of islets, and around numberless monster bergs, but "the finger of God was upon us," and we were saved! Miraculously, the remaining fluke of the heavy anchor we had been dragging became entangled in a ledge of rocks at the bottom of a narrow fiord into which we had drifted towards the close of the second day after our breaking out. In a few days we were back again in our old quarters, and frozen in as tight and as securely, apparently, as ever, and though we had in the short weeks that were to come, previous to our great disaster, many similar experiences, none equalled the terror inspired by the events of the night of the 9th of November, 1867. By the 6th of December we thought we had fairly settled down in our quarters for the long winter. The topmasts had been housed, and surplus stores sleded ashore and *cached*, the main deck had been completely planked over; the scuttles of the cabin and forecastle companion-ways had been rendered impervious to the weather by a covering of snow blocks, with a tortuous passage similar to the approaches to an Esquimaux ice-hut, and everything aboard ship seemed to wear an air of comparative comfort. But on the night of the 6th a violent gale set in from the south, which raged with uninterrupted fury for four days, and though we had taken every precaution to prevent the ship from being carried out to sea again, the immense power of the "pack ice" impelled by the driving gale, became at length irresistable, and once more the two vessels, lashed side by side, began drifting rudderless amid the huge bergs and dangerous reefs of Cumberland Inlet. In this sad plight, utterly powerless to remedy our situation, we remained for four long days, every moment expecting the little vessel to be dashed to atoms upon some sharp-pointed reef, or split asunder by violent collisions with the monster fields of heavy ice which came rapidly driving in upon us. It was toward midnight on the 10th that the gale shifted to the northward, and the brig to which we had been lashed after smashing our davits, and carrying away all of the small boats on that side, and staving in our port bulwarks, parted company with us, and hoisting sail ran upon the rocks at Umanockjuak, where she soon went to pieces. The wind had hardly settled well from the north before the pack ice was down upon us, and began rapidly piling itself up in huge incongruous masses against the sides of the ship, lifting her bodily high and dry out of the sea, with her stern at an angle of fully forty-five degrees with her stem. In this condition, in the centre of an enormous pack, and driven by a terrific storm, the Era moved out for the last time towards the broad ocean. When daylight appeared it was found that "the pack" had been forced in between two very large bergs that had grounded, and there we felt safely and securely wedged, at least until the next southerly storm. By a meridian altitude observation we discoverd that we had drifted 20 miles from our old anchorage, and as the great bulk of our stores was at Umanockjuak, and our supply of fresh water ice was nearly exhausted, it was determined on the night of the 12th of December to abandon the ship and make our way to the land. This was our only alternative, for it was thought absolutely certain that in the next gale from the southward the ship would either go to pieces in the heavy ice that surrounded her, or be carried out to sea without water or provisions. It was indeed a fearful expedient to throw ourselves upon an ice-bound coast, with no shelter, but a scanty share of provisions, and in a country where the thermometer ranged during eight months from 30 to 70 below zero. At three o'clock in the morning we were called up and started with our sleds, packed with clothing, provisions and bedding, for the shore, distant about two leagues from the ship. Hardly a word was spoken, and even the officers gave their orders in subdued voices, for sad enough we all were as we pursued our mournful tramp over huge hummocks of ice, and through deep snow, with the wind piercing through our furs at every blast. Arriving after almost incredible difficulty at the foot of one of those monster promontories whose bleak and hoary heads rise abrubtly from the sea, and whose bold outlines mark the landscape with such startling distinctness, we deposited our load of valuables and selected the spot where we were to make our home for many long dreary months. I then experienced not the forlornness of my situation as a shipwrecked voyager, but a feeling of unraptured awe overcame me at the thought that I was in the midst of a wild and trackless waste, surrounded by scenery at whose desolate grandeur I was forced to stand aghast. If there were not actual peril in my position—thus alone and to a certain extent companionless—there was that amount of adventure that summons a man's courage to its post, and tells him that he must look to his own safety; and who that has felt this sensation, this proud sense of self-dependence, does not know its ecstacy? Fortunately for us, the weather became milder soon after abandoning the vessel, which enabled us to sled everything of value to quarters which we had established ashore, where we had improvised a house from the ship's mainsail and foresail. Our tent we rendered comparatively comfortable by covering it, in native fashion, with huge blocks of snow. The natives, soon after our arrival ashore, came down from above, and materially assisted us in constructing our house, besides keeping us constantly provided with fresh seal and bear meat. They built their eglows or icehouses around us, forming when completed quite a colony, which they formally christened with the uncouth cognomen of Quakjug.

