

RURAL TOPICS.

Notes, News and Thoughts Connected with Farm and Household Management.

FACTS FOR FARMERS.

Land that is not thoroughly drained will not pasture sheep without including the appearance of foot-rot.

Bedding for sheep not only promotes health but assists in preventing dirt in the wool. Cleanliness is as indispensable to sheep as to other stock.

Better feed your hay, straw and corn than sell it. By that means you "kill two birds with one stone"—you feed your land as well as your stock.

In order to secure the fastest walking horses they must be tested, and the best retained for breeding, as careful selections will result in the establishment of a breed of fast walking horses if persisted in.

A Wisconsin farmer claims to have discovered a specific remedy for the ravages of the potato bug. He plants one or two flax seeds in every hill of potatoes and says by so doing the bugs never trouble the crop.

Foalder that is properly saved, and fed in combination with clover hay and grain, is of equal value with timothy hay by weight, says Professor Searborn, but such foalder is very different from that which is exposed to frost and leaching rains.

Now that the cold weather is approaching, or with it, it ought to be remembered that a covering of felt nicely put on pipes prevents the water from freezing in them and all the train of evil consequences which frozen water pipes entail, unless the cold is unusually severe or the spell unusually protracted.

Crotched fruit trees of any kind can be kept from splitting down by twisting together one twig from each of the main branches. Those thus twisted will in five years grow into a solid branch which cannot be broken. Twigs which grow from the lower part of the branches are preferable. If there are no such twigs on the branches, a "water spout" or "sucker" should be allowed to grow; or one may be started by nicely inserting a scion into a slit between the bark and the wood, securely waxing it. Twigs from the size of a lead pencil to half an inch in diameter can be used for this purpose.

EVERLASTING FENCE.

A correspondent gives the Western Rural his method of making everlasting fence posts. He says he discovered many years ago that wood can be made to last longer than iron in the ground, but thought the process so simple and inexpensive that it was not worth while to make any stir about it. He would as soon have poplar or ash as any kind of timber for posts. He has taken out basswood posts, after having been set seven years, that were as sound when taken up as when put in the ground. Time and weather seemed to have no effect upon them. The posts can be prepared for less than two cents. Take boiled linseed oil and stir in pulverized charcoal to the consistency of paint. Pat a coat of this over the lumber, and there is not a man that will live long enough to see it rot.

PACKING BUTTER.

The secretary of the British Dairy Farmers' association says he does not know of a better method of packing butter than that adopted by the consignors of Brittany weekly in rough pine boxes, holding two dozen pounds each. The butter is made up into two-pound rolls, and is wrapped in muslin, with an outside covering of clean, white paper. The boxes measure 14 inches long, 10½ wide by 6½ inches deep, and as the lumps of butter are made of uniform length and diameter, twelve of them can be easily but closely packed on end in each box. This butter arrives in London beautifully fresh, perfectly clean, unbranded and unadorned in any way.

The secretary further suggests that boxes may be made to hold one or two dozen half-pound rolls on end in the manner described. It is not necessary to wrap each roll of butter in muslin if it is properly made into rolls of equal size and form. The muslin used is called mull muslin.

THE COST OF COLD WINDS.

Professor Shelton, of the Kansas Agricultural College, puts the question of sheltering stock in an exceedingly pointed manner. He has lately been feeding ten steers in an experimental way. He found that, for the period of ten days ending December 26th, the average gain per head was thirty-one and one-tenth pounds. The weather was warm and sunny. The steers were fed in an unobstructed barn. During the succeeding ten days, when the cold was intense almost the whole time, the same steers, fed on the same rations and in the same shed, gained but six and six-tenths pounds per head. About a year ago the Professor fed a lot of pigs for three weeks of the coldest weather, in open yards, and found them to consume more than three times the amount of food to a pound of increase than the same number of pigs in the warm basement of the barn. He has a cow kept in a bleak "Kansas barn" which shrank in her milk from one-fourth to one-half after twenty-four hours of very severe weather. From all this the conclusion is what we have so often taught in these columns, though not so carefully as the professor teaches by his careful experiments, that you cannot burn fuel as fast to support the body of an animal and at the same time have the animal stow it away

in the form of muscle and fat. The fact is that our farmers throw away one-half their feed in furnishing animal heat that they might just as well save by paying a small lumber bill and expending a moderate amount of labor.

