

SAN MARCOS FREE PRESS.

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SAN MARCOS, TEXAS

TEXAS TOPICS.

—Cotton seed sells for 15 cents per bushel in Austin.

—The Santa Fe road has reached a point within 25 miles of Fort Worth.

—Texas beef cattle sell from seven and a half to eight cents per lb in New York city.

—The Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe road will be completed to Fort Worth in November.

—The contract for building 100 miles of the road from Sherman to Mount Pleasant was let on the 1st inst.

—The German ship Crown Prince, with 1,048 German immigrants aboard, arrived at Galveston recently.

—A stalk of corn was exhibited in the town of Mason which measured eleven feet to the first ear, and to the top of the stalk about fifteen feet.

—The contract for the extension of the Texas and St. Louis road from Mount Pleasant to Dallas was let last week, and work on the same has been commenced.

—The International Railway Company have ordered two thousand copies of the Governor's forthcoming book on Texas for distribution, principally at the Atlanta Exposition.

—With a continuance of favorable weather, Southern Texas will yet make a good cotton crop, as the plant is full of blossoms and bolls in all stages of development.

—In the district court at Tyler recently, Miss Kate McCarthy recovered judgment for \$10,000 against the International and Great Northern for killing her husband, who was a road-master on said road, and was killed while propelling a velocipede hand car.

Henrietta Shield: The preliminary survey of the Fort Worth and Denver railroad struck the Canadian river, in the Panhandle, at the mouth of Big Blue, 349 miles from Fort Worth. The engineer, Captain Murrell reports a very practicable route all along the line.

—The reports of the short crops does not seem to prevent emigrants from coming into Texas. The International Emigrant's Home at Palestine has been filled with new-comers for weeks, principally from western and northwestern states, and from New York and the middle states.

—About 3,000 persons in Texas devote themselves strictly to sheep raising, while many farmers own flocks. The stock is being gradually improved, and now hundreds of thousands of excellent graded sheep, which yield fine clips twice a year and make good mutton, are feeding on the Texas prairies.

—**Burnet Bulletin:** Mr. Ebbing, a German sheep-raiser in Blanco county, started the business twenty-seven years ago with only about fifteen head of sheep. As he got in a little money, he bought a few more sheep, making it a rule not to go in debt. At this time he owns a flock of 3,500 head, a 10,000 acre ranch inclosed in a rock fence, besides several other ranches.

—**Buffalo Gap News:** The mesquite bean is becoming an object of interest to our farmers. Hundreds of bushels will be gathered this year for feed. They are equal to corn, and as our prairies are covered with the trees, and as they are native to the soil and this latitude, we will always have an abundance of food whether grass and corn "hits" or not.

—The disbursements by the state treasurer for the fiscal year expired August 31st amounted to \$3,044,613; the actual expenses were \$1,415,893. The balance consisted in appropriations for the purchase of bonds in a sum of \$500,000, retiring the public debt in support of public schools and the purchasing of bonds for the permanent schools, university and asylum funds.

—**Uvalde Hesperian:** While other Texas towns are boasting of their streets being lined with cotton, here in Uvalde they are filled with wool. All day long heavily laden trains are passing through, bearing their valuable cargoes to market, where double the price of cotton is paid for it. The immense wool interest of the West is beginning

to show its vast proportions as shearing and shipping progresses. The former, on some ranches, is finished; on others, just fairly begun. Large trains laden with wool line the road between Fort Clark and San Antonio, while great quantities have been stored at various places. The warehouses of our merchants used for this purpose, are kept full. As fast as one lot is shipped another takes its place to await transportation, or a rise in the market, as the owner may prefer. The wool is generally in first-class condition, though light in weight, owing to the long, hot summer and prevalent dry winds. It is clean, and free from burrs and grease, and would command good prices if shipped to the northern markets. The flocks are in good condition generally, and with proper care will doubtless pass the winter without an unusual amount of mortality.

A Large Paving Stone.

Scientific American.