With the Esquimaux, or Innuits, as they call themselves, we remained seven dreary, monotonous months, and had both ample time and opportunity to study their character and habits. But, as so much has been written by far abler pens regarding the natives of the far North than mine, I will confine myself simply to a few cursory remarks and sketches of Innuit life as I saw it. The natives we met at Quakjug were finer specimens of humanity, if any can be so denominated where all are dwarfed stunted beings, than those we met at the head-waters of Hudson's Bay. The men were not muscularly strong, but there were no drones among them, and they accomplished a great deal in their own peculiar way of working. The women were all remarkably apt, in many respects superior to the men, and all that I saw were infinitely more intelligent. I did not see one finely formed man, and but one pretty face among the women, and this was a little girl not over ten years of age. The old women were absolutely hideous, and I do not doubt but that Meg Merrilles, with her fiendish features distorted by the most violent passion, would have been an actual Hebe to most of the Innuit old wives whom I saw. The Esquimaux as a rule, notwithstanding their excessive filthiness, are a healthy race, and are naturally a gentle people, driven as they are by the relentless need and severity of their lives into close and peaceful companionship. They have no bread, no medicine, no household furniture, but of the rudest description, and have no help or resource but in the seal, the bear and the walrus, from whom they have learned how to shelter themselves, whose skins cover them, and whose unctuous flesh provides them with both food and fuel. They are, indeed, poor human waifs upon the wild white bosom of this frigid region. Attracted one day by the deep sonorous murmurings of their chant, which is the main feature in their ritual or *ancoot*, and which renders the ceremony to the ear of a civilized being anything but musical, I entered the eglow from which the sounds proceeded. I there discovered the old men and women deeply absorbed in the performance of some unholy rite over the person of a sick Innuit—a young girl. The low monotonous chantings of the savages, occasionally broken by the suppressed sobs and moaning of the poor creature in her pain, the grim swarthy faces of the old wives, spectrally illuminated by the fitful gleams from the stone lamps, together with the continuous oscillations of their dark bodies swaying awkwardly to and fro in time to the rude intonations of their barbarous song, made up a scene as wild and unearthly as any I have ever beheld. The Innuits' idea of heaven is the same happy hunting-ground which has universal credence among the aborigines of the States, and like them they always bury their dead fully equipped and provisioned for the savage elysium. The infernal regions was pictured to me by an old squaw as a place not of everlasting fire, but down ever so far beneath the surface of the earth, where the heat was very great, in fact, almost insufferable, and where noxious insects in myriads upon myriads preyed upon the unlucky damned of the Esquimaux. I amused myself with the reflection that, as far as the vermin are concerned, the Innuits' home on earth was about as near an approach to the torments of an Esquimaux hell as one could well conceive, and I doubted very much whether the hardened old sinner after a long life in his arctic home, would be very much annoyed by the punishment inflicted by his creeping friends in the lower regions. When we had been confined about two months to our eglows at Quakjug, we were honored with a visit from Ug jack, chief of all the Innuits in Cumberland Gulf. He came down to us from the northward, ostensibly to pay us a visit of state, but in reality to obtain a supply of whiskey and tobacco. There was no distinctive feature about Ug jack to distinguish him from any of his race. I had the distinguished honor of being presented to him, when we smoked and chatted quite freely. Esquimaux royalty rather gained the ascendancy in that *tete a tete*, for its representative both out-talked, out-smoked and out-drank me. I must confess, even before his Majesty became drunk, that I was not impressed with the regality of his remarks. His ideas were anything but princely, nor did his address manifest that degree of confidence which the consciousness of supremacy always exhibits, even as evinced in the lofty bearing and extreme haughtiness of a petty Comanche brave.