SANITARY VALUE OF FOLIAGE.

Professor Goret, of the University of Geneva, points out that the functions of trees in streets are not limited to acting as screens for sun-shunning wayfarers—they temper the heat and serve as a protection against that—the evaporation from their leaves tends to keep the surrounding air cool and moist, and, as one of the best means of refreshing the air of a sick-room, is to place in it the plants and branches, and sprinkle them with water, a like effect is produced by trees. Sunlight is necessary to health; but trees, if not too thickly planted, do not intercept sunlight—the continual vibration of their leaves and swaying of their branches admitting the light every instant and in sufficient measure, serving moreover, to protect the eyes from the noonday glare. So far from trees impeding the circulation of the air, they help to purify it; the evaporation of their leaves determines a current from above, and the fresh air thus brought down assists in driving away the heated and dust-impregnated gases of the streets. Another useful property of foliage is that, while in hot, dry weather it moistens the surrounding atmosphere, thus rendering it filter to breathe, its effect, which is due to evaporation, ceases in wet weather.

TESTING DAIRY COWS.

A good idea is suggested by a correspondent of the Country Gentleman, who advocates the testing of the butter-producing powers of common cows as well as the Jerseys and Guernseys. "Owners and breeders of Jerseys and Guernseys in different parts of the country (he says), from time to time, test the butter-producing powers of their herd. This has of late come to be attended with considerable blowing of horns, and stripped of its disguise, I believe, understood to be an advertisement. Of course, when the animal subjected to the test performs handsomely at the pail, the result is of value to the other breeders. If a test is valuable to any particular breed, it is of value to another breed. If a test is of value for the purpose of showing farmers how that breed is superior to the common stock of the country, then the same test should be applied to common cows.

"I would like to see farmers who must and will continue to breed from common stock, make periodical tests of all the cows in their dairies. An animal, even if she is a scrub, that will produce ten pounds of butter per week is of more value for breeding purposes than one that will only produce five pounds, because the chances are many that her calf will inherit the qualities of its dam. She is also of much more value in the dairy. It would be a most excellent thing for a farmer to know how many cows he is keeping that are unable to produce five pounds of butter per week. The farmer can make a test that will be approximately correct at much less cost than that of a public test. It would not have to be sworn to, or to be advertised and would satisfy the farmer himself, who is the only one concerned. By all means let us have tests of our common cows, as well as tests of Jerseys or Guernseys."

"BEST FEED ON EARTH."

A correspondent of the Poultry Yard declares, with his experience of twenty years he must say there is no feed on this earth that is so good for young chickens, old chickens, or old fowls, as sour milk. Even old, sour buttermilk for old fowls is the best of food, but all of this must have some meal and judgment added to it. No gapes, no cholera among chickens that are fed on sour milk and kept free from lice. His feed is fresh ground cornmeal, oatmeal, and shorts wet with clabbered milk, some cracked corn and whole wheat fed according to the age of chickens. Raising chickens is something like making cheese. There is a time and a place for every step from the egg to the full-grown chicken. Experience, with the right kind of perseverance, will raise chickens and take good care of old fowls. Sour milk, thickened with shorts and meal, whole grain at night, is his best feed for eggs. It is our impression that the fresh ground cornmeal, the oatmeal and shorts, the cracked corn and whole wheat constitute a pretty good variety of food, even with the sour milk left out, and for very small chicks we would so leave it. For older fowls old milk is first class. New milk won't hurt them.

ORCHARD CULTURE.

These thoughts are gleaned from a report of a recent meeting of New England horticulturists at Boston. To prescribe one rule for all orchards is like one medicine for all diseases. It is absolutely necessary for each grower to search out the nature and needs of his trees if he desires the best results to reward his labor. Experience teaches that forty feet apart is a desirable distance for apple trees. Care in gathering and barreling fruit for storing and keeping is of utmost importance. The best topdressing for the apple is wood ashes and bone. Stable manure seems to promote growth rather than fruit bearing, but bones and ashes applied together seem to develop fruit buds and fruit, and to keep the trees not in a very luxuriant, but healthy growth. It is fully as important to keep our apple trees well trimmed in as it is our grape vines. We are young man, beginning life as a farmer, I think the first thing I should attempt would be the cultivation of an apple orchard. Prairie Farmer.

