

### DENMARK FARMERS.

#### THE PEASANTRY DIVIDED INTO FOUR DISTINCT CLASSES.

Feeding and Lodging the Laborers—Homestead of the Yeoman Farmer—The Law of Inheritance—Class Distinctions Concerning Marriage—Keeping Poultry.

The peasantry of Denmark are divided into four distinct classes, namely, the "Gaardmand" (pronounced Gorman), or yeoman farmer, who either owns or rents from thirty to eighty five acres (English); secondly, the "Parcelist," who owns or rents from eight to thirty acres; thirdly, the "Husmand," or cottager, with from one to eight acres; and lastly, the "In sidder," who generally rents his cottage and garden plot, and from this last class it is that the laboring man are principally drawn.

Until marriage the laboring men are fed and lodged upon the farm where they work, and in one of the buildings just referred to are the dormitories for the "Parcelist," which upon such a farm there would be about twelve, beside the foreman; there, too, is the roomy kitchen, and the refectory, where these stalwart hungry youths are fed; and particularly well fed, too, partaking of no less than five good meals a day. At 8 in the morning their breakfast is served, consisting of huge slices of bread and butter—out by a machine—with coffee and a small glass of "snaps," or corn brandy; on the island of Zealand this early meal is a kind of thick soup made of rye bread and beer, with which a salt herring is eaten. At noon dinner, which is soup or porridge, followed by meat, or codfish, or pork, with vegetables and beer; at 4 p. m., bread and butter, cheese, beer, and more snaps, and finally, a supper of porridge with milk.

The farm hands are hired by the half year, and the whole system has hitherto worked to the mutual satisfaction of both laborer and employer. This, however, is greatly due to the fact that there exists a code of laws which provides an easy settlement of all disputes between master and man. Every servant, farm or domestic, is under these laws compelled to keep a book which is officially registered, and wherein are written all his or her certificates of character, each one of which is necessarily countersigned by the magistrate of the district wherein the master or mistress resides.

The Gaardmand's homestead is substantial, square and thatched; the barns, stables, etc., are joined to it, forming together a quadrangular farm yard, with the entrance gate facing the dwelling. At the back is a garden, usually of about three-quarters of an acre, devoted to fruit, vegetables and hops, with a few roses and gilly flowers near the house door. A farmer working from sixty to eighty acres will have upon his farm two "karies," a boy, and two girls for the dairy, all of whom are helped in their work by their master and his family. Generally such a farmer keeps upon his land fifteen or more cows, four sheep, four horses and two goats; for every lammer is a horse breeder more or less. The poultry is well cared for and profitable, and forms a highly important item in her yearly budget. These farms, when owned by the yeoman, are, generally speaking, mortgaged for half their value, a fact to be attributed in most instances to the repeal of the law of primogeniture.

At present the parent is permitted, if he pleases, to leave one-third of his property to his eldest son, a clause in the law of inheritance much appreciated and in general use. As the eldest son generally raises a loan with which to buy out his brothers and sisters, with their consent, and the race being a practical one, endowed with generous instincts, this modified form of "partage force" does not appear as yet to produce the jealous feuds or to work the evil it is known to do in other countries; though, as indeed the system has not been long in force, it is perhaps rash to predict that it may effect no change for the worse during the lapse of a century. In cases where a loan is impossible, owing to a previous mortgage, subdivision steps in, and in some instances has been repeated until the minimum area has been reached under the new law already referred to. Necessarily, if the family be numerous, and all elect to retain their share in the land, they sink to the position of Husmand, and have to resort to a trade to eke out their livelihood. Should, however, a younger member of the family have had the good luck to have married the child of a wealthy Gaardmand with a good dowry, then the newly married pair proceed to buy a small farm of about twenty-five acres, and become Parcelists.

