FACTS FOR THE CURIOUS.

Cows may have scarlet fever. It attacks cows with fresh calves before others.

Coupling cars is a duty in which, according to Prof. Arthur L. Hadley, there are 15,000 persons injured every year.

Of ancient Persian paintings there are now no remains or information. The walls of the buildings were no doubt plastered and colored.

The Wars of the Roses lasted thirty years from the first battle of St. Albans to the last one on Bosworth Field, and in that time there were twelve battles fought.

Dr. J. S. H. Fogg, of Boston, has a complete set of the autographs of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, having paid $50 for one signature cut from the fly-leaf of a book.

The ancient Britons, before the coming of Julius Cæsar, were very clever at basket work. They could even make boats of wicker, covered with the skins of animals, and very good wooden boats also.

John Spaulding, of Louisville, Ky., owns a big mastiff. Not long since she captured and killed a cat, the mother of three kittens, and then, as if conscious of having done an evil deed, gathered the little orphans to her side, and has since tenderly cared for them and fed them with the faithfulness of a mother.

Farini saw many strange sights during his recent passage through the Kalahari Desert in South Africa. Of natural freaks and wonders the supply appears to be considerable. One of them is a bug which, on being touched, emits a perfume, and two or three of which, carried in his wagon, scented it delightfully for weeks.

The national health statistics, prepared by Dr. Billings, show that in proportion to the population there are more deaths from pneumonia in New York than in any other part of the country. Dr. Draper, of the New York Meteorological Observatory, attributes this to the presence of ozone in the atmosphere; other authorities, finding that the air of New York is very deficient in ozone, think it due to the absence of that healthful element.

The phrase "man alive" originated in Rugby School, England, and belongs in the vocabulary of public school words. It is an exclamation of impatience: "Man alive, what are you doing that for?" i. e: "You are a living man with your wits about you, haven't you more sense than to do that?" It is interesting as one of the comparatively few cases in which, in ordinary English, an adjective follows instead of preceding the substantive. These instances are often of a religious kind, as "God Almighty," "Life eternal," "Faith unfeigned."

Girls of a marriageable age do not like to tell how old they are, but you can find out by following the subjoined instructions, the young lady doing the figuring. Tell her to put down the number of the month in which she was born; then to multiply it by two; then to add five; then to multiply by fifty; then to add her age; then to subtract 365; then to add 115; then tell her to tell you the amount she has left. The two figures to the right will denote her age, and the remainder the month of her birth. For example the amount is 822, she is twenty-two years old, and was born in the eighth month (August). Try it.

Three Unique New York Clubs.

There are three rather unique clubs in New York that, judging by their recent growth, will in time become quite celebrated. One is the Thirteen Club, which meets at dinner at 7:13 o'clock on the 13th of each month, to disprove the popular superstition that one of every thirteen who sit down to a table will die before the year is out. The club started several years ago with thirteen at a table, but so popular have their dinners become by reason of the feast of wit and wisdom, not to say viands provided, that at their dinner next week at Brighton Beach, thirteen tables, each seating thirteen, will be provided. There are thirteen courses on the menu, thirteen at table, thirteen speeches made, and the number thirteen introduced in every possible way and shape. Not being able to make the menu card in the shape of the numeral, the suggestive form of a coffin is adopted.

The necrology of the club effectually explodes the theory of the fatality of the number and the club is gaining recruits every dinner, and will have a headquarters and take its place among the social clubs next season.

The other club is the Twilight Club, which meets at a dinner every fortnight, and after the cloth has been removed, discusses the leading questions of the day, pro and con, according to the predilections of the speakers, who are generally selected because they are known to be antagonistic. The antagonism of the speakers prevents the club from ever being a mutual admiration society, and consequently its dinners have become very attractive to a large class who enjoy this species of intellectual sparring.

The third club is the least known of the three; indeed, though with a larger membership than either, little is known of it outside of its members. It is known as the Peanut Club, and the badge of membership—a peanut—must be worn on every occasion as an ornament or amulet, in metal, jewelry or carved wood. Any member accosting another who cannot display the badge can call on him for a dinner for as many of the club as he likes. It may be the call may be made in the middle of the night and the challenged party aroused from his slumbers; or it may be that the demand may be made in the breakers off Coney Island or Long Branch—no matter when or where, if the counterfeit peanut is not produced the penalty is established. The result is that many of the members carry their emblem of membership attached to a string around the neck, and wear it night and day. The gentleman who was aroused from his slumbers wore his in this way. If the challenging party cannot produce the emblem if required by one who has, he is called on to pay the penalty, and in this case it took the form of a very elaborate dinner at the West End Hotel.—*Philadelphia Press.*

Superstitious Miners.