A MAN REFORMED.

A Hard Drinker for Thirty Years Abstains by Force of Will.

Nasby has reformed. There is no longer the shadow of a doubt about it. He was in Detroit the other day, and was met by a former fellow-drunkard, who expressed amazement at the revolution that abstinence has wrought in the renowned humorist.

"I know it is almost incredible," said Nasby, "but it is a fact that I have not tasted alcohol in any form for eighteen months. I'm completely reformed."

"Obviously," was the reply. "Oh! Ah! Of course. You refer to—well, to this nose?"

"Precisely. But I don't want to seem to be offensively personal."

"Don't apologize. I can afford to talk about it, because I'm ahead."

"Well, then, how did you bleach it?"

"By letting whisky alone. When I was in London some time ago I met an American physician there who said to me one day: 'Look, I can bleach that nose of yours in three days. Been experimenting with certain chemicals for twenty years. No humbug; honor bright. I can do the work. Haven't made my discovery public yet, but I'll give you a practical demonstration of its efficacy.'"

"With that he came at me with a bottle of something or another and a camel's hair brush, and proceeded to paint the red out. I wouldn't submit to his manipulations, but inasmuch as he is an eminent authority on diseases of the skin, I have no doubt that he can really restore a rummy nose as he claims. Name is Sherman, and I suppose he is still in London."

"How did I happen to stop drinking?"

"Business. About the time I stopped my business manager came to me one day and told me that 20 per cent. of the subscriptions of my weekly paper were to expire in a week, and that it was necessary for me to jump into the breach and prevent a permanent dropping out. I appreciated the seriousness of the situation, and swore that I would go to work in earnest. He said he must have two or three serial stories, and the best Nasby letters that I could write, besides a lot of other plunder."

"I had been a hard drinker for thirty years, and had lost my powers of intellectual and physical recuperation."

"Up to about 40 years of age I had been able to go to bed religiously drunk every night and attend to business with reasonable industry every day. When the crisis came of which I speak I was swallowing more than forty drinks—I estimate the quantity in gross at two gallons—of raw whisky every twenty-four hours."

"I couldn't work. Application was out of the question. I would lie in bed until 11 o'clock in the morning, and on awakening used to contemplate my boots half an hour at a time with not enough energy to pull them on. Habitually drank five or six whiskies before breakfast and then at breakfast would take another nip, with a couple of soft boiled eggs—no appetite or ambition. When I tried to write I couldn't make it go—brain sluggish, body enfeebled, and final destruction near at hand."

"Well, sir, I swore to quit the work that was demanded of me, but I'd keep putting it off, nevertheless, helpless and—no, not hopeless. The last day came around and still I had not produced a line. Then I fully realized what a miserable victim I was. One morning while I lay in bed, staring as usual at my boots, I suddenly resolved that I would never drink another drop of alcohol. I dressed, went down to the office, told the business manager that I was assuming of the manner in which I had failed to respond to his necessities and added that he probably would not see me in the office again for three days. Didn't say a word to him about my resolution on the whisky question."

"All that day I smoked incessantly, spending most of the time on the docks walking bareheaded with my face against the breeze. The weather was warm, and I was full of fever; but I held out and at 11 o'clock went to bed. Next morning to my great surprise I was able to eat a small piece of porter-house steak—hadn't touched it at breakfast before in twenty years. That was a hopeful incident. At noon I ate a fair lunch. This was better. At night I stowed away a well-made dinner. That was best of all; for when a drunkard man can eat you may conclude that he is no lost. In three days coffee began to taste good and solid food had a flavor that was delicious. My recovery was quick."

"Did your craving for liquor continue for some time?"