Class distinctions are clearly marked and rigidly adhered to among the peasantry. Not so very long ago it was argued from certain political platforms in the Midlands that the farm laborer who possessed "three acres and a cow" would no longer have the need to touch his hat to the squire. Judging from the Danish peasantry, however, a race fully as sturdy and independent as our own, it would appear that an increase in the number of owners of land does but augment the number of those who demand a respectful salutation from the laborer, whether he possesses a cow or not. Also as regards marriage, a Gaardmand's son marries almost invariably a Gaardmand's daughter. When the marriage of a Gaardmand's son and the peasant's daughter occurs, all the peasant's social of the district is put in a flutter, and the match is considered a grave occasion, not at all to be encouraged. The younger sons of a Gaardmand who have neither the prospect of a good inheritance nor of a good "match," usually learn a village trade, such as that of wheelwright or blacksmith; those with a better education and more enlightened may become village schoolmasters and village "vets," and sometimes, if they have a preference for horseflesh, they may take the post of coachman at the Gaardmand's, though it is rare for the yeoman class to enter domestic service. Those who do so, like those who take to a trade, lose caste, and may freely choose their wives from the Husmand's daughters, but not so the veterinary, or schoolmaster, for whom it would be unpardonable.

Fowls are kept invariably. They help to pay the rent, and often more besides. Upon the highway one meets the tiny child of 4 or 5, fair haired and blue eyed, her mother in miniature as regards dress, from the close fitting cap and large apron to the little sabots peeping out from under the long full petticoats. She is armed with a wily, and there alone to guard the flock of poultry searching for a meal by the wayside, and which, ever living on terms of close intimacy with the family, are well conducted birds, easily amenable to discipline. In winter they are stowed away in all sorts of places, in the loft, or more often in lathes.—Fortnightly Review.

### The Interest in Athletics.

The universal interest in all these trials of strength and dexterity and quickness is a feature of the time. The derided baseball crank finds himself numbered by thousands. In spite of all the mockery leveled at him, in spite of his propping and possible unfairness in results, in spite of the fact that players are but somebody's "hired man," and local enthusiasm a farce, the grand stand and the bleaching boards scarcely contain the multitudes who gather to see the fun. Lawn tennis, an importation of comparatively few years ago, is now in national repute. Lacrosse holds its own, and cricket is overcoming the objection to it as a strictly English pastime which refuses to be naturalized elsewhere. Our great races are few and our prize winners have no "grand prix" to fight for. But our breeds of running and trotting horses are improving steadily, and a larger constituency looks, day after day, with keen interest, for the record of the judges. Every form of outdoor sport has come into distinctly greater favor; and, although some of this enthusiasm will undoubtedly effervesce, it will leave permanent traces upon our life and modes of thought and habit of enjoyment.

The result of the progress of what, for want of a better term, we designate interest in athletics, will prove, we doubt not, highly beneficial. All these things have their flood tide and their ebb. The history of intercollegiate contests epitomizes theirs. The first college contests at bat and our were simple and friendly rivalries. With the awakening of youthful ambition and determination to win they were carried beyond the point of wisdom or safety. Too much of value was subordinated to their requirements, and college authorities felt themselves obliged to interfere with the single devotion to athletics that threatened physical as well as mental injury. Restrained within reasonable limits, the intercollegiate games and races will continue to play a part scarcely inferior, in their way, to the discipline of ordinary college work. So the future over general sports and amusements which now possesses the public will pass away, as it ought.—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

### Superstition of an Author.

Howard Seely, the Texan writer, who has been attracting attention for several years past by his clever sketches and stories of frontier life, and whose recent "A Yarn of the West," received favorable comment, has some curious superstitions about literary composition, and is unique in his methods of work. The most unique feature of his study is a human skull and femora surmounting a bookcase. The thigh bones are those of a man, but the skull is a woman's, said to have formerly appertained to a Mexican senorita of great beauty. There is some mystery about this relic, for the author is reticent about talking of it.

The brain cavity is lined with black velvet, and the top of the skull opens with a mirror; for this ghastly box is a receptacle for pens and the names of his heroes inscribed upon bits of ivory. It is his custom when the name of a heroine has been selected, and her character and physical attractions are in process of development, to put this title in the head of the skull and let it remain there until the story is finished. The eyes of the skull are provided with silver fronts to contain ink—the left red and the right black. When in the throes of composition this skull is used, and his fiction may, therefore, be said to emanate from the left eye, and consequently from the right hemisphere of the skull of the Mexican senorita.—New York Graphic.