In the mining camps in California in early days a rabbit's claw nailed underneath the top of a table covered with a faro or monte lay out was reckoned a "dead hoodoo," and miners visiting towns adjacent to their camp on Sundays would often stick a cotton tail's trotter underneath the top of a gaming table at which they were bucking. It was not an uncommon occurrence at the close of a deal resulting unluckily for the game for the deal, lookout and case-keeper to light a candle and carefully inspect the under part of the table in search of the obnoxious rabbit's claw to which they attributed their bad luck. On one occasion a dealer was shot and fell stone dead underneath the table while attempting to remove one of the ill omened claws by the player who placed it there.—*Virginia (Nev.) Chronicle.*

AGRICULTURAL.

TOPICS OF INTEREST RELATIVE TO FARM AND GARDEN.

Exterminate the Weeds.

The weeds at the sides of cultivated fields, if there are any, and those along the hedge-rows, should be cut this month, or at any other time when they are large enough. Cut them down on a damp day, or when wet with rain, and gather them into heaps where they can be burned when dry enough. This process will destroy the greater part of the seeds in them and save much labor in killing weeds in future years. It is poor economy to use weeds for bedding, or to put them in the yards. Certainly they are worth something when converted into manure, but the weeds which will spring up where such manure is used will take more value from the manure than they will give it. The farmer's motto should be: "Let no weed ripen its seed;" but while it would not be easy to follow out that principle literally, it is comparatively easy to greatly reduce the number, and a half dozen years of careful cultivation will get a field to a tolerably clean condition where no weed seeds are carried out in the manure. And it is equally true that one year of neglect will make another half-dozen years of hard hoeing.—*Cultivator.*

How to Build a Stack.

A few simple rules are given to aid the beginner:

1. A bottom for a rick to hold 200 dozen should be ten by twenty feet.

2. Make the bottom of rails, selecting six of the largest straight ones, to be laid on the ground four feet apart, so that they will be eight feet wide by twenty feet long; then lay rails across these ground rails, ten inches apart, until they are covered; now take four small rails and lay them on the ends of the last ones laid down and the bottom is ready.

3. Begin at one end, carefully placing the sheaves across the rails, letting the butt ends reach six or eight inches beyond the platform for the first row of sheaves, and then reverse the sheaves and allow them to lap one half on the first row and so on until the bottom is covered.

4. Begin laying the first outside course at one corner, placing the sheaves so the butt ends may reach over six or eight inches with the long side of the sheaf up, and thus lay the outside course. Then for the next or first inside course, turn the short side of the sheaves up, and let this course cover about one-third of the length of the sheaves in the outside course. Thus lay the inside courses until the sheaves meet in the middle, so as to form a good elevation.

5. For all the rest of the outside courses the stacker must get on his knees and carefully place each sheaf, catching hold with both hands, long side up, letting the under side of the sheaf catch in the lower course, the inside courses to be laid as before stated, short side up, covering one-third of the outside courses. Continue this process until about two-thirds of the wheat has been put in; then turn the sheaves for the outside course, short side up, and draw in a little until the rick is complete. Do not turn the sheaves on the end of the rick, nor draw in either.

(Note 1.) The long or short of the sheaf is made in the shock by leaning together.

2. The stacker may be on his feet on the inside courses.

3. Keep the middle full, and pack the sheaves close together.

4. The heads of the sheaves must always be kept in the centre.

5. Near the top the operator will need to turn a few sheaves lengthwise in the middle of the rick, so as to keep the middle elevated. I have stacked on this plan for thirty years, and never had a stack or rick damaged by water running into it.—*Indiana Farmer.*

Importance of Good Breeds.