I had thought that up to the 6th of March I had experienced the utmost extremity of Arctic cold, but I think we far exceeded all former frigid sufferings and trials. The wind commenced blowing a violent gale from the northwest about daylight, soon after which our mercury thermometer passed the 50th degree below zero, and formed a solid mass in the bulb. Our spirit instrument graduated for a much greater fall, gradually dropped after the gale set in, and reached at noon the fearfully unprecedented figure of 72 degrees below zero, actually 104 degrees from the freezing point. With a very small house unusually tight and impervious to the weather, in which was crowded thirty-two persons, enveloped in furs and wrapped in the heaviest Mackinaw blankets, and with two roaring coal fires, kept burning constantly, it was impossible to preserve even the natural warmth of the body, and several were badly frozen in passing a few feet from the snow houses to the galley through a passage only six feet long. Indeed, one of the severest trials we were called upon to sustain, was, beyond a doubt, the sufferings from the severe climate, and nothing more distinctly marked the extremity of the cold than the singularly strange transformations that were wrought in various articles of ship stores. Potatoes assumed the appearance and were as brittle as paving stones; butter and lard suggested veracious recollections of Irish and Carracca marbles, and a slab of yellow pine was so thoroughly infused with frost that, when dropped upon the ice it gave out a ring as clear as solid steel. This extreme temperature, with the darkness and gloom of a long winter, told frightfully upon our health and spirits. In course of time our faces assumed a livid paleness, like plants growing in darkness. We became moody and dreamy, and a strange apathy pervaded all. This uninterrupted cold compelled constant confinement to the narrow limits of our house, and the lack of exercise and the monotonous diet soon brought the scurvy in our midst, and before the dread curse left us many a poor fellow was consigned to an icy grave. In March we just began to see the beginning of the end of a long dreary season of frigid agony. The southerly gales became more frequent, and the ice grew weaker and weaker day by day. The sun had not yet made his appearance, and the eye was wearied with the everlasting vista of snow and ice. Before us towered hundreds of monster bergs, and field upon field of huge hummocks stretched far away in the dim distance a vast eternity of frozen water heaped in strange incongruous masses and illuminated only by the fitful flashes of the Aurora Borealis. In April we emerged from the season of darkness—the long Polar night—during which the nearest approach to daylight was a dim twilight, with now and then a rosy streak blooming upon the belt of snow which stretched away in the far southern horizon. The clouds became daily flushed with a deeper tint of pink, and the sun's rays shot up from the verge each day more brilliantly, until at last be appeared in all his grandeur, to gladden us once more. The whole landscape, then suffused with a coloring warmer than the warmest tints of an Italian sky, while the purple line of the Polar night fringed the picture. Day after day the sun rose higher and higher, and seemed to roll listlessly along the horizon until it sank to rest behind the glaciers. As the season advanced, and time approached for the arrival of succor, the days seemed to lag with persistent tardiness. To all, this inactivity was almost insufferable, but to our gallant commander it was real torture. Finally, as the ice became weaker and weaker, and the prospect of an early gale from the south more certain, Tyson concluded to risk all, and re-embark with his men and provisions aboard of the Era, and save or lose all. The perilous undertaking was no sooner thought of than it was accomplished, and once more the intrepid Captain, with his little band aboard of his ship, awaited a battle with the ice and sea. The storm came, but what at first threatened to be our destruction, in the end proved our salvation. The monster icebergs, between which the vessel had been forced, served as a barrier against the vast fields of ice which the gale hurled in upon us, and ground to powder against its sides. Thus we lay for weeks while the pack ice outside of us was going through a grand coffee-mill process, when finally our glacial protectors, with a terrific noise, toppled over into the sea, and the Era once more floated safely into blue water. By the middle of July we had fairly commenced the Polar day—the season of constant sunshine, and I shall never forget the impression made upon my mind as I witnessed the transcendent beauties of Arctic scenery for the last time illumined by the midnight sun as we sailed out of Cumberland Gulf, homeward bound, leaving, I hope forever, a land where the voyager is constantly surrounded by the most overwhelming gradeur, by the sublimest manifestations of nature, by the most gorgeous and majestic optical illusions, and by the most repulsive facts of daily existence.