### Value of the Coconut Tree.

"A full grown coconut tree will mature from sixty to a hundred nuts annually," said a Washington market dealer to a reporter. "In reality the coconut tree is one of the most valuable trees in the world, nearly every part of it being useful to man. The natives eat the young roots and also weave them into baskets. The tender leaves are crooked like cabbage, and the old leaves are made into mats, hats, baskets, fans, lanterns, etc. It is used for bedding, for thatching roofs, for fishing nets, even for writing paper. The magnificent trunk of the tree furnishes canoes, house posts and fences. The ribs of the leaves are so strong that they make excellent paddles for boats, arrows, combs, torches and no end of other useful things.

"When the wood is burned it makes the very best potash for soap. By a peculiar process of fermentation, good vinegar can be obtained from it, and also a fair kind of sugar. The name of the fruit is derived from the Portuguese word cocon and the English word nut. Cocon means 'an ugly nut,' and is said to have been given because the end of a coconut looks like a monkey's face. Last year 860,000 coconuts were brought to this market, the average wholesale price being four cents apiece. It is expected that the figures this season will be nearly 900,000."—New York Mail and Express.

### Largest Sailing Ship Afloat.

The Palgrave is the largest sailing ship afloat. She is 3,078 tons register, which is only twenty tons smaller than the new North German Lloyd steamship Lahn, and there are only about twenty steamships that exceed this size. Allowing for the great amount of room occupied by the engines and machinery of the monster steamship, together with the space devoted to their passenger accommodations, the Palgrave can carry a larger cargo than any other vessel, except the Great Eastern, that has ever made a voyage. There are only three other sailing ships in the world registering more than 2,600 tons. These are the Reliance, of 2,668 tons, built in Liverpool in 1854; the Fin gal, of 2,910 tons, built at Dublin in 1833; the New York, of 2,699 tons, built at Greenock in 1858; the New York, how ever, has an auxiliary screw propeller, though relying chiefly upon her sails. The Fin gal is built of steel and the other two are iron.—Detroit Free Press.

### A Difference in Dress.

It isn't always that a woman can afford to forget the quality of distinction in dress. They are telling of a man who died lately and left as a widow a young woman who had formerly been his cook that he succumbed to her in consequence of her appreciation of this principle. She was a good looking and intelligent girl, but he paid no attention to her so long as he saw her only in kitchen attire. But she saved up two or three months' wages, invested the money in the handsome and becoming costume of a lady, carefully arranged herself in it for an ostensible trip to the city from the suburban home, and then managed to show herself in that improved more serene and calm. She was transformed into a fine handsome lady in flattery. They were married within a month, and now she is a widow with a fortune.—New York Sun.

### ABOUT RATTLESNAKES.

#### BY AN OBSERVANT WOODMAN WHO LIVES AMONG THEM.

A Remedy for the Dreaded Bite—Market for Snake Skins and Hides—Rattlesnake Kings—Consumption Cure—A Popular Superstition—Antidote.

"The splitting of a live chicken and applying the warm flesh to a rattlesnake bite," said a backwoods resident, who lives almost within gunshot of a rattlesnake den in the Upper Shohola creek, "is believed by nine out of ten of the old time dwellers among the mountains of north-eastern Pennsylvania to be a never failing extractor of the venom of that reptile. I have never known personally a case of fatal poisoning by rattlesnake bites in human beings. In fact, I cannot remember of a single person ever having been bitten within my knowledge, and I live within ten minutes walk of a place where over 300 rattlesnakes were captured by one man in the spring of 1893, and which I can go any day and gather as many rattlers as a customer may desire. Within the past five years there has arisen a craze among city people who spend the summer in the Pike county and other North Pennsylvania mountains for specimens of rattlesnake skins and rattles, and I have myself driven a profitable business in supplying hides and buttons for that purpose for three summers. I know one summer boarding house keeper who buys these things on speculation so sell to his learners. I furnished him more than fifty big skins and as many sets of rattles last summer, and have now a contract for 100 of the same this season. I have known as much as \$2.50 to be paid for one rattlesnake skin. Some fanciers have the skins stuffed and mounted, and others have belts, pocketbooks, card cases, cigar cases and even slippers made from the skins, after a careful process of tanning, by which the colors and luster of the skin are preserved as they are when the snake is alive and ready to sink his fangs in his victim's flesh.