"I think not. It was a moral as well as a physical overturning in my case. That is, the better condition to which I had come so soon was a cause of more pleasure and exhilaration to me than any quantity of alcohol could make possible. I simply couldn't afford to put in peril that rationally happy condition."

"Do you never feel a desire to drink at this stage of the fight?"

"Possibly I do. At least and at most, along about 4 o'clock in the afternoon I feel a deep depression—not for want of a nip so much as because I am tired with work. The natural impulse then is to stimulate, but I beat it down without great effort, and in a little while it passes."

"I am absolutely certain that if I were to take one drink I should take forty. Alcohol runs through my veins like quicksilver."

"No, I don't believe I shall ever resume. I inherited a cast-iron constitution—ought to live 130 years in all, but I threw away thirty years by dissipation, and so I shall live to be only 100."

"Fun? Well, no. Can't say that a sober man has much of the sort of 'fun' that the drinker has; and it may be doubted whether many reformed drunk-

ards ever enjoy mere physical existence after reformation with the same eager zest they knew in more convivial days. Why, when I used to go over to Chase's and get in four or five drinks I owned all that side of the street. On ten drinks I had quite a comfortable balance of ready money in bank. At the twenty stage of my drinks I owned the whole city of Toledo. Haven't been very wealthy lately from that point of view."

"I want to add to my conviction that 'fun' is a disease, not a vice. Detroit Free Press.

THE ENVY OF HER SEX.

Mrs. Cornwallis-West, the Rival of Little Langtry.

Mrs. Cornwallis-West is the lady who dimmed the lustre of the Grassy Lily, thereby winning the Lily's detestation. "She is a horrid thing," she justly describes



the feelings of Mrs. Langtry for Mrs. Cornwallis-West.

Both ladies are beautiful, and both were admired by that connoisseur of beauty, the Prince of Wales. The ladies represent different types of feminine excellence of form and feature.

Mrs. Cornwallis-West is the young wife of a retired officer of the Grenadier Guards, a cousin of Minister Sackville-West. She is a little above the medium height and carries her figure with native grace. She is of a nervous temperament, and darts flashes of pleasantry from her bewitching eyes, followed by a quickness of movement which intensifies her mastery over the masculine sex.

She is not stentor and willow. Her frame is rather large, and although there is nothing masculine about her she would be termed "handsome," the quality of beauty by which men are described. The beauty came to this country last Winter and visited the West family in Washington.

IN THREE STATES AT ONCE.

The Curious Bit of No-Man's Land near Newark, Delaware.

The Maryland line is about two miles south of Newark, and the tracks of the Baltimore & Ohio extension run across the sharp angle of Pennsylvania, which extends down between Delaware and Maryland, at the point where it is five feet wide. After the first train stopped over the Maryland line most of the persons on board alighted and picked their way 250 feet through the mud and water to the point in the woods where the three States meet. The spot is indicated first by a long stone just above the surface which marks Mason and Dixon's line. Beside it is planted a triangular stone, with the initials of Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania cut on the various sides. On the west side is the following inscription: "Erected by H. G. S. Key, Md.; J. P. Eyre, Pa.; G. R. Riddle, Del., Commissioners, 1849."

Most of the visitors mounted the stone in order to say that they sat in three States at one time, others placed their thumbs on the apex of the stone in order to say that they had their thumbs in the three States at one time, while others still stood in the narrow strip of Pennsylvania and extended one hand into Maryland and the other into Delaware. The stone is about three feet high and the three sides each about fourteen inches wide. It is called a prismatic stone. Baltimore Sun.

MARRIAGE MAXIMS.

The very nearest approach to domestic happiness on earth is in the cultivation on both sides of absolute selfishness.

Never both be angry at once.

Never taunt with a past mistake.

Never meet without a loving welcome.

Never forget the happy hours of early love.

Never let the sun go down upon any anger or grievance.

Neglect the whole world besides rather than one another.

Never talk at one another, either alone or in company.

Never speak loud to one another—unless the house is on fire.

Let each one strive to yield the oftenest to the wishes of the other.

Never sigh over what might have been, but make the best of what is.

Never make a remark at the expense of each other; it is a meanness.

Never part for a day without loving words to think of during absence.