It may be safely claimed that a good animal requires no more room in the stable than will one that is inferior, and therefore a saving of labor is effected in lessening the cost of care and attention, it being as easy to manage the superior animal as it is to give the labor to the other. But the saving in the shelter, room, and labor is not the only item. As only the most approved machinery is used by manufacturers in order to enable them to produce goods at the lowest cost and compete in markets with each other, so should the farmer take advantage of his opportunities with pure-bred stock, and lessen the cost by increasing the amount of product.

As the manufacturer can adopt the kind of machines most suitable, so may the farmer select the kind of stock for his special purpose. While on many farms no regard is given the breeding or characteristics of the animals used, yet the farmer has it in his power to use cattle that excel in butter, beef or milk, and as some breeds combine several good qualities, his advantages are not limited. There is no necessity for devoting a stall to a cow that yields only ten quarts of milk per day when, by judicious breeding, the product may be doubled. We can point to special cows that have yielded over forty quarts of milk per day, and cows are numerous that produce over twenty pounds of butter per week. Steers have been known to gain three pounds weight daily, rams have sheared over thirty pounds of wool, and mutton sheep have attained 400 pounds live weight in two years, while the hog seems to have an easy time gaining a pound daily for twelve months.

It is not supposed that every farmer will be so fortunate as to possess animals of extraordinary merit, but as long as such excellence exists the farmer should be encouraged to strive always for something better. There is no middle ground in keeping stock. There must either be an improvement or a retrogression. The farmer who does not have some object in view will soon or late be compelled to dispose of his stock as unprofitable, as the difference in profit and loss is in the animals and their management.

The cost of improvement is, fortunately, but a small sum compared with the benefits derived, as nature has endowed the males with the capacity of begetting a large progeny. And as experiments have demonstrated that the characteristics of a breed may be transmitted through the male line it becomes but a matter of a few seasons when an entire herd or flock may be changed. If one will but calculate the additional value imparted to the stock by only a single cross it will readily be perceived that the services performed by the male more than balances his cost the first season, and as he may be useful for several years it is not only costless and economical to improve, but very profitable, as stock that formerly did not repay their cost may, by a change to grades, add so largely to milk, beef or butter as to make it an object to still further improve. The performance of celebrated animals show what can be done, and every farmer should aim to improve his stock to whatever point others have reached.—*Chicago Herald.*

Farm and Garden Notes.

An application of lye will restore to rough trunks and branches of orchard trees their original smoothness.

Carefully conducted experiments have shown that subsoil is often injurious to the land, especially so in wet seasons. Coarse, porous soils are never benefited by subsoiling.

It is the same with an animal as with a steam-boiler—the more complete the combustion of the food or fuel it gets the more satisfactory will be the result, because there is less waste.

Overladen fruit trees mature their fruit while it is yet small. Pick off one-half before much growth is made, and the remaining half may grow to as many bushels as all would if left.

Honey of different grades should be kept separate. An inferior grade put in with the best will set a lower price on the whole. At the close of each season of bloom grade the whole product.

Resources of the soil do not end abruptly at four or five inches in depth, yet there are hundreds of farms where all beneath is terra incognita because no effort has ever been made to explore.

Although flat turnips are mostly water, there is nutriment enough to make them an important addition to food for cattle and sheep, and it is therefore desirable that in a season of scarcity they be raised to the full extent of opportunity.

The *Gardener's Monthly* says: The practice of pegging down ever-blooming roses, so that they will cover completely the surface of the bed, is well known to produce very pleasing results. It is said that pegging down dahlias proves quite as satisfactory.

Do not have too many plants in the hills. If the late corn is backward and growth apparently slow thin out the plants so as to allow of more room and plant-food. It is better to have one or two good thrifty stalks than three or four weakly ones.

A good animal should be a heavy feeder. It has often been considered an advantage that an animal eat but little, but just the opposite should be desired. It takes a liberal supply of food and a good appetite to derive the greatest amount of product.

For growing cucumbers, squashes or similar plants put old sawdust or rotten wood about them. Those who have never tried cucumbers on strong, bushy stakes like pea-sticks, will be surprised to note how they enjoy it. Tomatoes do better trained to stout stakes than any other way.

If you have thin, flat stones at command, say as thick as roofing slate or somewhat thicker, try mulching a few strawberry plants with them. Tin answers the same purpose. Shingles are good, but inclined to warp. A patented clay tile is sold in some places, but stones are cheaper and better.

