

Rural Economy.

DR. GIRDWOOD'S LECTURE ON POISONS.

We extract the following from the third Somerville lecture of the course now being delivered in the Hall of the Natural History Society:—

"But there were other poisons of a somewhat different class—he meant that of special disease which we knew little about in ourselves, but which were too frequently found producing their effects among us, such as cholera, typhus, measles, small-pox, &c. That each of these had a poison peculiar to itself was generally recognized, for in every case was found a certain fixed series of symptoms—for the most part running their course in a certain given time. Such poisons were difficult of detection, and their presence was only known by their effects. Some articles of food commonly used become poison to certain individuals. This was the case with pork, certain kinds of shell-fish, and mushrooms. The lecturer went on to show how poisons had an elective affinity for particular organs of the body, and produced their effects on them especially; how, but with few exceptions, they acted through the medium of the blood, and said it was not necessary that poison should be actually swallowed—it might be introduced through the skin directly into the blood. Diseased, or over-driven cattle, and newly killed meat, was in general liable to produce violent gastric irritation, and even cholera. It was necessary that some means should be taken to protect the public of cities from having such meat supplied them. The lecturer next referred to the pork disease in Germany, stating that at one single wedding feast some sixty people lost their lives, having eaten at the feast of sausages made from a pig that was suffering from a small parasite, which, when swallowed, perforates the alimentary canal, and takes up its abode in the muscles, upon which it lives, and there multiplies, till at last it produces such a state of exhaustion, that the patient sinks. Both pork and veal were unwholesome food, and, unless thoroughly cooked, were very apt to produce poisonous results. The lecturer quoted authorities to prove this. He went on to refer to the habits of the farmers in bringing into market in spring time very young veal, before the snow was off the ground, and before the cows could obtain their natural food, good wholesome grass. He did not consider this food wholesome, and he mentioned one case of dysentery where death ensued, attributable to its use. He alluded to another practice which prevails here of driving calves and sheep to market with their feet tied together. These cattle brought in long distances are often tossed down on the pavement, and left for whole hours during our summer sun without water, and even without shelter. Poultry also was brought in pairs with their legs very tightly tied together. Animals treated in this way cannot be considered as fit for food, being in a feverish state from the sufferings they undergo. The only condition of atmosphere which can be compared with that arising from overcrowding in its effect upon the spread of the cholera, is that produced by the diffusion of the effluvia of drains, sewers, slaughter-houses, manure manufactories, &c., which correspond closely in their nature and effects with the putrescent emanations from the living human body. The emanations from drains were, for the most part, deleterious in reducing the system by the quantity of sulphuretted hydrogen present, and by its being charged with organic matter, thereby preventing the exhalation of the lungs of such matters as are formed during the circulation of the blood, from the waste of tissues. Thus the blood becomes charged with worn-out materials and rendered unfit to keep the body in health, an epidemic of disease arises, and such as are within the pale of these deleterious influences are the victims." The lecturer's remarks were earnestly listened to, and, on conclusion, he was heartily applauded by the large audience present.

carbonates, etc., etc. It would be labor wasted upon a people who never use them, simply because they do not yet see the necessity. While admitting that this gradual wasting of the strength of the soil is short-sighted policy for our farmers, we are thankful that the soil is rich enough to stand the drain for so many years to come."

THE PEACH CROP.

A number of the members of the Legislature have, at the request of Dr. Trimble, of Newark, furnished him peach buds from their respective counties for inspection, in order to discover whether the crop has been entirely destroyed by the extreme cold weather of January. Several hundred buds have been examined from the counties of Sussex, Warren, Morris, Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, Essex, Passaic, Bergen, and Hudson, and not a living one has been found. About one in five buds in a few twigs from the counties of Salem and Cumberland were found not killed. One in about ten were found alive in those from Egg Harbor city, in Atlantic county. Peach buds are killed at eighteen degrees below zero, proving that in the northern part of the State the mercury fell at least that low on the night of January 8th. It is expected that more living buds will be found in the southern portion of the State, but the prospects of the crop will be seen to be poor indeed.—Newark, N. J., Advertiser, February 17.

KEEPING HORSES' FEET AND LEGS IN ORDER.

If I were asked to account for my horses' legs and feet being in better order than those of my neighbor, I should attribute it to the four following circumstances:—First, they are all shod with a few nails, so placed in the shoe as to permit the foot to expand every time they move; second, that they all live in boxes instead of stalls, and can move whenever they please; third, they spend two hours, daily, walking-exercise when they were not at work; and fourth, that I have not a headstall or track chain in my stall. These four circumstances comprehend the whole mystery of keeping horses' legs fine, and their feet in sound working condition up to old age.—Miles.

SHOEING HORSES THAT OVERREACH.

