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CURRENT ITEMS.

There are many war mules scattered throughout the country, but war horses have most all died out.

A rat recently made his nest out of bank notes at New York. Only thirty dollars in fragments were subsequently recovered.

To die is easy enough—but living there's the test. Any body can die, but ah, the infinite difficulty of living—Chicago Journal.

Capitalists of Los Angeles, Cal., have established a factory for the manufacture of rope from the yucca plant, better known as the Spanish bayonet.

It is rumored that there are over fifty thousand square miles of swampy land east of the Mississippi river that might, by draining, be made profitable farming land.

Clear Root, of Erie, Pa., in a quarrel with Martin Stadt Miller, had one of his fingers bitten by the latter. Blood-poisoning set in, and now Root is a living maniac.

The planet Mars has more land than the earth, and the latest theory is that Mars is inhabited by a race being similar to our own, but longevity there is far less than here.

Red hair is now fashionable in Paris. The orthodox color, according to the London Graphic, is a deep blood-red, not auburn, produced by a decoction of henna leaves.

Five men have been convicted and sent to prison at Olympia for attempting to cheat the Chinese from that place. Their sentences were five hundred dollars and five and six months' imprisonment.

In a Kentucky town stands a statue of George Washington, who is represented holding a hat in his hand. A pair of woodpeckers discovered his hat one day, and forthwith set about making a nest in its crown.

What every married man in this country wants is a trained, fierce-looking little mouse that will appear whenever called. It will stampede a family quarrel in less than time that it takes to provoke one—Massachusetts Telegraph.

An Atlanta (Ga.) citizen recently scratched the end of a needle out of his head. Twenty years ago his nurse dropped him on the floor, and his head struck the needle, which was broken off in his skull—Atlanta Constitution.

A pair of native sparrows marched up to the very corner of a month at Fort Willist and built their little nest inside of it. The gun was loaded, and the bold intruders might have fared badly had not their presence been discovered before the discharge of the gun.

A canyon or ravine by any other name would form as picturesque a feature of the landscape, surely; and yet an independent reader writes to the Star complaining of its use of the word "gully" in describing the valley through which the Rock creek takes its romantic name—Washington Star.

Una B. McLean has secured the contract for carrying the United States mails between Eureka and Palisade, Nev., on days when the train, which leaves tri-weekly, is laid off. She is being a trifle criticized at San Francisco for running the Eureka and Palisade track between those points. The distance is ninety miles, and the fair Una expects to make the run in six hours—Chicago Times.

Stillinger's method of teaching is a favorite method for teaching with many fishermen, and there is a peculiar excitement and exhilaration about it, as one stands waist deep in the surf that surges around him and feels the top of his hat that tells him he is hooked—an excitement that is heightened as the big fish is drawn shoreward, struggling fiercely in the surf, and scattering the salt spray in showers along the path of his enfolded quarry—Boston Herald.

The curious question has been asked, why oak and elm are especially liable to be struck by lightning. It was declared in 1787 that the elm, chestnut, oak and the pine were the trees most often struck in America, and in 1850 G. F. Symonds states that the elm, oak, ash and poplar were the most frequently struck in England. A Magdeburg journal, covering ten years, reports injuries to 250 trees, 165 being oaks, 34 Scotch firs, 23 pines, and 20 beeches. It has been suggested that the frequency with which oaks are struck is due to the presence of iron in the wood—Chicago Times.

A LOFTY OBSERVATORY. The Highest Meteorological Station in the World.

The Tyrolers are going to do the highest observatory on record. The advantages of regular accounts of what goes on a few thousand feet above us have long been recognized by meteorologists. The difficulty is, how to get them; and the nature of the chief objects may be gathered from the description of the kind of quarters in process of construction for the new hermit of the Sonnblick. He has to dwell in a log house on ordinary days, as in a stone residence he would probably be frozen to death. But although his wooden habitation is constructed as strongly and solidly as possible, and supported by the rock by steel wire ropes, it is anticipated that of a stormy night the whole structure may slip its cables and graze off bodily into the valley. In such emergencies the man of science in possession is recommended to retire to a massive stone tower of refuge, which, of enormous thickness, which, it is thought, will resist the very worst of the wind-furies can do against it. Here, if he can keep himself warm, the solitary life in the small there is a thunder-storm. These, however, are usual in dry weather on the Sonnblick, so three lightning-rods and a special lightning-proof fence have been added to the defenses of the observatory. The curious thing is, that an observatory is already in training to take possession of the happy home—St. James's Gazette.