Never find fault unless it is perfectly certain that a fault has been committed, and always speak lovingly.

Never let any fault you have committed go by until you have frankly confessed it and asked forgiveness.

In France ladies pay 250,000 francs for their trousseau.

FENCE-RAILS PHILOSOPHY.

A Lecture on the Best Way of Keeping the Boys at Home.

Good morning, neighbor Jones. Anything gone wrong? You look as dismal as a tombstone. What! Your two oldest boys run off?

That is a calamity, neighbor Jones, and I'm sorry for you, sorry for them, and sorry for those traits of human nature that makes such misfortune possible. Am I surprised, do you say? Well, yes; I am surprised. I'm surprised they didn't run away long ago, and I see that you are very much surprised that I should take such a view of the case. But now let me explain, and I'll do it in my plain blunt way, for I'm no hand at smoothing down ragged facts. Your boys have run away from home, and you think they had no cause for an act which, to you, seems like base ingratitude.

But I don't look at it in that light. Your boys left home because they were starved! Yes; fire up and get mad about it if you want to! Take that hand spike and knock me off this fence if you feel that it will relieve you; but that won't make facts any less facts. I will admit that you gave your boys sufficient food for their stomachs, enough clothing for their loins, and comfortable beds to lie in. You did the same for your hogs and your cattle. But, neighbor Jones, you never stopped to consider that your boys were rational beings with higher wants than the brutes exhibit, and so I say that in the highest and noblest sense they were starved, and they ran away to satisfy those mental cravings which stood no chance of being satisfied at home. Poor fellows, how I have pitied them!

From morning till night, week to week, and month to month, throughout the year, they knew nothing but work, work, work. You provided them with no books; you took no papers for them. Not even a poor picture adorns the walls of your house. You afforded your boys no pleasure, unless it was to go to the fair once a year and possibly allow them one visit to the circus. You permitted no social gatherings at your house, and Christmas, New Year's, Thanksgiving day and birthday anniversaries were no different from other days. So I say your poor boys were starved, were ill treated and were denied the comforts of life to which they were entitled.

Yes, yes, I know, you wanted to bring up your children with the notion hammered into their minds that life is a very serious affair, and that the principal object in living and working is to save money. It is well enough to be frugal and industrious, but this can be carried to extremes like any other good thing. What is the use of money anyway, but for the comforts and enjoyments you can buy with it? And when is a better time for enjoyments than in youth? Of course you tell your boys that all the wealth you are hoarding will eventually go to them; but that is poor comfort. One dollar now will buy them more real enjoyment than fifty dollars will twenty years from now.

Now, neighbor Jones, you are not a bad man at heart. So far as honesty goes, you stand well in the community. You pay your bills and you neither rob nor cheat your neighbors; but your constant grind, grind, grind, has worn away your better nature and has substituted an artificial one. How can you change your life now, do you ask? Easy enough. You are a man of strong resolution and prompt action. Just resolve to make the most of the present. Never mind the future. Turn your attention awhile from your fields and cattle to your home and your family, but carpets on your floors where they are needed, paper your walls and adorn them with pictures. Get a book case and fill it with choice works. Subscribe for several good papers. Get your daughters an organ, and invite the boys and the girls of the neighborhood to come in and enjoy themselves. Give your boys a reasonable allowance of spending money, and don't ask them to render an account of every nickel. Give them an interest in the farm. Buy improved farm machinery, and let them use it. Give them land and stock and let it be secretly theirs. Let them feel that their home is a republic, not a monarchy. Do all these things and if at the end of the year you don't come to me and say that it has been the happiest twelve months you have had in many a year, you'll agree to eat this fence rail to the last splinter.

Too late, now, do you say, because the boys have left you? Not too late. Would you agree to reform your life in the manner I have pointed out if the boys could be brought home? You would. Very well, then, you are a man of strict integrity. Your word is as good as your bond. You have entered into a solemn contract, and I shall see that you live up to it. About the boys—well, you needn't worry about them. They are over at my house having a good time with my youngsters. You see, last night, when I was sitting on this very fence, meditating over things in general, you should come along but your two boys with bundles in hand leaving their old home behind them. Well, I couldn't see them going into the world without giving them a little advice. So I talked to them in my plain, blunt way, and the end of it was, they agreed to stop at my house for a day or so and give the matter a little thought. Good fellows, those boys are, and they'll make splendid men; but they couldn't stand it to be treated like cattle, and who can blame them?