The largest stone slab ever quarried in the United States has recently been placed before the new residence of Mr. W. H. Vanderbilt, on Fifth avenue. The stone measures 25 feet 2 inches by 15 feet, and 8 inches thick. It weighs about 44,000 pounds. It was quarried at Barreville, Sullivan county, N. Y., and the block from which it was cut is described as perfectly level, and about 90 feet long 19 feet in width. From this surface the block was cut out and then raised by wedges. In this instance the seam was so open that the stone was raised without difficulty, and what was unusually gratifying to the contractors was the perfectly clean and level bed below, which required comparatively little dressing. The block could have been made 85 feet in length, but the great weight would have made its transportation very risky. As it was, a great deal of difficulty was met in bringing it to this city. It was first rolled down a hill a distance of half a mile to the river bank, and then placed edgewise in a boat especially arranged to receive it. The canal boat brought it to the foot of West 13th street, in this city, when it was taken out by one of Delamater's floating derricks and placed upon the deck of the derrick. From 13th street the derrick was towed to the foot of West 51st street, where the stone was lifted out and placed upon two trucks built for the occasion, and capable of carrying 25 or 40 tons. Six teams of horses hauled it to its present resting place. The risk in hauling such a block of stone is very great, as a sudden jar or fall would be apt to break it. It was estimated that it would cost from \$5,000 to \$6,000 to duplicate it.

Aside from this monster stone, the others that have already been placed in position are of no ordinary size. Nineteen blocks, including the one already described, serve to make up the entire front on Fifth avenue, between 51st and 52d streets. The others average from 12 to 13 feet in length and 15 feet in width. These large pavements are all laid upon three parallel walls of solid rock, which is something of an innovation in its way. It has usually been the custom to rest them upon beds of sand, but it is frequently the case that the sand falls away and the stone falls with it, or, failing to do so, is very apt to break. The present method was expected to do away with any possibility of breaking. Other large stones have been employed in this building, among them the step from the sidewalk at the entrance on Fifth avenue, one of the largest of its kind; it is a fine blue stone, 24 feet 2 inches in length, 3½ feet wide, and 13 inches deep.

The Art of Swinging a Scythe.

A young man from the city, while visiting friends in the country, became interested in the invigorating spectacle of the farmer's hired man cutting weeds with a scythe. It suggested to his inexperienced mind the "poetry of motion." When the hired man laid down the scythe and went into the barn a few minutes, the city youth picked up the utensil and made a punge at a group of weeds. The point of the scythe struck the earth with such unexpectedness that the youth fell over the handle and plowed up the earth with his head. He was a little discouraged, but it looked so easy that he got up and essayed another stroke. This was disastrous. The blade appeared to coil around his legs like a serpent, cutting through his hip pocket about an inch, amputating his coat-tail, and then cut slices of flesh out of his calves. He is now convinced that it is easier to fall over a wheelbarrow than to swing a scythe without any previous instructions.—*Norristown Herald.*

Red River—Its Early Navigation.

A correspondent of the New Orleans Democrat over the nom de plume of *Old Times* says:

As early as 1719 Bernard de la Harp received a grant from the French government, and established a colony on Red river, near the present site of Natchitoches. The French kept up communication with the city until France relinquished the whole territory of Louisiana to the Spaniards in 1764. The Natchitoches country at this time contained a population of 811 people, white and black. The Spaniards held possession until 1803, when the French again took possession and sold the territory to the United States government in 1804. During all these years trade was kept up with the Natchitoches country via Red river. In 1806 the Spaniards were assuming a hostile attitude; General Wilkinson, of the United States army, concentrated a large force of troops at Fort Adams, and with a fleet of nine gun-boats and barges, ascended Red river to Natchitoches, and compelled the Spaniards to evacuate the country and fall back into Mexican territory. The Red river country soon after began to fill up rapidly with American emigrants, who kept up communication with this city by means of barges. This continued until 1815, when the steamboat—the Enterprise—made two trips to the falls. In 1817 steamboats commenced making trips to Natchitoches. This place for many years continued to be the head of navigation, as the foot of the great raft was only a short distance above this place. Between the years 1832 and 1838 this raft was removed, and navigation opened the whole length of the river. The time of the first forming of this raft is beyond the memory of man, nor is there any evidence on record in regard to it, but judging from the fact that it was 170 miles in length, it must have taken over a hundred years to form it. As it formed, the raft forced the water from the main channel and formed lakes covering large areas of land, sometimes 50 miles square in surface. It was not till 1848 that the head waters of this river were explored by Captain Marcy, of the United States Army, who found that the source of the river began in the Llano Estacado or great plains of New Mexico. The length of the river from source to mouth is 1500 miles. The upper portion for about 700 miles is about half a mile in width. At flood time it is a grand looking stream, but when the waters subside, there is but little of the river left, which is caused from the fact that springing from the plains as it does, where it is hot and dry nearly two-thirds of the year, the supply is limited; and further that there are few if any tributaries emptying into it worthy of mention.