Singleness of Pursuit. An absolute singleness of pursuit almost means a mind always in one attitude, an eye that regards every object, however many-sided, from one point of view, an intellectual dietary beginning and ending with one article. Exclusiveness of this kind is apt to produce serious evils. It disposes each man to exaggerate the force and value of his own particular attainment, and perhaps therewith his own importance. It deprives the mind of refreshment which is afforded by alternation of labor, and of the strength, as well as the activity, to be gained by allowing varied subjects to evoke and put in exercise its wonderfully varied powers—St. Y. Ledger.

MONACO PALACE.

A Blind Prince Who Does Much for the Emancipated Slaves of his Subjects.

After seeing the games at Monte Carlo I visited the palace of Prince Charles at Monaco. Careless writers use the name interchangeably. He understood, then, that the great gambling hell is within and a part of the diminutive principality of Monaco. The less is included in the greater. The Prince's palace is situated at the other end of his possessions, about a mile from Monte Carlo. He never occupies it. He lives in luxurious retirement at Paris on the large revenues derived from a lease of the gambling monopoly. But he is cut off from many of the pleasures of his life, as he is stone-blind. His ample income enables him to remit all taxes to his few thousand subjects and to keep a really beautiful palace on silver for all comers. He is not so wanting in any of the outward signs of sovereignty as he maintains a strong and eighty-five fellows—sixty-five army—and has a park of highly trained artillery pointing seawards. Hundreds of cannon balls are piled up symmetrically in his palace yard. At the great gates stood two very good-looking soldiers. One rested graciously on his shining musket and the other played about in the grass. Seeing me he recovered his erect position and dignity and returned my courteous salute.

With a gesture of the hand he gave me permission to enter the palace. With a gesture of the hand he gave me permission to enter the palace. With a gesture of the hand he gave me permission to enter the palace.

The blind Prince not only exempts his subjects from taxes, but he provides for several good schools and is a liberal supporter of the Roman Catholic Church. A fine cathedral is now rising at Monaco. As no resident, but only the stranger, is allowed access to the Casino at Monte Carlo, the population is not hurt by the games. Speaking of suicides, I have learned that only two days before writing my last letter on this subject, a man who had lost his all on one day's play, had whipped out a pistol and shot himself. He was quietly removed and the rattle and rattle of quinine went on without interruption. A lady, who had been watching the play on one occasion, told me that she saw a person seize from the table a little pile of money which had been won by another. He appealed for redress to the superintendent of the Casino. The latter did not stop to inquire into the justice of the claim, but immediately paid over to the second player the sum which he said had been publicly stolen from him. This little incident proves the honesty and integrity of the administration to avoid disagreeable scenes and scandals. But the suicides can't be stopped, as men, setting under the sudden impulse of despair, will kill themselves before the bank can saddle them with the donation it is always ready to make for the relief of ruined gamblers. The French Government could, if it would—in the capacity of protector and powerful neighbor—suppress the monstrous evil of Monte Carlo. But Prince Charles manages to keep in favor at Paris, not merely by his personal residence there, but by a billon-league location, which he maintains at the French capital for diplomatic purposes, just like a French sovereign—Journal of Commerce.

THE BEST WOOL.

It Can Not Be Produced Unless the Sheep Are Kept in Prime Condition.

Every man who grows wool wants to grow the best; or, if not the best, the best of the kind which he grows. It may not be the best kind, but it should be the best of its kind. Although not the best kind for some purposes, it may be the best for others. Every man should aim at excellence, whatever he does. As the tried adage has it, "whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well." This principle applies to wool-growing, and cotton-growing, as well as to any other kind of industry. Indeed, it has a universal application. But how is the farmer to grow the best wool of his kind? Simply by keeping his sheep in the best condition all the while. The secret that is in its best possible condition, will grow the best wool it is possible for it to grow. Uniformity of condition is an important point, and necessary to the production of a fibre of wool of uniform fineness and strength. The sheep must not be gorged one month and starved the next. If it is, depend upon it the fiber of the wool will show the weakness produced by starving. Neither manly effort, nor want of water, or salt, or even if it does, the expert can find it recorded in the fiber of the wool.

