AT THE POLLS.

PICTURESQUE ELECTION SIGHTS IN THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

To a Large Class of People This is the One Great Day of the Year —How New York Votes. Duties of "Workers."

MR. ERNEST INGERSOLL has written for the Century a paper on "Election Day in New York." Mr. Ingersoll, after speaking of those who take advantage of the holiday to flock out of town, says:

Another class rejoice in this holiday as an opportunity to sit at home enjoying domestic comfort, reading in slippered ease the postponed book, or fondling the pet hobby. The "people" call them "silk stockings," and have no fear of their beautifully modulated expressions of censure, because they rarely back it up by a vote.

Down at the polls they cannot understand this frame of mind. A certain number of citizens, to be sure, come, deposit their votes as quickly as possible, and go away with an attitude of having performed a disagreeable duty. But to the many who are more or less visible there all day this is the most important occasion of the year, and there is hardly anything they would not rather do than miss it. To be sure, it may be worth a few dollars to them, directly or indirectly: but plainly they look further than this, and have a hazy sense of the dignity of the act, comparable to the fetish-worshiper's notion of religion. They are not ignorant, foreign, dollar-a-day men laborers, stupid and besotted with liquor, but men earning wages enough to enable them to pay their footing in the bar-room club, and having sufficient brains to make them serviceable to their "captain." Alert with the keenness of the street, knowing everybody, and feeling above none, they are wholly devoted to "the cause" as long as they get fair treatment.

It is these men who make the voting places picturesque. In rough garb and with lordly swagger, they sandwitch themselves between neat and dignified lawyers, merchants and clergymen, proudly sensible of their equality at the polls. Sometimes the motley line reaches out of doors and down the street. As soon as one has voted he joins the loiterers outside, and pompously lights a cigar, scornful of the black pipe more familiar to his teeth.

In the afternoon the brisk captain, who has been dodging all day from poll to poll, obtains an approximate list of those of his side who have not yet voted, and despatches workers to "bring them out." They search their haunts, and presently return with recruits. Some of these delinquents have simply been tardy, others are sick or lame or blind, and are gently conducted to the polls, perhaps in a carriage, placed in the line, and carefully assisted to the ballot-box. The attention he gets on Election Day is a genuine comfort to many a poor fellow kicked about all the rest of the year. Now and then a henchman seizes a captain and whispers portentously in his ear. A moment later he hurries off, looking very important, and soon reappears with a companion, who is sent on alone, while he himself stays back at the corner. This means that some voter has been ascertained to be out of town or sick abed, and that a willing and thrifty stranger has come to vote (illegally) in his name. This is only one of many tricks election officers and watchers must guard against toward the end of the day, and sometimes at a cost to the latter of no small courage; for whisky emboldens the roughest workers to try to "stand on his head" any one who interfers with them.

The day wear on—Sunday without the churches, a gray day in every sense of the word. In the lower wards, where folks are close enough together to feel one another's warmth, and where it really matters whether Mike O'Farron or Barney Cadigan is to be Alderman or Coronor, each cross road has an excited crowd; but uptown the side streets are deserted, and even Broadway and Fifth avenue are dead.

The first to break the silence are the boys crying the afternoon papers; but there is nothing in them except clever guesswork, unless the tension factions at some polling place, or the wild foolishness of a tipsy worker, has brought on a fight or two. Election Day rows are now remarkably rare in New York.

Loiterers increase about the polling places and voters crowd forward, fearful lest they be too late. The weary inspectors and clerks must now work harder than ever, and the watchers watch their very best. This is the time when the schemer gathers results —gets in his fine work as he would tell you. Men present themselves with specious claims, politicians bulldoze, and it is only the most determined guardian of the purity of the ballot who in this time can withstand the pressure. It happened in several districts in 1884, when the voter was called upon to fold and select from twenty-three ballots, that there was not time enough in the day for all those entitled to the franchise to reach the ballot-box, and voting twice in one place was out of the question.

Kill Every Tenth Child.

Axim, on the African gold coast, must have a very large population. The natives have the pleasant custom of putting to death the tenth child in every family. The local authorities assert that thousands of children are destroyed on account of this superstitious practice, but that the influence of the fetich priests is so great that only stringent legislation can stop the slaughter.

Queer Hailstones.