"The person who caught the 300 rattlesnakes two years ago was Elijah Pelton, a big double fisted woodman. He kept them all alive without removing a fang, and was the only person I ever really knew to handle live, fang whole rattlesnakes with impunity. He did this daily nearly all summer at Shohola Glen before hundreds of New York people who visited that place, and I always thought the performance a singular one to be made an attraction of a summer sojourning place, especially as Pelton did not conceal the fact that the snakes were captured within an hour's journey of the resort. He had the snakes in a large cage, which he entered and handled there at will, to the accompaniment of an almost deafening chorus of rattling from his vicious looking pets, as they darted here and there about the cage, or coiled themselves in the position they always assume when about to strike. Pelton asserts that he was bitten time and time again, but that he simply sucked out the poison, and did not stint himself as to whisky.

"There was once another rattlesnake king in Pike county named Sam Helms. He supplied himself with snakes from the same den that Pelton got his from, and was never known to be without his bosom and pockets filled with them. He died some years ago of consumption, and his death from that disease shook the faith of the old mountaineers in the efficacy of the rattlesnake as a curative power.

"The high value that is set on rattlesnake oil wherever that snake is found is widely known. I have known as much as \$5 to be paid for an ounce of rattlesnake oil, no great was the purchaser's faith in it as a cure for rheumatism, and many believe that the oil is infallible as an internal remedy for all kinds of fever, and in some places it is regarded as a never failing cure for ita. It is on record that many years ago, over in Sullivan county, the settlers on the east branch of the Delaware got together one fall and killed over 1,200 rattlesnakes at their dens for the purpose of trying out the oil for bottling. "But the uses of the live rattlesnake as a medicinal agent are not so well known. The father of one of my present neighbors suffered some years ago from an ulcer on his leg. He did not seem to receive any benefit from rattlesnake oil, so he took the advice of an old resident, now dead, and carried a live rattlesnake to bed with him and kept it there three days. The old gentleman always insisted that he was bitten by the snake, and that the poison simply counteracted the poison of the disease that was in his blood and drove it out. How true that may be I do not know, but it is certain that the man's ulcer disappeared, and he got well and lived for several years. I don't know whether the snake died or not, but very likely it did.

"Then there was, and to some extent is yet, a belief that if a consumptive should bite deep into the neck of a live rattlesnake at certain times the disease would be cured. When it was found that Sam Helms had the consumption the live rattlesnake treatment was tried on him. From all accounts he must have bitten the necks of a whole den of live rattlesnakes, but consumption's hand was not stayed, and Sam was gathered to his non-snake biting fathers.

"Another popular superstition among the old residents, and one that some of the descendants believe in yet, was to carry a set of rattles in their hats to prevent or cure headache and render sunstroke impossible. It was once believed that if a person bitten by a rattlesnake should swallow a few drops of the poison itself the former would have no effect. Not a few woodsmen I have known always had a little vial of the poison, which they extracted from the sacs at the base of the fangs of rattlesnakes they killed for their oil, to be used internally in case they should have the misfortune to be inoculated by a snake bite in their tramps through the woods. But I never knew of any of them having occasion to use the alleged antidote, although if some of them are to be believed they have taken pints of the venom during their lives. The antidote they took, I guess, was carried in much larger bottles, and was purchased at the nearest tavern.

"There used to be a man named Geer who lived near Long Eddy, Sullivan county, and who claimed to have an infallible cure for rattlesnake bites that his grandfather obtained from the Indians. But Geer would go any distance to doctor persons who were snake bitten. He claimed to have saved the lives of many people suffering from rattlesnake bites, but Geer died a year or two ago, but the secret of the rattlesnake cure is still in his family. It is a singular fact that none of the alleged antidotes for rattlesnake bites is effectual in case of poisoning by the copperhead or pilot.—Hawley (Pa.) Cor. New York Sun.

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