All know very well that the hair of people is affected by sickness and often falls out. It also gets dry and harsh and dead at the ends. The hair of a person in perfect health appears very different from that of a person in poor health. The wool of sheep is affected in the same way, by health and sickness; and as sheep are often exposed to wider and more severe extremes than persons are, their wool is more affected than the human hair. Sheep sometimes shed their wool because of sickness. In cases of suffering from cold and lack of food the wool will sometimes stop growing and when it starts again will be distinctly marked on the fiber of the wool by a hard place. There is nothing like a uniformly good condition, with no shocks given to the system of the sheep, for producing a uniform fiber and the best possible wool—National Live Stock Journal.

—Eleanor Talbot, a young woman of Lecombe, La., was standing by a window during a thunder storm, when she was struck by lightning. Her right side was burned from the shoulder to the foot, and her clothes were set on fire. Other persons in the house were so stunned by the shock that for some time they were not able to aid the girl, who was so badly burned that her life was despaired of. She recovered.—N. O. Phoenician.

—Some one has invented a dish-washing machine that is capable of washing three thousand dishes in half an hour. One special advantage of this machine is that it does not lose any time talking in the back alley with a policeman.—The Bits.

—The English census returns show that while in 1861 only 1,931 women were employed in the civil service of that country, the number has risen in 1881 to 7,574.

KID GLOVE-MAKING.

Processes the Skins Have to Go Through Before Being Converted Into Gloves.

"Kid gloves," said a leading glove-maker to a reporter the other day, "are, for the best part, made in France. There are some made in England and Germany, but the best are of French make, the principle manufacturers being at Paris, Grenoble and Chaumont. Of all the materials used for gloves kid is the favorite, yet of the manifold operations necessary to put the skin into shape to cover the hand few people have any idea. In all there are 219 separate and distinct processes that the raw skin has to go through before converted into the kid glove.

The reporter had been brushing up his knowledge of glove-making. At what period of the world's history gloves had not been made to satisfaction is hard to determine. His researches had carried him back to Genesis, where it tells of the mother of Job covering the boy's hands with the hairy skin of a goat in order to save him from satisfaction. It is said that the earliest mention of gloves, coming down to a late date, Homer sings about them, and they are spoken of in Shakespeare's writings, having exhausted his own time and patience, the reporter had gone to the local glove-maker.

"The first thing to do," continued the latter, "is to get the hair from the skin. A three week's bath in lime-water does the work, as skins are constantly tanned and shifted, and when taken out the hair comes off easily.

"From the time that the skins go to the tanning room, where they are stretched on a wooden block and are wrapped with a blunt knife. Then they are taken by the fisher, who cuts away all the worthless parts, that are used for glue and gelatine, while the hair goes to the tanner. The tanner then takes the skin and removes any hair that may have escaped the previous operations. A soak in clear water to take all traces of lime is the next step. The skins are put in, and then they are put through a process of artificial fermentation. The French call it 'mise en saumure,' and it removes every filthy impurity from the skins and renders them soft and pliable. The tanning of the kid skin is done in the usual way with bark, but they use a mixture of the yolks of eggs, wheaten flour, alum and salt. It takes about two days, one factory at Chaumont using, I understand, over three hundred tons of lime a day. The skins are kept in this mess for an hour, then being allowed to dry for twelve hours. Then they go to the drying-room, and are subjected to a temperature varying from 100 to 120 degrees. This leaves them dry, and they are next 'seasoned' or 'sammied' with cold water. Then they are stretched backward and forward over an upright knife of half-moon shape.