Humboldt, the great scientist and an undisputed authority on atmospheric as well as other natural phenomena, tells of a hail storm which passed over Tuscany on March 14, 1813, every ice globule of the entire fall being of a beautiful orange color. Five years prior to that extraordinary event Carniola, Germany, was treated to a fall of five feet of blood-red snow. This was followed by a fall of blue hail, which is said to have given "the whole face of nature an exceedingly curious aspect."

Red hailstones fell at Amsterdam in 1726, at London in 1663 (during the time of the great plague), and at divers places in Ireland and France during the early part of the present century.

In 1823 a monstrous hailstone fell at Munson, Mass. It is described in the Waltham "Register" of July 15th of that year as follows: "Extremes four feet long, three feet wide and two feet thick. After the rough part of the body had been removed there remained a clear, solid block of ice two feet three inches long, one foot and six inches wide and one foot and three inches thick."

The most extraordinary hailstorm of history, as far as the queer shapes of the hailstones were concerned, was that which occurred on the Wadi oasis in the Desert of Sahara in 1851. The individual ice chunks were of all imaginable forms. There were wheels with four, six and eight spokes, dumb bells, large and small; triangles, cylinders, both solid and hollow; some of the solid ones being as much as six inches in length and not larger in diameter than a lead pencil. The common round hailstones congealed together in their descent, forming into fantastic pyramids, like the old pictures of the piled-up cannon balls. Some took upon themselves the forms of gigantic bunches of grapes, and other masses "fell in the shape of necklaces, crowns, crosses, etc."

In a hail storm in Wisconsin in 1886 the individual "stones" were of many odd shapes and forms. Some were shaped like ginger snaps, others like watches, loaves of bread, etc.

Photographing a Splash.

Professor Worthington has been studying a curious phenomenon for twenty years, says Knowledge. The splash of a drop occurs in the twinkling of an eye, yet it is an exquisitely regulated phenomenon and one that very happily illustrates some of the fundamental properties of the fluid.

The problem that Professor Worthington has succeeded in solving is to let a drop of definite size fall from a fixed height in comparative darkness on to a surface and to illuminate it by a flash of exceedingly short duration at any desired stage, so as to exclude all the stages previous and subsequent to those thus selected. The many illustrations in his volume testify to the accuracy and beauty of his work.

The curious results of a splash of a drop of mercury from a height of three inches upon a smooth glass plate are particularly interesting. Very soon after the first minute rays are shot out in all directions on the surface with marvelous regularity. From the ends of the rays droplets of liquid split off. The liquid subsides in the middle and soon afterward flows into the ring. The ring then divides in such a manner as to join up the rays in pairs. Thereafter the whole contracts till the liquid rises in the centre, so as to form the rebound of the drop from the plate.

Molasses as a Fertilizer.

The Louisiana sugar planters have not yet been able to solve the riddle of the bestowal of their surplus molasses. It is now proposed to use it as a fertilizer. It is found that molasses can be charred by waste heat in sugar manufacture, and much reduced in weight, and free from liability to offensive or troublesome fermentation, be easily added to the soil as are commercial fertilizers.

When in this state it is devoid of stickiness, easy to handle and contains a large part of the mineral fertilizers taken by the cane from the soil, as well as the lime used in clarifying. A temperature of 350 degrees Fahrenheit is sufficient to destroy the objectional gumminess, to expel nearly all the water and to so char the molasses that it is fit to return to the soil. It is suggested that the sugar manufacturers can easily place a large pipe in the waste heat of their furnaces, for the charring of the molasses, filter press cakes, etc.

The mass would be removed by a chain scraper passing slowly through the pipe, and charred and dry and pulverized, it would be ready for instant and effective use as a fertilizer.

Queer Sights.

A young friend says he saw some queer things on the streets the other day. He saw a watch spring, a horse fly, a match box, a peanut stand and a cat fish. While watching them he saw some alligator's hide shoes, and another fellow came along and said that while out in the country he heard the bark of a tree—actually saw the tree bark—saw it hollow and commence to leave. He also saw a farmer seize the trunk of another tree for board. These things sound strange, but are not harder to believe than the story of a member of the Guards, who said he saw a uniform smile.—Bainbridge (Ga.) Democrat.

The Kaiser in a Merry Mood.

While Kaiser Wilhelm was celebrating the birthday of his little daughter, Victoria, recently by a children's party at Potsdam, the children wanted to dance. It being inconvenient to call in a military band, the Kaiser sent out into the street for an Italian organ grinder, and after the dancing was over he gave him $37.

POPULAR SCIENCE.