The Southern System of Cultivation.

A late bulletin of the Census Department is devoted to statistics on a most interesting matter—the size and number of farms in several states, and the manner in which they are cultivated—whether by paid laborers, by renting, or under the share system. Unfortunately, Louisiana, is not one of the states, concerning which this information is given; but there are statistics from Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama and others of our neighbors, which furnish us with a fair idea of the present condition of agriculture in the south, and the changes that have taken place since the war. All of the states returned show a large increase in the number and a consequent decrease in the size of farms. Evidently, the era of big plantations is rapidly passing away, and we are trying the small farm system which, it has been found, produces more to the hand and to the acre than any other. Thus, in Alabama, the number of farms has doubled in the past decade, although there has been but a slight increase in the population of the state during this period. The number of farms in Arkansas has doubled during these ten years, while in Florida, they have sprung from 10,241 to 23,438. In Alabama, there is now one farm to every nine people, men, women and children, and in Arkansas, one to six—in other words, two out of three adult males in that State have farms to cultivate. There is considerable diversity in the several States, as to the manner in which the land is cultivated. In Alabama, for instance, half the farms are worked by their owners, one-sixth rented and one-third cultivated on shares. In Arkansas, two-thirds are cultivated by their own-

ers, one-tenth rented and nearly one-fifth worked on shares. In Florida, two-thirds are worked by hands of their owners, one-sixth worked on shares and one-sixth rented. In Georgia, half are run by the owner, a third, on shares, and a sixth rented. In South Carolina, half by the owner, a fourth rented and a fourth cultivated on shares. The advantages of these three modes of cultivation, have been made the subject of a special investigation by the census department that will prove highly interesting to the southern farmers. This matter has been discussed at length for years, whether the shares or wages system are the best—and yet both sides remain as undecided as ever. The result of the inquiries into the matter in Louisiana has already been published in Professor Hilgard's report on cotton production, but it is very difficult to arrive at any certain conclusion from this, as the reports are about equally divided—half of them declaring the share system the best, producing larger crops, but at the same time somewhat deteriorating the soil, while the other half protested against it as both injurious to the farm and demoralizing to the laborers. It was generally admitted, however, that the negro preferred the share system as it gave him independence and prevented him from spending his wages as soon as he obtained them. The weight of evidence, however, leans slightly toward the share system. The returns from nineteen parishes, the heaviest cotton producers in the state, favor it, while only eight, mainly white parishes, the country of small farms, pronounce in favor of wages.—*N. O. Democrat.*

Cattle and Meat Trade.

From the Montreal Gazette.

A few days ago we alluded to the frozen-meat business now springing up between Australia and England, steamships in that trade having been provided with refrigerator rooms, cooled by cold-air machinery. This new mode of cooling seems to meet with great favor, and we learn that another Australian steamship is now being fitted out in England by Messrs. Hick, Hargraves & Co., engineers, Bolton, Lancashire, the patentees of the cold-dry-air machinery. The steamer is to have cold-room space to carry about 250 tons of meat at a time. This new mode of carrying fresh meats—preserved in cold dry air—appears to have great advantages over the old plan of cool damp air, obtained simply by passing air over a supply of ice, as hitherto in practice on steamships in the Atlantic trade. The improved mode should receive the careful consideration of all interested in the cattle trade of Canada. The principle of these machines is that of producing cold air by the well-known method of compressing air in a closed cylinder, absorbing the heat by cooling water acting on the compressed air, and the subsequent expansion of the compressed air in a second cylinder, by which means a great degree of cold can readily be obtained. At this stage, and before the cool air is allowed to pass to the room to be cooled, a peculiarly arranged patent snow box is attached to the delivery-pipe of the expansion cylinder, and by this means all moisture contained in the air is effectually condensed in the form of snow and deposited in the snow-box; the cooled and dried air is then allowed to pass into ice room required to be cooled. Montreal has now two well-equipped public abattoirs, and is therefore well able to turn out any quantity of slaughtered animals for export, and we believe by the adoption of these patent cold dry air machines Canadian meat could be delivered in England in much finer condition, owing to the short Atlantic voyage, than Australian shipments. Besides the employment that would be given to a very large staff of our abattoir companies, the hides and offal of the slaughtered animals would be retained in the country, manufactured into leather, etc., and help to build up other important industries in the Dominion.