Lack of water is one reason why cows shrink in their yield of milk at this season of the year. Partially dried herbage is more like hay than grass, and even plenty of water to drink will not obliterate the difference. If the yield of milk is once allowed to fall off no amount of good feeding will ever quite restore it to what it should have been. Worst of all, the cow poorly watered loses flesh and will not be so good another season.

Prof. L. B. Arnold says there are several things that produce ropy milk and cream. The most common cause is the use of some medicinal weeds, especially bitter weeds—as ragweed, tansy, wormwood and some species of yellow daisy. Poisonous weeds, such as cicuta and lobelia, which cows sometimes seem disposed to take, have the same effect. I have, in several instances, known it to occur from an excessive use of good food. A too free use of cornmeal and of sugar beets has every now and then been the occasion of ropy milk, but oftener in hot weather than in cold. It is also often the result of weakness from any cause, but especially from scouring.

A correspondent of the *Southern Cultivator* thinks he has a remedy that will cure what he calls cholera. It is his opinion that hog cholera is mostly worms, and when these are expelled the hogs get well. He uses this mixture: Five pounds of copperas, twelve pounds of sulphur, four pounds of bicarbonate of soda, two pounds of blood root, one pound of mandrake root; powder and mix these well and then add two bushels of lime and twenty-five to thirty bushels of slack coal. This should be dumped down in a dry place where the hogs can get at it, but not scattered around. The smaller the drove of hogs the smaller the quantity of ingredients used in making this mixture.

A Chinese Cure for Piracy.

Particulars of the attempt of pirates to capture the steamer "Mee-foo," and the suppression of the plot, briefly noticed in the summary of news by the last steamer, show that about two hundred freebooters, pretending to be discharged soldiers, boarded the vessel at Foochow. The presence of several hundred Chinese troops on board baulked the attempt to capture the steamer, but stealing was resorted to instead. On ascertaining the character of the gang the officer commanding the troops directed the wholesale slaughter of the pirates. Red ribbons were plaited in the cues of the soldiers to distinguish them from the pirates, and the latter were decapitated as they came up from below by guards stationed at the hatchways for the purpose. Some took the alarm, remained below, and on reaching port were permitted to escape, the commander being sated with bloodshed. The deck of the ship looked like a shambles, running with blood, and littered with headless and limbless trunks.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

Spontaneous Combustion.

Spontaneous combustion is said to be an impossibility, but a phenomenon that at one time would be ascribed to that cause has lately been observed in the suburbs of Paris. In 1871, a fire occurred in a villa. The reparation was carried out under the direction of an architect, and the house has since been occupied by the same owner. One day he observed that the ceiling of the dining room appeared as if some of the plaster was about to give way, and, as the bulging increased, he called in an architect. He concluded that somehow a beam must have given away, and workmen were employed to make a close examination. It was then discovered that the wood was almost consumed. Some spark may have remained, and during fifteen years the destruction must have gone on by inches, for no other hypothesis was brought forward than one of very slow combustion. The circumstance is so remarkable as to appear almost incredible, although firemen can relate stories of a similar kind.

Half a million wild ducks are annually killed in Southern Louisiana and sent to the New Orleans market.

THE TERRAPIN.

AN EDIBLE REPTILE BELOVED BY THE EPICURE.

A Maryland Member of Congress the First Terrapin Eater—How the Terrapin is Turned Into Food.

The turtle's immediate relatives are the land tortoise and the terrapin. The tortoise was highly respected by the ancients, and is mentioned by Pliny the younger as a reptile "of calm and imposing demeanor, and wise, inasmuch as he avoideth haste."