The comparatively few days subsequent to our arrival in the United States, the monotony of the voyage became absolutely unbearable. The same green water, the same white sails, the same tall masts, the same anxious faces, and one has the whole vista before him. Not even a strange sail greeted our gaze shoreward, and all of us became dull, morose and unsociable, dissatisfied with our associates, and equally so with ourselves. Such a deplorable sociable condition is the inevitable state to which a protracted voyage at sea always tends. Yet withal, when men have braved together the ice and everlasting snows of the Arctic, have been wind-beaten and drenched by the same storm, and stood upon the deck of the same frail little bark, with only a plank between them and eternity, there is a feeling of friendship which springs up between them that is difficult for one inexperienced to understand. There were a number of whole souled, noble-hearted and brave fellows aboard of the schooner Era, not the least of whom was her captain, and I am unwilling to believe that these emotions of kindness are unknown to their hearts.

Rattlesnakes.

Serpents have always had a sort of horrible fascination for the sons of Eve, and naturally there has been much romancing about their habits, especially the habits of the more venomous kinds. Most readers, then, will be surprised at some statements which they may read in the "Scientific Miscellany" of the *Galaxy*, where a Mr. Morley, chief surveyor of some railroads in Colorado and New Mexico, sets down some of the results of his observation of these reptiles, and corrects several popular delusions in regard to them while confirming some articles of the popular faith. The tales which one may hear among the southern negroes about the rattlesnake's ability to launch itself through the air to a distance of twice its length, Mr. Morley has never found verified in the course of his experience with many hundred snakes:

"It throws itself forward about three-fourths of its length, supporting its weight entirely upon the remaining fourth. In order to strike, it must lie in a coil, with its head and neck erect." Its venom is not, as has been universally asserted, injected into the wound through a hollow fang; the fangs are hollow for a part of their length, but the tip is never pierced; "the poisonsac, the position of which may be roughly indicated by comparing it to a gum-boil, is in such relation with the base of the fang that, when the animal strikes, pressure is exerted upon the sac, which causes a drop of venom to run down *outside* the tooth into the puncture." Thus it happens that rattlesnakes' bites are sometimes harmless when the creature attemps to strike through cloth, the poison being absorbed by the material. As for the rattle, it is of little value as a warning, for the striking is almost simultaneous with the sound, and is done with electric quickness—sometimes is done twice, contrary to the opinion that venomous snakes do not bite twice in immediate succession. But if the warning is of little value, the bite on the other hand, is reported by Mr. Morley to be much less dangerous than he supposed. Of thirty persons whom he has known to have been bitten, all recovered except one, and he lived twelve days after the accident. This one, by the bye, was the only one of the party who had surgical aid. The best cure for the bite, Mr. Morley says, confirming the popular belief, is to make the patient drink whiskey enough to make him drunk; and he further says that much more whiskey is required to produce this effect than if the person drinking had not been bitten. This specific, for such it may almost confidently be called, is also in use in the South, and sometimes really immense doses are tolerated. The peculiarly offensive odor of these snakes is vouched for by Mr. Morley, who says that if "one is irritated to kill him, the implement will retain the same unpleasant odor for months." One more error he corrects by saying that he has frequently killed the rattlesnake at an elevation of about 8,000 feet, although all writers on the subject say that he never is found at a greater height above the sea-level than 6,000 feet. These mountain snakes are said to be more venomous than their brethren of the lowlands, but this may be a mere conjecture based on the highland snake's greater vividness of color. Nervous readers may be pleased to hear that the part of the United States where rattlesnakes are most numerous is the strip of land, sixty or seventy miles wide, between the Rio Grande and the Neuces, in Texas, which swarms with them: "One cannot go fifty yards without seeing a rattlesnake." Moccasons, centipedes, tarantulas, and scorpions are other inhabitants of this region.

WORKING WOMEN.—Mr. C. C. Fulton, editor of the *American*, in one of his letters from Berlin, thus describes the German women:

"German women are undoubtedly able to do a man's work, and some of them do more in that line than most men are willing to. The very hardest species of manual labor is spading ground and turning over the sod. In the Park to-day we passed nearly fifty women, all strong and muscular, busily driving their spades into the earth. They worked in gangs of five, side by side, apparently as contented as if they were piercing a cambric handkerchief with a needle. When women can perform this kind of labor they are certainly on an equality with man in some things if not in all, and need no protectors. Only think of marrying a woman who can dig all day with a spade! It would not do for most of the lords of creation to have such wives, or at least to provoke them to a trial of strength.