Prince Krapotkin says that there is both water and vegetation on the moon.

An eminent oculist asserts that opera glasses hired in theatres often spread eye diseases.

Immense deposits of asbestos have been discovered in the Ferris Range of mountains in Carbon County, Wyoming.

Over 500 fossil elephant teeth have been dredged from the sea at Molease, on the coast of the Mediterranean, since 1870.

A telephone exchange has been established in Kioto, Japan, and is said to have proved a great success. It is under Government control.

A company for the manufacture of cycles is being promoted in Japan. The capital is to be 200,000 yen, and it is intended to export the wheels.

A telegram has been received from the Lowell Observatory, at Flagstaff, Arizona, announcing that the canals of Mars, known as Phison and Euphrates, have been observed again to be double.

A new German lamp chimney has the bulb in the upper instead of the bottom part, and the upper part is cut obliquely. It is claimed that this shape makes it safer to blow out the light, while the flame is improved by being made taller and steadier.

Professor Villard, of the Ecole Normale in Paris, has succeeded in making the newly discovered and obdurate gas, argon, combine with water; it required a pressure of 200 atmospheres to coerce it into this combination. The compound is colorless and crystalizes very prettily when kept cool.

Among the proposals made at the recent meteorological congress in Paris was one for establishing a station on the coast of Finland, which would issue reports of the breaking up of the ice, the movements of the icebergs, marine currents and the prospects of fisheries. Many shipwrecks, it was urged, might be thus prevented.

Professor W. H. Morse, of Westfield, N. J., has made a little discovery which, he says, will materially decrease the weight of a bicycle. He inflates the tire with hydrogen gas. By this means he finds the weight to be reduced by eight pounds, and claims that with an aluminum frame the entire machine need not weigh more than ten pounds. Some inventive genius will be coming forward next with a project to light the headlight with gas, fed from the machine itself.

Distance Covered in an Hour's Walk.

Have you ever thought of the distance you travel while you are out for an hour's stroll? Possibly you walk three miles within the hour, but that does not by any means represent the distance you travel. The earth turns on its axis every twenty-four hours. For the sake of round figures we will call the earth's circumference 24,000 miles, and so you must have traveled during your hour's stroll one thousand miles in the axial turn of the earth.

But this is by no means all. The earth makes a journey around the sun every year, and a long, but rapid trip it is. The distance of our planet from the sun we will put at 92,000,000 miles. This is the radius of the earth's orbit—half the diameter of the circle, as we call it. The whole diameter, therefore, is 184,000,000 miles, and the circumference, being the diameter multiplied by 3.1416, is about 587,000,000 miles.

This amazing distance the earth travels in its yearly journey, and dividing it by 365, we find the daily speed to be about 1,584,000 miles. Then to get the distance you rode around the sun during your hour's walk, divide again by 24, and the result is about 66,000 miles. But this is not the end of your hour's trip. The sun, with its entire brood of planets, is moving in space at the rate of 166,000,000 miles in a year. This is at the rate of a little more than 454,000 miles a day, or 18,900 miles an hour.

So, adding your three miles of leg travel to the hour's axial movement of the earth, this to the earth's orbital journey, and that again to the earth's excursion with the sun, and you will have traveled in the hour 85,903 miles.

A Dog Who Knows a Thing or Two.

A physician who resides in a neighboring town has a dog which he claims can beat the canine world for agility, intelligence, and all-round usefulness. The animal is a massive black fellow, and has never been known to enter a gate to reach a place if he can attain his ends by jumping a fence. He acts as mail carrier, for the doctor, and when he gets a letter from the postman, whom he always meets upon the pavement, he will clear the high iron railing in front of the house, and make for the front door knob, which long practice has enabled him to turn with a dextrous twist of his paw. He will never deliver a letter to any one but the physician, who thinks so much of him that he almost believes the dog might be taught to compound pills.—Elmira (N. Y.) Advertiser.

Growing Figs in Texas.

Ripe figs have been plentiful on our streets this week, and cheap. They were mostly brought in by the darkies of Caney. The crop is abundant and the quality of the fruit is fine. The fig seems to be as naturally adapted to this country as the cotton plant and the darkey. There is a region down in the vicinity of New Orleans where fig culture is an extensive and profitable business, where the fruit is put up for the markets of the world, and we believe that Matagorda County can excel the New Orleans district if made a business.—Bay City (Texas) Breeze.