Why, certainly, neighbor Jones, I'll shake hands with you and I honor those tears that are streaming down your cheeks, for they show that your better nature is coming to the surface. Now let me suggest that next Sunday when you go to class-meeting just omit that confession that you are a miserable, un-

worthy sinner—everybody knows that—don't implore the Throne of Grace to purify your heart and make you a new man; but just tell the Lord you have taken that contract off his hands, and intend to try to build up a little heaven on earth, and I tell you that when you come to join in the singing you will see as you never saw before, the sublimity of the sentiment in that beautiful melody "Nearer my God to thee?" Western Plowman.

NAUGHTILY AUGUST.

How His Escapes Reached the Ears of His Wife.

August Belmont is a very wealthy man and he has enough brains to use his money to make him a powerful man, but neither his money nor his power can



give him exalted virtue or freedom from annoyance. Mr. Braem, the Danish consul in New York, who was also a trustee of Trinity church parish and a prominent member of the Union and other fashionable clubs, took a dislike to Mr. Belmont. This dislike was founded, it is said, on jealousy, because August was more successful than Mr. Braem in an affair that would not tend to make Mrs. Belmont think any more of August if she knew about it. Mr. Braem began writing anonymous letters to members of the Belmont family. It is said, keeping them informed of Mr. Belmont's proceedings. For three years August wore this and then he tried to find the author of the unpleasant epistles. The letters were in a woman's handwriting. Detectives visited every real-estate office in this and other cities, and at last the one who wrote the letters was found. She was shown great numbers of men and was asked if they had hired her to write the letters, but she shook her head. At last Mr. Braem was pointed out to her and she said: "That is the man."

August Belmont demanded that Mr. Braem resign from Trinity church parish, and he resigned. The officers of the Union Club showed him a letter of resignation from the club, and he signed that. It is said that the doctor's resign from the clubs he will be expected.

The woman is a sister of a prominent State senator from this city, but she was disowned by her family years ago. Mr. Braem's friends say that he wrote the letters when he wrote the letters, and that he doesn't remember anything about them. August's friends say that this explanation is too attended to what Mrs. Belmont thinks about it isn't known, as the affair has been hushed up, and the newspapers have treated it much more tenderly than they would if somebody less influential had been involved.

THE BRIGAND SCHEME.

Hampath of Hampath Brothers Explains That It Doesn't Work.

"Are you a dramatic editor?" asked a smooth-faced young man, attired in a plug hat, a bright green holtball frieze coat, and tight checked pants, and further adorned by red scarf, yellow upper shoes, and a four-pound watch-chain, as he walked into the office, with a three-ply frown corrugating his brow. "Are you the man that prints them guys out on the profession?"

"We occasionally print interesting incidents relating to prominent artists," replied the d. e. blandly.

"Wasn't this the paper that printed that story about Giannini, the opera singer, being captured by brigands in Spain?"

"I think I remember the instance," replied the critic.

"And after they had cleaned out the tenor and his troupe, Giannini began to sing something, whereupon the chief of the robbers recognized the tenor from having heard him sing at Madrid, and was so much affected that he embraced him, returned the plunder, and escorted him safe through the country. That was the story, eh?"

"Yes, I think such were the facts," said the journalist, snuffing his watch.

"Well, it is all, guff—a regular bilk," exclaimed the professional angrily.

"What do you mean?" growled the writer, reaching for the big shears.

"Why, just this: 'Robbers ain't got no more appreciation for talent than managers have. They don't give a cent on art, them fellows don't,' and the artist gloomily lit one of the critic's cigarettes.

"Don't, eh?" said the star snapper.

"No, sir, they don't; and I'll prove it. My stage name is Hampath—you've heard of the Hampath Brothers, the great song-and-dance team, haven't you?"

The dramatic editor admitted that he hadn't.