Near the close of the first day of a great meeting of hardshell baptists, in Georgia, the local preacher said, alluding to the meeting to be held next day: "I hope that the congregation will be here by ten o'clock, for precisely at that hour we will march to the creek, where I shall proceed to baptize four adults and six adulteresses."

"James," said a young wife to her husband a few days after marriage, "you were honest enough to tell me that the chimney smoked, but why didn't you tell me that you smoked yourself."

Happiness is so independent of external circumstances, that to consider it as being invariably connected with the pomp and parade of wealth or power is entirely fallacious.

Powdered hair is again in fashion. Blonde and white are the favorite styles.

Select Poetry.

EARLY MORNING.

BY ALIQUA.

Bars of gold through the eastern window
Shine high up on the western wall;
And without in the maple branches
Bluebirds answer the robins' call.

Mists of night speed over the hill-tops,
Hasting hence when their work is done,
And smoke of engines down the valley
Looks like silver foam in the sun.

Fresh and fair and bright is the morning,
Clear and blue is the spring-time sky,
And those white doves on wing I fancy
Offering praises as they fly.

As the mists and the birds fly upward,
So our hearts on the wings of praise
Rise to the loving and watchful Father
Blessing us now with sweet spring days.

The Farmer.

Milk Setting.

Moore's Rural New Yorker says an earnest controversy has been going on for some time among butter-makers as to whether the most butter can be made by deep or shallow setting of the milk. We have the result of several experiments, and some of them so loosely made as to be nearly worthless as evidence in favor of either system. We suppose that all butter-makers must be glad to get light on this question, and we therefore print the following statement made by Hon. F. D. Douglass, of Whiting, in a recent address before the Vermont Board of Agriculture. From Mr. Douglass's ruputation as a butter-maker and a careful experimenter, his statement is of more than ordinary interest.

He says:—You will doubtless ask whether as much butter can be obtained from deep as from shallow setting? I answer emphatically—Yes, where the right temperature is maintained. Whatever doubt may arise in the minds of any upon this subject, with regard to results when the weather is cool and most favorable for the success of shallow setting, there can be no doubt with regard to this point for the entire season, and most certainly not during warm weather. I have experimented upon this subject, not so much to satisfy the public with regard to it as myself, and consequently some of my experiments have not been conducted with that nice accuracy of detail, and the results so carefully recorded, as they would have been had they been designed for the public eye. I will, however, give you the details of one of these experiments which was the most carefully conduct, that you may understand upon what grounds I base my conclusions in this matter, and if you discover defects in any of the conditions upon which this experiment was conducted, I trust you will freely point them out.

On the 17th day of June, 1871, I divided the day's milk of my entire dairy, then consisting of twenty-two cows, into two equal parts. The amount given by each cow was weighed and accurately divided by weight immediately after being drawn from the cow. One-half was strained into common pans, which were filled about two-thirds full, and placed upon shelves in the milk room. The other half was placed in pails to the depth of about eleven and one-half inches. These were set in vats of water in the same room, and the temperature reduced to 60°, which was the same as the air in the room at that time. They were allowed to stand until the milk in each had become thoroughly loppered, and it was evident that no more cream would rise. The milk in the pans reached that point and was skimmed in forty-eight hours; that in the pails stood twelve hours longer. The range of the thermometer in the room was from 60° to 63°, until the last twelve hours, when it rose to 68°. The thermometer indicated the same range of temperature in the milk in the pails as in the air, except that it did not rise so high by two or three degrees during the last twelve hours. The rise spoken of could not have affected the result, as the pans had already been skimmed, and the cream had doubtless all risen in the pails.

The weight of cream produced from the pans was 28½ pounds; from the pails 33½ pounds. This was all churned June 22, each at the same temperature, 60°, and in the same churn. Each was washed in precisely the same manner, and taken from the churn into the same butter bowl and carefully weighed. The scales used were Howe's platform scales, nearly new and in good order, but would not indicate a difference of less than one-fourth of a pound, and by them there was no difference indicated in the weight of the two batches, each weighing twelve pounds before the salt was added. The difference in the weight of the cream is easily accounted for, there having been an evaporation from the pans amounting to five pounds in weight more than from the pails, caused by the greater extent of surface exposed.