CURIOUS FACTS.

The room in which Napoleon died is now used as a stable.

Daniel Campbell and his wife, of Walton County, Florida, are said to be respectively 117 and 118 years old.

Trees which grow on the northern side of a hill make more durable lumber than those which grow on the southern side.

Previous to the sixteenth century it was customary for every physician in Europe to wear a ring on his finger, as an indication of his profession.

A newsdealer near the Long Island ferry, New York, bids for business with this sigh, which hangs above his stand: "Notice—I am the only totally blind man in East Thirty-fourth street."

A new and less destructive method of getting rubber has been discovered. Heretofore the trees have been cut down, but it has been found that the leaves yield a purer and more abundant article.

The splendid botanical garden at Buitenzorg, Java, has the finest collection of palms in the world. There are three hundred determined species, besides about one hundred which appear distinct.

During the reign of James I. England's first newspaper was born May, 1622, being the first issue of the Weekly News. Notwithstanding that it was ill received, its editor, Nathaniel Butter, lived by the business for eighteen years.

A great many people object to hiring or buying residences on the west side of streets which run north and south. The reason for their objection is, that more dust and snow seem to accumulate on the west than on the east side of such streets.

Julia F. Williams has been keeper of the Santa Barbara (Cal.) lighthouse for thirty-one years. During that period she has climbed the tower and attended to the light herself every night, with the exception of three weeks, twenty years ago.

In Austria, when a woman is convicted of crime she is sent, not to a general prison, but a convent where she is placed in charge of a man who sees the prisoner does not escape, but who imposes no punishment beyond confinement to convent limits.

A Swedish mile in the longest mile in the world. A traveler in Sweden when told that he is only about a mile from a desired point would better hire a horse, for the distance he will have to walk, if he chose in his ignorance to adopt that mode of travel, is exactly 11,700 yards.

How the Common Pin is Made.

To complete a pin it has to go through many hands. It is a very delicate article to handle, and the cost of building the machines to make it is the greatest outlay. The wire from which pins are manufactured is specially prepared, and comes to the factory on large reels very much like gigantic cotton spools. The wire is first turned through eight or ten little copper rollers. This is to get all the bend and kink out of it; in other words, to straighten it perfectly. After this operation it is once more wound on a very large reel, which is attached to the machine that makes the pins. One of these machines makes 8000 pins an hour, and some large factories will often have thirty or forty machines at work at one time. After the pins are released from the grip of this machine they are given a bath of sulphuric acid. This removes all the grease and the dirt from them.

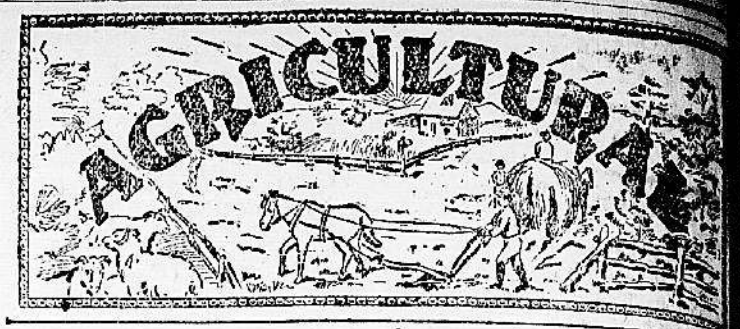
They are then placed in a tub or barrel of sawdust. Pins and sawdust are next taken together from the barrel and allowed to fall in a steady stream through a strong air blast, which separates the sawdust from the pins. But as yet they are pointless, and pins without points would not be of much use. In order to point them they are carried on an endless grooved belt, which passes a set of rapidly moving files. This points them roughly, and after being passed between two grinding wheels and forced against a rapidly moving band faced with emery cloth they are dipped in a polishing tub of oil. The latter is a large, slowly revolving copper lined tub, which is tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees. As this revolves the points keep sliding down the smooth copper to the lower side, and owing to the constant friction against the copper and each other receive a brilliant polish and finish.

They go next to the sticker, where they fall from a hopper on an inclined plane, in which are a number of slits. The pins catch in these slits, and hanging by their heads, slide down to an apparatus which inserts them in the paper. This machine is perhaps the most ingenious of all the beautiful and complicated contrivances that help to make and manipulate the pin. It does all this at the rate of 100,000 pins an hour, and yet a single bent or damaged pin will cause it to stop feeding until the attendant removes the offender.—Dry Goods Economist.