"Well, sir, my partner, the world renowned Teddy Hampath, was up doing the northern circuit last week, and the stage he was in was stopped by road agents near Ukial. Ted had read that blamed Giannini item, so he took the boss highwayman aside into the bushes and sung him a couple of verses of 'Dat Yaller Gal Dressed in Green.'"



Alfonso XII.

The relations of this country with Spain are just now of a more interesting character than those existing between the United States and any other European country. A proposed reciprocity treaty between the federal government and Spain lives in the senate ready to be discussed with the view to either its rejection or ratification by the statesmen who constitute that body. One effect of its being ratified would be securing Cuba a reprieve from bankruptcy and ruin, a result only second in importance, to the people of this country, to the effect which the treaty would have on their own social condition and business position.

In its home political life Spain is unhappy, which is an element of painful interest to the many who love and admire that ancient land renowned in story. Unless a successful foreign policy shall save the cabinet headed by Canovas it will soon give place to an administration probably of a dangerously opposite character. A conservative, reactionary policy is now dominant, one fiercely assailed by an able autonomism which not only threatens conservative supremacy, but to sweep away existing institutions.

The young king who rules Spain is having an anxious experience. His tenure of the crown is most precarious, being dependent on the good will of the army, which is said to be largely influenced by the revolutionary opinions distributed by Zorrilla from his place of safety in a foreign country. Perhaps even worse than this to bear a sovereign who has always manifested a tender regard for the welfare of his subjects, are the consequences of the terrible visitations of earthquakes in some of the provinces of Spain, which have killed many persons and otherwise inflicted incalculable loss and injury. Then, too, Alfonso himself is slowly wasting away, the victim of an incurable consumption.

Enough has been said of Spain and her sovereign to make opportune the presentation of a portrait and sketch of Alfonso XII, in whose case is once more verified the words of Shakespeare: "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

The reigning king of Spain was born Nov. 28, 1857. He is the son of Queen Isabel and the Infante Francisco. His mother's reign was succeeded by a provisional government in 1868; Marshal Serrano was made regent in 1869; and Prince Amadeo, son of Victor Emmanuel, became king, 1870. In 1873 Spain was constituted a republic with the cortes as the executive as well as legislative power.

This was succeeded in 1874 by the present, doncy of Marshal Serrano. On Dec. 31, 1874, Alfonso was proclaimed king, and on Jan. 9 next ensuing he assumed the dignified position which he has managed to hold ever since. During the interim between his leaving Spain after his mother's abdication of the crown and his assumption of sovereign duties, Alfonso received an English military education at Woolwich, near London.

Although so young a man Alfonso has been twice married. His first wife was the Princess Marie-de las Mercedes, youngest daughter of the Duc de Montpensier, to whom he was united January 23, 1878. He was left a widower in the same year. In November 1879, he was married, in Madrid, to the Archduchess Marie Cristina of Austria. The offspring of the second union is a daughter, named after the first wife.

To consolidate his power Alfonso has cultivated influential friendships with foreign potentates. His visit to Germany in the early fall of 1883, will be remembered by every reader, associated as it was with the flitting conduct of a mob in Paris, which beset him while traveling, and vented an unreasonable spite by hissing him publicly because he had accepted from the emperor William the colonelcy of a German regiment.

Spain is not a wealthy country, but the total amount of the civil list and allowances to the relatives of the king is more than two million dollars a year. The constitution under which she is governed was proclaimed June 30, 1876. Its first article enacts that Spain shall be a constitutional monarchy, the executive resting in the king, and the power to make the laws "in the cortes with the king." The cortes are composed of a senate and congress equal in authority. Ministers are responsible, but the king is inviolable. Nine men constitute the council of ministers, in which under the king, the executive is vested.

In an unusually trying circumstance manifested kingly courage and sagacity. While no true American can be in sympathy with the reactionary cabinet under which Spain seems to be again drifting toward revolution, the downfall of Alfonso in consequence of acts not his own, would be generally regretted in this and other countries, but this is among the considerable possibilities of the year 1885, should the young king live long enough to endure the full force of the intrigue, discontent and administrative error which threaten the speedy extinction of his power.