The identity of a man who first ate an oyster is buried in obscurity. Attempts have been made by many learned antiquarians to discover that daring individual, but in vain. At one time, about the beginning of this century, a musty old searcher into the records of the past declared that a Celtic knight, Sir Mora Gan, who was the possessor of a massive stronghold on the western shores, was the first oyster cater, but he failed dismally in the presence of delegates from seventeen learned societies to establish his claim to the alleged discovery. But the names of those who took the initial plunge in the terrapin business are well-known and honored in Maryland, where the terrapin is, of all things in animated nature, most honored and loved. Daniel St. George Tenifer, member of Congress from Maryland, and afterward Minister to Austria, and John B. Morris, President of the Mechanics' Bank of Baltimore, were the heroes who ate the first terrapin that civilized man ever ate. Morris died in 1875, at the age of ninety, and Tenifer was almost as old when called away from this world, the good things of which, chiefly terrapin, he had heartily enjoyed. Mr. Tenifer argued that if the turtle, whose habits so closely resembled the terrapin, was edible, there was no reason why the terrapin should not be equally good. So soon as this valuable culinary discovery was announced, all the epicures of Baltimore clamored for terrapin. From 1845 to 1850 terrapin sold in Baltimore at from $2 to $8 per dozen. In 1860 they commanded $25 a dozen, and after the war the dealers asked $30 and $40 a dozen, and got it, too.

The best terrapin are the diamond back. These come from the eastern shores of Chesapeake Bay, and are affectionately known as "eastern shore pullets." A full-grown specimen is from nine to ten inches in length. The best season for eating them is in November, when they are taken by drags from the mud in which they hibernate. The excellent quality of these terrapin, which are much finer than any in this State, is attributed to the fact that they lie at the edge of tide water, and are alternately washed by the fresh and salt water during the twenty-four hours.

The female terrapin, when carrying eggs, as she does in the winter season, is the most highly esteemed. The male terrapin is set down as a tough fellow, and no true epicure will have him in his stew. In the cooking, the intestines, which, as the reptile is hibernating, are empty, are cut up with the other portions and are said to impart a very superior flavor. The Baltimoreans differ from the Californians in preparing this delicious dish. They cook their terrapin altogether without spice, except pepper and salt, using only butter rolled in flour to thicken it, and flavor it with old Madeira instead of sherry. The gourmets of the old days kept what they called the terrapin bottle. Into this, when the Madeira was decanted, the lees were poured, which are considered better for the terrapin stew than the clear wine. It was only after the failure of the Madeira wine crop that Baltimore gentlemen used sherry in their terrapin. In preparing terrapin for the stew pot care is taken that the gall is extracted, else the dish becomes a nauseating failure. They are plunged alive into boiling water, and when the claws pull out easily, they are done and ready to be picked for the stewpan. The cultivation of terrapin is quite an important industry in this portion of the South, and one gentleman last year cleared over $4,000 from his terrapin farm.

Terrapin are very numerous in this State, but their consumption is not at all as general as in the Eastern and Southern sections of the country. A few epicures enjoy them, but it is not easy to find a cook who thoroughly understands their preparation. They make the stews too thin, and so smother them with spice that the true, delicate flavor of the terrapin is completely sacrificed. Indeed, a cook of ordinary skill can make an imitation of terrapin with soup meat very close to the real thing as presented here, being spiced beyond recognition. In those large ponds and sloughs made by the overflow of the Sacramento River terrapin abound. They are taken with drag and scoop nets at all seasons, and sell in the markets from $2.50 to $3 a dozen. In marketing, the terrapin dealer will always try to palm off the male terrapin on the ignorant eater, while the females are reserved for their customers who know what they are about, and would not have the gentleman reptile for a gift. Along the Southern shore, in the neighborhood of Point San Pablo, are several large terrapin ponds, where they are bred for the market. Here the female is allowed to deposit her eggs undisturbed in the sandy margin of these ponds, and never raked out during the hibernating season.

A jar of terrapin is a favorite Christmas present from the Baltimore aristocracy to their English friends, and the great American delicacy is most thoroughly appreciated on the other side of the water.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

Fables for the Times.

A Hickory Nut was once floating down a stream with some apples, when it suddenly exclaimed, with arrogant enthusiasm: "How we apples do swim!" Scarcely were the words uttered, when a passer-by seized the Hickory Nut, carried it home and ground it to atoms in a cider mill.

Moral: This Fable teaches that false pretence is often its own reward; and that a liar may experience discomfiture from the very brilliancy of his own lying.

THE ASS ON THE ROOF.

An Ass one day climbed upon the roof of a house, and after playing about for a while, fell through into the room below. "The roof of a house is no proper playground for an ass," remarked the owner of the house to the unceremonious intruder. "There's where you make a mistake," responded the Ass; "for nothing but an Ass would play on such a place."