"Shaving is the next process, this requiring great dexterity. It is done with specially constructed knives, and moves all the under flesh. The skins are again treated to a composition of the mixture of bark, borax, soap, lime and salts of wild plants, which are used to have accepted as a perfectly legitimate substitute for corn bread. In the interior of Sweden, according to Prof. Sava, the best bread of the peasant consists of the husks of the rye, and here it is usually made of the inner layers of the pine bark, ground to a meal, which is mixed with a small quantity of rye flour to give the requisite tenacity to the dough. The Pinlanders of an older generation showed marvelous ingenuity in composing breadstuffs in which scarcely a trace of any cereal could be detected in the mixture of bark, borax, soap, lime and salts of wild plants, which are used to have accepted as a perfectly legitimate substitute for corn bread.

The finest grade of tobacco comes from Havana, and is used for what is called filling. The wrapper used mostly throughout the Union is the Sumatra leaf, and is the handsomest and best in use. In the first place, all tobacco is moistened with water, and left standing between twenty-four and forty-eight hours, according to the texture of the tobacco. It is then stripped, that is, the stem is taken out and the leaf opened and spread out on a board for the purpose of keeping it open and of giving it a flat surface. In this stage the leaf is dried and worked into cigars as fillers. The greatest precaution is always taken that the fillers be perfectly dry, or it can not be smoked and therefore the cigar would not fulfill its purpose in the least.

Cigars are rolled on flat stones by a deft motion quite indescribable to those who have not seen it. The rolling is done by the wrapper, who has a piece of the leaf on the stone, the practical fingers touch it—minute more and there is a cigar of perfect proportions, which is rapidly passed along to the next man, who snips off the pointed end with a pair of scissors. The cigars are then laid on the stone, the practical fingers touch it—minute more and there is a cigar of perfect proportions, which is rapidly passed along to the next man, who snips off the pointed end with a pair of scissors.

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—In New York a scarlet label lettered in white was put upon bottles containing cigars, in which there are more than two grains of opium or morphine to the ounce. The name and residence of the person for whom the compound was prepared, must be placed upon the label.—N. Y. World.

NORWEGIAN FLÅDBROD.

Substitution of Indigestible Bark for Rye or Wheat Flour.

Most travelers in Norway have probably had more than sufficient opportunities of becoming acquainted with the so-called "Flådbrod," flat bread, of the country. Few, however, among them who have partaken of this dry and insipid food may possibly be aware that in many districts, more especially in Hardanger, the chief ingredient in its composition is the bark of trees. This substitution of an indigestible product for bona fide flour is not necessarily a proof of the scarcity of cereals, but is to be ascribed rather to an opinion prevalent among the peasant women of the back of young pine branches, or twigs of the elm are capable of being made into a thinner paste than unadulterated barley or rye-meal, of which the Norse housewife, who prides herself on her "lightness," has "Flådbrod," puts in only enough to make the compound hold together.

The absence of any nutritive property in bark bread, whether made with elm or pine bark, and the positive injury it may do to the digestive organs, has of late attracted much notice among Norwegian physiologists, and the editor of *Nature*, with a view of calling the attention of the public to the subject, has, with the author's permission, printed some remarks by Dr. Schubeler on the history and character of the bark bread of Scandinavia. From this source we learn that the oldest reference to the use of bark bread in Norway occurs in a poem, ascribed to the Skald Sigvat, who lived in the first half of the eleventh century. In the year 1300 the annals of Gotland record a season of dearth in which men were forced to eat the bark and leaves of trees, while then, and during the latter periods of the middle ages, the frequent famine of the crops in all parts of Scandinavia led to the systematic use of the bark and leaves of trees, as well as the bark of trees as a substitute for genuine flour, and so extensively was the latter substance used that Pastor Horvum, Rector, who, in 1762, wrote a treatise on the preservation of woods, has drawn attention to the almost complete disappearance of the elm in the Bohus district, which he ascribes to the universal practice in bygone times of stripping the bark for the preparation of bread.