It will be seen that this experiment was conducted under most favorable circumstances for the success of the shallow setting. The result will be different whenever the temperature of the room rises much above or falls below 60°, and is relied on to temper the milk in the pans, while the milk in the pails is tempered rightly by artificial means. It will be readily seen that the amount produced by the pails will be greater than that from the pans just in proportion as the degree of heat or cold in the room rises above or falls below a right mean. It is upon this and other like experiments, with the general fact of the increased production of my dairy cows since its adoption (deep setting,) that I base my conclusions in this matter.

The advocates of deep setting, so far as we are informed, have never claimed that more butter could be made from deep setting, when both samples of milk are kept at the same range of temperature; but the advocates of shallow setting claim that that plan will produce more butter than the other. This experiment of Mr. Douglass seems to be fairly made, and if, as he says, his other experiments point in the same direction, he has good and sufficient reasons for his conclusions, since, by the deep setting, a more even temperature is maintained than in the open air, while the labor involved is less with the deep than with the shallow settings.

Over 20,000 quarts of milk are daily condensed in the cantons of St. Gall and Frieburg, Switzerland. Most of this goes to the London market.

The way to raise young turkeys is to keep them off the ground until they are about six weeks old; feed them wheat bread, soaked in buttermilk or sweet milk.

To prevent feather plucking, it is recommended to give fowls dry corn fodder. Those who have done so say it is a sure preventive of this practice.

Unlike heavily timbered countries the Kansas prairie has more springs after cultivation than in the wild state.

Plaster—How and When to Use it.

The following was furnished to *Colman's Rural World* by Prof. Joseph Luce:

PLASTER AS A FERTILIZER.—Among the manufactured products which ought to be employed by the farmers in the beginning of the year as a fertilizing agent we will place the common plaster. Its applications are numerous, and the modes of applying vary according to the mixtures of the crop.

Plaster is a compound salt or lime and sulphuric acid, known under the name of gypsum, or sulphate of lime; its composition when pure is, sulphuric acid 43, lime 33, water 24. There are often variations in the formula of commercial plaster, due to the calcination and the presence of foreign matter, such as silica and carbonate of lime; but none can be injurious in its application as a fertilizer. There are five commonly cultivated crops which contain gypsum in sensible proportion; they are: Lucern, sainfoin, red clover, rye grass, turnips; but its transformation by absorption of ammonia enables its constituents to become the food of other varieties of crops, such as wheat, barley, oats, beans, peas and vines.

Professor Liebig contends that the nature of gypsum consists in giving a fixed constitution to the nitrogen, or ammonia, which is brought into the soil, and is indispensable for the nutrition of plants. He says that "100 pounds of gypsum gives as much ammonia as 6,250 pounds of horse's urine would yield; four pounds of gypsum increase the produce of meadows 100 lbs."

GRASSES AND RED CLOVER.—After seeding when the frost leaves the ground in the earlier part of the spring (April,) we ought to sow plaster on the soil, about 100 pounds to the acre. When grass or clover are one, two, or more years old, sow the same quantity per acre; when the plant is three to four inches high, and, if possible, during wet weather.

WHEAT.—Upon winter wheat there should be a top dressing of about fifty lbs. to the acre in the fall when it comes up, and another like dressing after it has started in the spring. In cases where it has been affected by the severity of the winter, and especially in all cases where it is uneven in growth, with spots nearly killed out, a larger application should be made, full one hundred pounds to the acre, and making even a more liberal application than that to the poor spots. The effect will appear marvelous. Upon spring wheat it should be sown after it is well up—about one hundred pounds to the acre.

OATS, BARLEY AND RYE.—Upon oats, barley and rye, the application should be the same as upon spring wheat, after they are well up, and about one hundred pounds to the acre.

POTATOES.—Upon potatoes plaster should be sown upon the hill soon after the plants are up, same as upon corn, about a tablespoonful or more to the hill, scattered upon the leaves as much as possible, and then should have at least one more liberal dressing upon the vines after hoeing, and when well advanced in growth.

CORN.—Various opinions are entertained by farmers as to the best mode of application of plaster to corn; of the benefits resulting from its use there is no doubt.