The Horse and the Oysters.

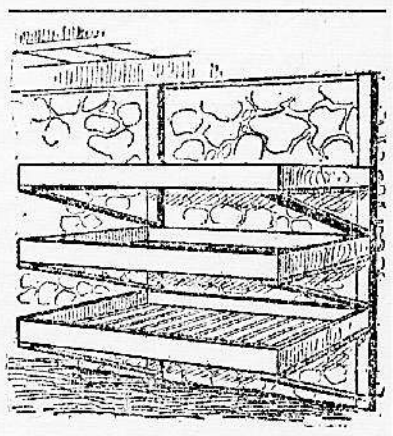
Speaking of oysters reminds Marshall P. Wilder of Dixey's story of the man who entered a country store on a cold day. A group of loungers were huddled about the stove, and the stranger could not get near enough to keep warm. "Got any oysters?" he asked the proprietor, and receiving an affirmative reply said: "Take a dozen on the half shell out to my horse."

All hands crowded to the door to see the horse eat oysters, and the stranger secured the most comfortable seat. The proprietor returned soon and said the horse refused to eat the shell fish. "Well, give 'em to me, then," said the foxy visitor, secure in his resting place.—New York Journal.



FOR STORING FRUIT.

The apple harvest brings up the subject of the proper disposal of the fruit when gathered from the trees. The apple crop will be large in many sections of the country this year, and prices will be likely to rule low—for the first part of the winter, at least. Much fruit will undoubtedly be stored in the hope of a better price later on. It is important, therefore, to adopt such a plan of storage as will keep the apples sound and plump, and in possession of the best possible flavor. A cellar just moist enough to keep the



IDEAL APPLE TRAYS.

fruit from evaporating any of its own juices, and capable of being held at a low temperature—just above the chilling point—is an almost ideal place for the storing of apples. But the location is not all. Large quantities should not be heaped together, nor should apples be kept in barrels, bins or boxes where the air cannot circulate freely through them. Any tendency toward decay is sure to be augmented under such circumstances. The accompanying illustration is presented as affording an economical and exceedingly practical method of storing fruit. Trays with slat bottoms, each three feet square, are supported, one above another, upon brackets that are nailed to pieces of upright studding. A succession of this studding with brackets can extend along the whole side of the cellar, or upon two sides, if desired. The trays can be made as deep as desired, and the fruit can be heaped up a little. In this way but a small quantity of fruit is kept in a mass, and the air can circulate about each and every apple. Each tray can be removed to a table if it is desired to look the fruit over for the detection of incipient decay, or when getting ready to pack for market. Such trays will last for a score of years, and can easily be made in the home workshop on rainy days. —New York Tribune.

SWEET POTATOES.

In this I include, says J. M. Rice, of Oklahoma, the sugary, juicy varieties grown in the South, which are perhaps more properly designated yams, and I shall more especially refer to the methods of raising in the drier Southwest.

The people of the North have an objection, or, perhaps, as with myself, it was only a prejudice, against the sugary, juicy varieties. For myself and family, after becoming accustomed to them, we very much prefer them, but this is, of course, a matter of taste, for both are good.

Our plan for a dry country is to have the ground deeply plowed in the winter, and then, after a rain and before planting time, to throw four furrows together, but aiming to overturn all the soil, so it is in width but three furrows of our fourteen or sixteen inch plows. These are gone over with hoe and rake, leveling the top a little and smoothing the sides. A light rain is preferred planting time, but we do not always wait for it. The roots of the plants being well dampened, they are firmly set in the firm, loose soil, and a little basin, holding a half-pint, left around each plant. Water is poured in, filling the basin, and when soaked away dry soil is drawn around the plants. A little surface hand cultivation is given, then such cultivation with the horse cultivator between the ridges as is needed, and plowing once with a stirring plow, throwing the sides of the ridges to the centre, then back again. For part of our ground we thus last year filled the trenches with damp, chaffy straw, tramping it in well, and, while all were good, those from the mulched ground were a little more even in size, showing that the dry spells had not affected the growth of a part.

Plants with heavy foliage and large roots do best in a dry climate, so the large sweet potatoes or yams succeed best here.

THE CROCUS AS A LAWN FLOWER.