It is very annoying to ride or drive a horse that is constantly pounding his fore shoes with his hind ones. It is click, click all the time. We have had a number of horses with this fault, but latterly have been able to cure them or greatly benefit them by a peculiarity of shoeing. Make high heel-caulks on the fore feet and very low toe-caulks, standing a little under and the shoe setting well backward. The fore foot thus managed will roll over and be sooner out of the way of the hind foot. On the hind foot make the heel-caulk low, and the toe-caulk high, projecting forward. If these directions are followed, the horse will travel clean, and the habit will soon be broken up.—Rural World.

HOW TO FRESHEN SALT BUTTER.

Churn the butter with new milk, in the proportion of a pound of butter to a quart of milk; treat the butter in all respects in churning as if it was fresh. Bad butter may be improved greatly by dissolving it thoroughly in hot water. Let it cool, then skim it off and churn again, adding a small quantity of good salt and sugar. A small quantity may be tried and approved before trying a larger one. The water should be merely hot enough to melt the butter.

Scientific.

MAGNESIUM LIGHT.

The brilliant white light produced by burning the metal magnesium has lately attracted much attention. Magnesium is the metal contained in ordinary magnesia and Epsom salts, in soapstone, and meerschaum, and might be a very common metal if uses were found for it. Within two or three years it has been produced in England in considerable quantities, and its price has rapidly fallen as the production increased, till it now costs in London only ten shillings an ounce. This weight corresponds to a considerable bulk, because of the low specific gravity of the metal, which is seven times lighter than lead. In the metallic state it looks much like zinc, a metal to which it bears a close chemical as well as physical resemblance. Zinc may be readily burned in a coal fire, and in the burning it also produces a white light, due, like the magnesium light, to the incandescence of particles of the solid oxide. A descent ribbon of magnesium may be lit by the heat of an alcohol or gas lamp, and it will burn steadily so long as it is properly protected from currents of air, provided there be no flaws in the ribbon. A slight puff of wind may blow out the flame. The magnesium light is remarkable for other qualities besides its brilliancy. The ultraviolet portion of the spectrum is more than six times as broad as the common spectrum produced by sunlight. Hence the phenomena of fluorescence are very finely exhibited with the magnesium light. Its chemical and photographic power is intense. Dry chloride of silver is colored dark blue by it in a few seconds. If a mixture of equal volumes of chlorine and hydrogen be exposed in a glass cylinder to the light of a burning magnesium wire, a mist of hydro-chloric acid will at once appear; and if a second burning wire be brought to reinforce the first, the two gases will, after a few seconds, unite with explosion, precisely as they do when exposed to direct sunlight. Bodies which will emit light in the dark after five or ten minutes' exposure to the direct rays of the sun, do the phosphides of calcium, strontium, barium, and some varieties of the diamond, of fluor spar, and of alumina, attain their maximum of phosphorescence as many seconds' exposure to the magnesium light. A perfect lamp for burning magnesium is yet to be invented. The product of the combustion is a white, solid, bulky ash, which consists of nothing but pure mag-

nesia. It is difficult to get rid of this ash, which forms very rapidly and greatly dims the brilliancy of the light. Progress has, however, been made towards this most desirable end, both by English experimenters and by the American Magnesium Company, of Boston. One of the most ingenious suggestions which has been made is to reduce the magnesium to powder, mix it with sand, and let the mixture run into a jet of gas, as sand runs from an hour-glass. The greater part of the magnesium now manufactured is consumed by the theaters, and for such purposes it is certainly much more convenient and manageable than either the Drummond or the electric light. For light-houses and for signal-lights at sea and upon railways, the magnesium light possesses great advantages over any light which has ever been used for such purposes; but the actual employment of the metal for ships and light-houses must depend upon the invention of a lamp which will insure the uninterrupted combustion of the metal, and the complete and immediate removal of the smoke and ash. For fire-works, mixtures of zinc and magnesium may be used with excellent effect. By the magnesium light photographs may be taken at night or in dark weather, and the interiors of caves, catacombs, and mines may be reproduced with all the distinctness of a sun-picture. Professor Smyth has obtained by its use photographs of the interior of the great Pyramid, and of the granite coffer in the King's chamber of the Pyramid. Colors look by the magnesium light just as they look sunlight, so that in those countries of Europe where sunshine is scarce the light may prove a convenience to dealers in delicately-colored fabrics of silk, cotton, or paper.—The Nation.

ANCIENT CAVE-DWELLERS.