A Noticeable Fact for Dairymen.

The correspondent of the *Inter Ocean* writes from Utica, N. Y., after visiting the dairy districts in Oneida county, as follows:

"The delivery of milk is greatly inferior to that of this date a year ago. Even the calves seem to have postponed their coming to wait for warmer skies, and this would point to a change of time, on the part of the farmers, in the association of their breeding stock. Whatever this change may signify, there is apparently a great decrease in the prevalence of an evil which, a few years ago, seemed to portend the ruin of the dairy business in this region. The percentage of abortions among the cows is much reduced in the record of this spring. The general belief is that the malady was not caused by organic disarrangement nor by the presence of the frightful animalculæ or poisonous substances which *quasi* doctors have conjured up for their profit, but was the result of an overtaxation of the powers of the impregnating animal, or by the employment of those too young for service. The disappearance of she evil is a fact of much value, and the farmers congratulate themselves upon it.

But the less delivery of milk at the factories cannot be wholly attributed to the backwardness of the season or the animals. I was struck by the decreasing of the herds as I listened to a number of dairymen relating their plans for the coming season. Almost all gave in a less number of cows, and spoke of preparing still more for the butcher. The importation of Canadian cows, once prevalent, has almost disappeared this spring, and many farmers are seriously thinking of throwing up their stock altogether. The favorite scheme with such is the raising hay for bailing and shipment, which just now promises good profits. The great care, anxiety and vexation consequent upon stock-breeding and the care of the animals seems to drive many to the mowing machine and the hay press. All these considerations point to a reduced production of cheese in this region. Even if the same numbers of cows were kept up, it would hardly be safe to expect so good a yield as last year exhibited, and the indications which I have noted must decrease it. Such a condition would, however, create a better demand for the yield of newer sections."

Cause of the Potato Rot.

By invitation from Lyman Reed, Esq. says the *New England Farmer*, we recently witnessed his microscopic exhibition of the insects or mites which he believes are the cause of the potato rot. There can be no doubt that the microscope reveals a multitude of living creatures tumbling about among the tissues of the bits of potatoes submitted to examination. To our eye they have much the appearance of sugar mites. They appear to be well fed, and to enjoy life as well as their more bulky fellow-beings. We also saw very distinctly what is supposed to be their eggs, as well as diminutive specimens of those just hatched—the real baby mites.

These insects are not found in the soft portion of diseased potatoes; but Mr. Reed is confident that his extended observations and experiments prove that these insects, or those hatched from eggs in the skin of the potato when planted, poison and destroy the roots, causing premature decay and death of the vines. The scale bark-louse blights and destroys the tree on the limbs of which it congregates in multitudes that no man can number. It is possible that these potato mites affect the plant in a somewhat similar manner. But being prejudiced in favor of the theory of the fungoid origin of the potato disease, neither Mr. Reed's arguments, nor his exhibition of these mites, satisfied us that his theory is the true explanation of the origin of the potato rot. But, be this as it may, his microscope introduces to our notice an interesting class of living, active beings; and we advise all who can make it convenient to do so, call on him to see, hear and judge for themselves.

Pearl-Fishing in Vermont.

The pearl-producing, fresh-water clam, or mussel, is found in some Western streams, though few pearls have yet been discovered in them. It seems that fresh-water pearls are found most abundantly in the Winooski river in Vermont, not far from its source, and in its small tributaries. Within a few years much attention has been given to hunting them, and vast quantities of the molluscs have been destroyed by the merciless pearl-hunters, yet they are still found in great numbers.

Pearls are more frequently found in clams that live on stony or gravelly bottoms, as a grain of sand or some small foreign substance that has entered the shell forms the nucleus around which the layers of pearl are made, taking an unknown number of years to form even a small pearl. Sometimes they are taken from river-beds of clay and mud. It is said clams must be seven years old before they begin to form a pearl.

The clams move slowly from place to place, crawling edgewise, leaving a groove-like track. The small end of the clam sticks in the bottom of the stream with the large end out and open, out of this a portion of the animal protrudes, but at the least disturbance withdraws, and the shell closes so tight it can not be opened without being cut at both ends. When open, the pearl if any, is at once seen in the small end, imbedded in the "flap."