Pretty in any place, the crocus is particularly attractive grown in the lawn, when they do not appear as having been planted there but as just happening to come up by chance. Of course it would be useless to plant crocus in a lawn that is cut very early with a lawn mower; but farmers' yards are not generally kept in this way, ours isn't, and it is a splendid place on the south side of the house for these very early and cheery blossoms. The grass being left undisturbed until the usual time to make hay, the crocuses have a chance to grow their leaves and ripen the bulbs, so they go on and do well for many years.

These bulbs can be planted any time in the fall before the ground is frozen hard, but the earlier this work is done the better, as then the bulbs have a chance to grow some roots before being frozen in for the winter. Putting them directly under the sod, as is often advised, I have never found very successful. I prefer to cut small holes into the turf with a sharp trowel, a little larger than the crocus bulb and about three inches deep, put in the bulb and fill up the hole with some good garden soil. Sometimes a larger place is made and several bulbs set out, leaving a little space between each bulb, but the single planting is best usually, I think. A well-grown bulb will have eight or ten blossoms and make a fine bit of color in the grass just beginning to grow green. When the dead grass is very long in the spring, the crocuses will show to better advantage, if much of the brown grass is pulled off, taking pains not to tread on the points of the crocuses coming up. The next spring after planting, the little holes made in the grass will show somewhat but will soon fill up, they look bigger than they are, in the winter. If the lawn is kept nicely mown, crocuses set as described will bloom well the third spring after planting, but very sparingly after that. Cutting off the green leaves injures them; they are, however, well worth putting out every year.—American Agriculturist.

FERTILIZERS.

The greatest saving on the farm is in the ability to buy fertilizers that are best adapted to the soil. Not farms are alike, and for that reason no formula can be placed before farmers that will prove satisfactory to all. As the majority of farmers know but little of chemistry, it is difficult to explain the action of chemicals in the soils, and their relations to the growth of plants. It has been but a short period since the discovery was made that the changes in the soil were due to the work of billions of bacteria, and that they are of various kinds, operating under certain conditions which best conducted to their efficiency as natural agents for converting the inert substance contained in the soils into plant foods, and that their work is best performed under the influences of sunlight, air and moisture, according to the work to be performed and the kind of plant for which they naturally provide. Every year the farmers are brought in contact with new theories which upset the old, and which they must consider knowledge proving of incalculable advantage in enabling them to use fertilizers judiciously, and to secure the best results at the lowest cost.

Experiments show that fertilizers abounding in nitrogen promote the growth of plants which have abundant and large foliage, giving that intense green tinge so noticeable in thrifty and healthy plants, but nitrogen must be reinforced by a proportionate supply of potash in the soil. Fruits and plants which produce seeds in abundance require more phosphoric acid than that of potash, while root crops such as turnips, potatoes, beets, carrots and parsnips are benefited by potash. It is important, however, for the farmer to know something of his soil, as it may contain an ample supply of potash or phosphoric acid, and in such cases he will require more nitrogen than mineral matter. All soils which are fertile contain substances which the farmer need not procure, and he can effect a saving by using only such as his soil may require. If nitrogen is needed if the land has been in clover, but the soil will be benefited by applications of phosphoric acid and potash.

The fall is the season when lime can be most profitably used, and in proportion to its cost it gives better results on most farms than any other substance. It should always be used where a crop or sod is turned under, as it not only contains within itself an important substance utilized by plants, but assists in effecting certain chemical changes in the soil by which plant food is liberated from the inert substances which otherwise could not be rendered soluble. Lime has a tendency to go downwards, and hence it is only necessary to broadcast it on the surface of the soil. It has been acknowledged by scientists and experimenters that where lime has been used and assisted by manure and fertilizers the soil has given satisfactory results with all kinds of crops, due probably to an alkaline condition of the soil being more favoraple to the work of the bacteria in changing the substance existing in the soil into plant food. In applying fertilizers in the fall, however, the phosphates and potash should be used, reserving the nitrogenous compounds for application in the spring.—Farmers' Friend.

Eat Apples Before Retiring.

Everybody ought to know that the very best thing he can do is to eat apples just before going to bed. The apple has remarkably efficacious medicinal properties. It is an excellent brain food, because it has much phosphoric acid in easily digestible shape than other fruits. It exerts the action of the liver, promotes sound and healthy sleep, and thoroughly disinfects the mouth. It helps the kidney secretions and prevents calculous growths, while it relieves indigestion and is one of the best preventives known for diseases of the throat. No harm can come to even a delicate system by the eating of ripe and juicy apples before retiring for the night.—Bulletin of Pharmacy.