A report to the Belgian Minister of the Interior, by Messrs. Van Beneden and Dupont, furnishes additional information regarding the curious researches in the primeval history of the human family that now occupy so large a portion of the attention of the scientific world. These gentlemen, who have long been engaged in the pursuit, have been rewarded by the discovery of what may be considered a model cave-dwelling on the banks of the river Lesse. It is described as well lighted, traversed by a spring, easy of access, and its situation most picturesque; in short, presenting every requisite of a "desirable family mansion" for our troglodytic ancestors. The evidences of occupation presented by this cavern are most numerous and important. The materials of the various stone implements found in immense numbers, fragments of minerals, flints, jet, sharks' teeth, etc., show that the inhabitants must have enjoyed extended commercial relations with other portions of Europe. Judging from the quantity of bones found in the cavern, the principal food of the cave-dwellers must have been horse-flesh, as the teeth of more than forty horses were found. The bones of the water-rat, badger, hare, boar, show that variety in diet was studied. The fore-arm of an elephant or mammoth found in the same dwelling is regarded by the discoverer rather as a fetish or idolatrous charm placed near the hearth, in the same manner as still practised by some African nations. The worked flints, in various stages of manufacture, collected more than thirty thousand. The cave appears to have been abandoned so suddenly that the inhabitants left behind them their tools, ornaments, and the remains of their meals. According to M. Dupont's theory, this must have arisen from the approach of the sudden inundation which covered the whole of Belgium and Northern France, and swept away that generation of the cave people. Immediately after they had left it, the roof and sides of the cave fell in, the pieces detached covering the floor, and thus preserving the remains from the action of the waters undisturbed to the present day. The writer reconstructs from the condition and habits of the early races of men in Belgium, a state that seems to have prevailed over the greater part of Europe. The remaining unsettled point of investigation is the ancestral relation held by these primitive populations to the present race of man. It will need more extensive discoveries of human remains than have yet been made, for its final settlement.—Ibid.

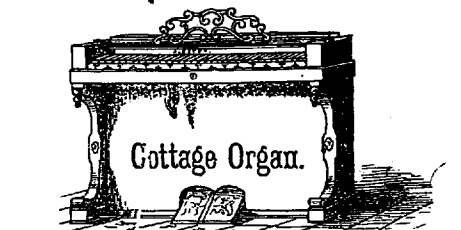
MANUFACTURE OF ARABIC TYPE.

Mr. Homan Hallock gives, in the Bible Society Record, an interesting description of the manufacture of Arabic type, for printing an edition of the Bible. He says:— "At the time when Rev. Dr. Eli Smith and myself commenced our efforts at Smyrna on the Arabic type, in 1833, although there were existing fonts of type in that language in England, France, Germany, Constantinople, Mount Lebanon, and Egypt, not one of them was at all endurable by the all-fascinating Arabs and Turks, who, notwithstanding their semi-barbarous state, are without equal in the exceeding beauty and symmetry of their manuscript, of which all printing in that language is an imitation. Still, in the absolute necessity for type to supply the almost total want of books, any one of these fonts would most gladly have been purchased and used at the Mission Press, but that, for various reasons, they could not be procured. In fact, Dr. Smith and his associates had made unwearied efforts to this end, but to no purpose. "At length, in despair of success, he called on me one day at Smyrna, proposing that I should commence the difficult work of manufacturing Arabic type. Previously to this, Dr. Smith, in pursuing his missionary work, had visited numerous parts of Syria, and had most carefully studied the forms of the Arabic letters, finding many good specimens of manuscript; but until about this time he had not found any that were drawn with sufficient accuracy for us as models for printing type. Now, however, by some means to him almost mysterious, some scores of pages of the elegant Turkish and Arab writing-masters came within his reach, and they proved a joy to which he could implicitly rely for all the ovals, and curves, and slopes, and other nice forms for which this writing is so remarkable.

"After rough-shaping about one hundred punches, with tolerable prospect of success, though not without long and painful effort, a woful hour of the night suggested to me that by reversing a certain part of a pantograph in my possession, I could trace my models direct upon the polished face of pieces of steel, reduced to any desired scale, and have only to follow my lines to make a perfect imitation of my patterns. This process was so clear and intelligible, that its first suggestion to my own mind, and also to his, at once removed our doubt of ultimate success. "Dr. Smith now commenced drawing a second set of patterns of the size of the palm of my hand, and after about ten days spent in new modelling my pantograph, I made my first steel letter, which, with its succeeding companions, is still in existence, has just now been used in making the type in hand, and has not since been improved in form, or scarcely in execution, in any succeeding font. "From that day to this, now about thirty years, I have made it my ruling business, and effort, and desire, to complete sets of these punches, of which four different sizes are done and are now in use at Beirut. The fifth I am now making at the Bible House, at New York, and the sixth will be commenced probably after a few months. The smallest of these fonts is the same with that in which the beautiful pocket Testament has just been printed at Beirut; the two large sizes will be used for the prominent words in large title pages, school-cards and the like, and in an edition of the Bible for the aged and weak-sighted, so frequently found in that region of the world. The intermediate sizes have long been in use at Beirut, in printing portions of the Bible and a multitude of other promiscuous works."

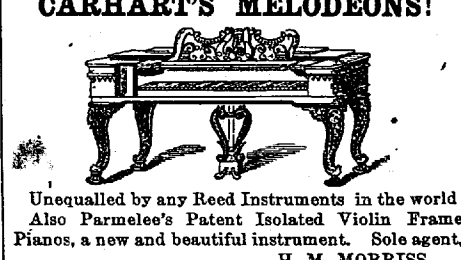
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