The instruments necessary for "pearl-hunting" as it is commonly called, are an iron rod, flattened at one end, with barbs cut in it to draw out the clams, a handled basket to carry them in, a stout knife to open the shells, and a box of fine cotton in which to put the pearls.

Sometimes the fisherman wears high rubber boots, oftener he wades into the river with bare feet and his breeches rolled high, with his basket on arm and spear in hand. He thrusts his spear into any open shell he may see on the bottom, which immediately closes, when he pulls it out, puts it in his basket, and looks for another. When satisfied with the number he has got, he carries them to the bank, where he sits down and opens them. The experienced hunter can usually tell before opening if there is a pearl inside, as only the deformed shells contain one. Often thousands of shells are opened and the inmates destroyed without obtaining a single pearl of value. Sometimes brownish ones, lustreless, and of no value are found. The white and rose-colored ones alone have the beautiful light and desirable lustre.

Probably more depends upon luck than skill. C. H. Stevens, Esq., of East Montpelier, is one of the most successful pearl-fishers of that region, and the one who some years ago found the largest pearl that has been discovered in the United States. He says: "The largest pearl I found was in two feet of water where it ran swift. It was in the first shell I took out, and I could see the place close to it where some one else had taken out another. The pearl is ⅝ of an inch in diameter, round as a ball, and of fine lustre. It is now owned by a gentleman in New York, who values it among the thousands. It was nearly in the middle of the clam by the hinge, the only one I ever heard of being found there."

For successful hunting a still day is necessary, as a small ripple on deep water will hide the clams. In shallow water it is not so important.

Upon such a day, during a "pearl-fever," it is not uncommon to see numbers of men and boys, and sometimes women, standing in the Winooski gathering the clams, or seated on the bank opening them. In warm weather sometimes, such numbers of clams are destroyed that the air is tainted with their decay for a long distance.

Expanding the Chest.

Take a strong rope, and fasten it to a beam overhead; to the lower end of the rope attach a stick three feet long, convenient to grasp with the hands. The rope should be fastened to the centre of the stick, which should hang six or eight inches above the head. Let a person grasp this stick with the hands two or three feet apart, and swing very moderately at first—perhaps only bear the weight, if very weak—and gradually increase, as the muscles gain strength from the exercise, until it may be used from three to five times daily. The connection of the arms with the body, with the exception of the clavicle with the breastbone, being a muscular attachment to the ribs, the effect of this exercise is to elevate the ribs and enlarge the chest; and as Nature allows no vacuum, the lungs expand to fill the cavity, increasing the volume of air, the natural purifier of blood, and preventing the congestion or the deposit of tuberculous matter. We have prescribed the above for all cases of hemorrhage of the lungs and threatened consumption for thirty-five years, and have been able to increase the measure of the chest from two to four inches within a few months, and with good results. But especially as a preventive we would recommend this exercise. Let those who love to live cultivate a well-formed, capacious chest. The student, the merchant, the sedentary, the young of both sexes—ay, all—should have a swing on which to stretch themselves daily. We are certain that if this were to be practiced by the rising generation in a dress allowing a free and full development of the body, many would be saved from consumption. Independently of its beneficial results, the exercise is an exceedingly pleasant one, and as the apparatus costs very little, there need be no difficulty about any one enjoying it who wishes to.—*Dio Lewis.*

The Chinese take a curious method to prevent their pigeons from being attacked by birds of prey while circling over the cities or moving from place to place. This consists in the employment of small short cylinder or reed pipes, in groups of three or four or more. These are attached to the back of the bird, and so adjusted that as it flies through the air a very sharp sound is produced. Varying lengths of the bamboo give variety of tones to this instrument; and when a large number of birds are flying together in a flock, as is very frequently the case, the sound produced by them is distinctly audible for a great distance. It is said that rapacious birds are effectively repelled by this precaution, so that the pigeons make their flights with perfect safety from one point to another.

A CURE FOR HARD TIMES.—Be industrious and live within your means, and there will not be much need of complaint about hard times, nor much necessity for borrowing money.

By united effort, the theorist and the practical man may accomplish much which neither could effect alone.

The great secret of success in life, is for a man to be ready when the opportunity comes.

Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, but wise men use them.