In Norway and Finland the bark of *Stratocarpus germanica* and other forms, as well as the leaves of various species of *Rumex*, have been largely used with barley-meal in making ordinary bread of the kind called "Flådbrod." In Finland the national "pastaleipa" (bark bread), which was in former times almost the only breadstuff of the country, still ranks as an ordinary article of food in Kajana and in the forest region of Oesterbotten and Petruviala. Here it is usually made of the inner layers of the pine bark, ground to a meal, which is mixed with a small quantity of rye flour to give the requisite tenacity to the dough. The Pinlanders of an older generation showed marvelous ingenuity in composing breadstuffs in which scarcely a trace of any cereal could be detected in the mixture of bark, borax, soap, lime and salts of wild plants, which are used to have accepted as a perfectly legitimate substitute for corn bread.

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CIGAR-MAKING.

How the Popular Weed is Made by Hand and by Machine.

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BANANA CONSUMPTION.

A Strong Competitor With Native Fruits of Every Kind.

The past five years have brought this tropical fruit into such repute in the Northern States and Canada as to make it a strong competitor with northern growing fruits. The banana is a fruit that many do not favor upon a first trial, but each succeeding one is sure to bring it into increased favor, and time only strengthens its hold upon its friends. It is regarded as a most healthful article of diet, as well as a delicacy, and the consumption increases from year to year.

The banana sold in this market are grown in the West Indies, the Isthmus of Central America. The ports of shipment are Aspinwall, Port Limon, Baracoa and the Island of Jamaica. There are two varieties—the red and yellow. The red bananas come from Honduras, and are really the richest and best-flavored fruit; but they only average about seventy-five to the bunch, while the Jamaica and Port Limon—the yellow—will average one hundred and twenty-five. This makes the yellow variety the most profitable to the retailer, as the first cost of the bunch is about the same in each case. The yellow varieties now come mainly from Port Limon on the Costa Rican coast, where large plantations have been set out within a few years, and are producing enormously. The Aspinwall plantations have deteriorated lately owing to lack of labor to care properly for them, and the fruit has deteriorated to consequence. The ports to which the cargoes are shipped are New Orleans, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. New York furnishes the most of the stock shipped to this market, and arrivals are increased rapidly in amount. With the exception of a short season in midwinter, this market is continuously supplied with this fruit.

The banana is a wonderfully productive plant, it being estimated that land which will produce 1,000 pounds of potatoes will produce 4,000 pounds of bananas. It is estimated that land sufficient to grow wheat enough to feed a man, when planted to bananas will feed twenty-five. Besides its fruit the banana plant is also available in other ways. Its young leaves are cooked as greens. The old leaves are filled with an aerial juice which, when mixed with an indigestible bark or dark brown. The fibers of the leaves make a textile fabric of great beauty, known as a fine kind of grass cloth. A plantation will yield all the material for the manufacture of a cordage of the crop is much more abundant at one season.—Chicago Mail.

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COLIC IN HORSES.

How It May Be Prevented Without the Aid of Medicine.

It is with horses, in many things, as with men. The digestive apparatus in both is quite similar. Some are troubled more than others with indigestion; and any sudden or severe shock to the system may disturb the digestive organs and bring on colic. If a man eats too much green food, or unripe fruit, it will affect his digestion and give him gripes. Let a horse that is kept on dry feed fill himself with green clover, and chances are that he will have colic. Cattle often bloat up and die under such circumstances. Let the horse get very dry and take a large amount of cold water into his stomach and it may bring on colic, especially if he is not exercised after drinking and warm at the time. Getting suddenly chilled and taking cold, thus closing the action of the skin and throwing all its work of purification upon the bowels, may cause indigestion and colic. It is particularly liable to it if the horse has weak digestion and is predisposed to colic. Too much dry feed, allowing the bowels to become constipated is a frequent source of colic. In such cases, injections of tepid water, to set the bowels in motion, will bring relief. But the better way is to see that the horse has every now and then a ration of succulent food to keep the bowels open and to prevent over-heating, as well as overeating after a long fast, are both liable to bring on colic. These are all causes that common sense and a little thought ought to avoid. But, as a rule, little or no attention is paid to any of these things, and when the horse gets sick, the wonder is what could have caused the sickness. Take thought for your horses as you would for yourself; but if you are one of those who take no thought about their own health, of course this injunction will not apply. Yet you should be careful with your faithful horse, however much you may neglect your own condition.—National Live-Stock Journal.

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