Moral: This Fable teaches that an event or circumstance, seemingly out of harmony with its environment, may bear some obscure correlation with the eternal fitness of things.—*Life.*

Chimney sweeps are apt to die of cancer, it is said.

Is the Far North Getting Colder?

The Danish government has repeatedly considered the question of assisting the natives of Iceland to leave a clime which almost every other year threatens them with annihilation. The chronic want of fuel is even more distressing than intermittent starvation; there is no coal, and trees absolutely refuse to grow. Yet when Henrick Olaf discovered the island in 872 its west coasts for hundreds of miles were covered with stately beech forests. Greenland, too, once deserved its name, and the traditions of the Zend Avesta speak of a time when Northern Asia was a land of gardens and meadows. There is no doubt that Labrador once contained five times its present population, and the chances are that before the end of another century the country will have no permanent population at all. Four weeks ago seventy Esquimaux made a descent on Mugford Harbor (Labrador), and had to be shot down like wolves to keep them from ravaging the scanty provision store of the settlers. In Astoria 115 persons out of a population of 52 families perished with hunger in the course of last winter. At Hopedale 40 squaws and 28 childrens died of starvation in the month of June alone. In Newfoundland, too, there are hundreds of starving families, and the entire north coast threatens to become uninhabitable. Is our planet undergoing refrigeration by the progressive cooling of its crust or has forest destruction thus modified the climate of the northern hemisphere?—*Dr. Felix L. Oswald.*

The Power of Electricity.

When the great iron tower, 1,000 feet high, was proposed some time ago for the Paris exhibition of 1889, many engineers doubted the feasibility of the project, judged from their point of view. However, M. Eiffel went at the problem and evolved a design which was chosen and which it is proposed to execute. On the eve of accomplishment, however, a French "savant" comes forward with a timely warning of the fearful consequences which the building of the iron tower will entail. He says that the enormous blocks of iron running north and south would become polarized, and that this polarization will soon invade the whole column. Then who knows whether the four lifts, with their continual friction, will not increase the magnetic influence a hundredfold? In this case all articles for a mile round will be attracted to the tower, and will adhere to it as a needle does to a magnet. If the troops quartered in the Ecole Militaire hard by be called out to drill, it will be all in vain for the commanding officer to shout "En avant!" if they are paraded with the column behind them. Then all the houses in Paris will suffer from a St. Vitus's dance, and, being gradually drawn toward the Champ de Mars, will finally find themselves stuck to the tower. As for locomotives entering Paris, it will be found impossible to stop them at the various termini; they will rush through the city and dash themselves to pieces against the centre of attraction.—*Electrical World.*

What Hail Can Do.

A letter written from Clifton, Illinois, to a citizen of Chicago, contains the personal experience of one of the sufferers from the recent terrific hail storm which swept over the State in a southeast direction and caused much damage. The writer says: "I have lost almost everything in the way of crops by one of the worst hail storms I ever saw, and the like of which I hope I may never see again. It took our crops clean. The hail stones came down as large as teacups and averaged as large as hens' eggs. My house is just riddled. Those of my neighbors who had blinds on their windows found them no protection, the hail stones passing through them and shattering them into splinters. In some cases they went clear through siding and plaster, and penetrated through shingles. The hail sounded like falling bricks as it struck the housetops, and the wind was terrible, taking everything, even to the largest trees, in its path. I have lived here thirty-three years next March, and I have never seen anything like this storm. I think it cleaned out from three to four thousand acres of grain. Some have a little left, but it is cut up so that I don't think it will come to anything. Some of the corn looks as if it had been the target for a cannonade with grape and canister. My crops up to the time of the storm looked splendidly. They were all destroyed in a half hour."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

STEAMERS from some of the Southern ports bring 60,000 to 70,000 big watermelons per trip. The freightage to New York is five cents a melon. Last season one company received $28,000 for watermelon freight, and carried nearly 600,000 melons.

OF the thousand or more prisoners discharged from Sing Sing prison during the last year and a half there was not one who was not able to sign his name. Many had learned this while at penal service.

HALF a million wild ducks are annually killed in Southern Louisiana and sent to the New Orleans market.

AN innovation in minstrelsy has taken place in Montana, where a negro is playing an engagement in which he "whitens up."

A NEGRO in Columbia county, Arkansas, claims to be 126 years old.