"SHUDGE," said a Dutchman who was pleading his own case in a court where he was arraigned on a charge of slander, "Shudge, when a man make up dot he will be a schoundrel undt a dief undt a shideboke, undt efery day de vay dot he behaves himself was der vay dot advertize he was a schoundrel undt a dief undt a shideboke, vot is der matter mit der man dot dells him he was a schoundrel undt a dief undt a shideboke. Ish dere some wrongtess about dot? Undt if it ish, where ish, it by shiminy?"—*Yonkers Gazette.*

SHAKING HANDS.

Right and Wrong Ways of Performing an Important Social Function.
From the Glass of Fashion.

Let the reader remember that there is a right and wrong way of hand-shaking. It is horrible when your unoffending digits are seized in the sharp compress of a kind of vise, and wrung and squeezed until you feel as if they were reduced to jelly. It is not less horrible when you find them lying in a limp, nerveless clasp, which makes no response to your hearty greeting, but chills you like a lump of ice. Shake hands as if you meant it, swiftly, strenuously and courteously, neither using an undue pressure nor falling wholly supine. You might judge of the character of a man from the way in which he shakes hands; there is the shake lymphatic, the shake aggressive, the shake supercilious, the shake imperative, the shake suspicious, the shake sympathetic, and the shake emotional. Charles Lamb describes also the pump-handle shake, which is executed by taking a friend's hand and working it up and down, through an arc of fifty degrees, for about a minute and a half. "To show its nature, force and character, this shake should be performed with a firm and steady motion. No attempt should be made to give it grace and still less variety, as the few instances in which the latter has been tried have uniformly resulted in dislocating the shoulder of the person on whom it has been attempted. On the contrary, persons who are partial to the pump-handle shake should be at some pains to give an agreeable, tranquil movement to the operation, which should on no account be continued after perspiration on the part of your friend has commenced." Then there is the pendulum shake, which somewhat resembles the former; but as its name implies the movement is on a horizontal instead of a perpendicular direction. "It is executed by sweeping your hand horizontally toward your friend's, and after the junction is effected moving with it from one side to the other according to the pleasure of the partie." Nor must the *tournoquet* shake be forgotten, which derives its name from the instrument employed by surgeons to stop the circulation of the blood in a limb about to be amputated. You grasp the hand of your friend as far as you can in your own, and then contract the muscles of your thumb, fingers and palm till you have induced any degree of compression you may propose in the hand of your friend. Particular care ought to be taken, if your hand be hard and big and that of your friend small and soft as a maiden's, not to make use of the *tournoquet* shake to such a degree that it will crush the small bones of the wrist out of their places. It is seldom safe to apply it to gouty or hot-tempered persons.

You will see some persons thrust forth their hand with a sudden jerk, like that of a steam engine suddenly set in motion; and lo, they have taken possession of your own and are doing with it as they will, before you have recovered breath. Others put forth their fingers with an apparent timidity or reluctance, and compel you to pounce upon them and draw them toward you, in order to perform an effective shake. Others, again, extend their hand timidly, partly withdraw it and again extend it, until you are uncertain whether or no the act of hand-shaking will be performed after all. As for the cold-blooded creatures who austere offer one or two fingers, I recommend you to ignore them; look loftily over them as if unconscious of their existence and—their fingers. But when a lady (and more particularly a fair one) does you the honor to offer her hand, take it with an air of grateful deference, which will show how you appreciate the honor; do not drop it instantly as if the touch scared you, nor hold it so long as to cause her a feeling of uneasiness.

A Large Blast.

About the middle of June a big blast was fired on the line of a new railway at the upper end of Shell Rock, twelve miles above the Cascades, Columbia River, Oregon. Chambers had been run into the cliff from nearly opposite sides, and charged with 14,000 pounds of powder. The cliff was of basalt, projecting into the river, above which it stood at the height of about 150 feet. The extent of its base was about 200 feet, and the lateral depth of rock which it was desired to move was 75 feet to 80 feet. About 40,000 cubic yards of rock was blown off into the river.