

Household.

On the Selection of Provisions.
In order to facilitate the choice of the best provisions the following signs of good quality should be attended to:

As a general rule, the best meat is that which is moderately fat. Lean meat will be found to be tough and tasteless. Very fat meat may be good but is not economical, and the butcher ought to be required to cut off the superfluous suet before weighing it.

Beef.—The flesh should feel tender, have a fine grain and clear red color. The fat should be moderate in quantity, and lie in streaks through the lean. Its color should be white or very light yellow. Ox beef is the best; heifer very good, if well fed; cow and bull decidedly inferior.

Mutton.—The flesh, like that of beef, should be of a good red color, perhaps a shade darker. It should be fine-grained and well mixed with fat, which ought to be white and firm. Wether mutton is superior to either ram or ewe, and may be distinguished by having a prominent lump of fat on the inside of the leg at the broadest part. The flesh of the ram has a very dark color, and is of a coarse texture; that of the ewe is pale, and the fat yellow and spongy.

Veal.—Its color should be light, with a tinge of pink. It ought to be rather fat and feel firm to the touch. The flesh should have a fine delicate texture. The leg bone should be small, the kidney small and well covered with fat. The proper age is about two or three months. When killed too young it is soft, flabby and dark colored. The bull calf makes the best veal, though the cow calf is preferred for some dishes on account of the udder.

Lamb.—This should be light colored and fat, and have a delicate appearance. The kidneys should be small and imbedded in fat, the quarters short and thick and the knuckle stiff. When fresh, the vein in the fore quarter will have a blueish tint. If the vein look green or yellow it is a sure sign of staleness, which may also be detected by smelling the kidneys.

Pork.—Both the flesh and the fat must be white, firm, smooth and dry. When young and fresh, the lean ought to break when pinched with the fingers, and the skin, which should be thin, yield to the nails. The breed having short legs, thick neck and small head is the best. Six months is the right age for killing, when the leg should not weigh more than six or seven pounds. Mottled pork is known by the fat being mottled with little lumps and kernels, and should be religiously avoided.

Generally all meat, when not fresh, has a tainted smell about the kidneys, and the eyes are sunk and shriveled instead of being plump and full.

Bacon and Ham. may be considered good when the rind is thin, the fat white and firm, and when the flesh adheres to the bone, and has a clear, darkish red color, not streaked with yellow. To test the perfect freshness of ham, run a knife into it close to the bone, and if, when drawn out, it has no unpleasant smell, and the knife is not smeared, the ham is fresh and good. If either bacon or ham have the slightest tinge of yellow, in the fat it will soon become rancid and unfit for use.

Butter and Cheese should be judged of by tasting them.

Eggs.—It is difficult to discover if an egg be fresh. The best plan is to hold it between the eye and a lighted candle, close to the light, when, if it appears equally transparent throughout, it may be pronounced good; but if there are any cloudy spots apparent it may be rejected as stale.

POULTRY.

Birds of all kinds are best when young. The thin bone projecting over the belly will then feel soft and gritty; if it is stiff and hard the bird is old. All poultry should be firm and fleshy.

Fowls are best when short and plump, with broad breast and thick rump, the legs smooth and the spurs short and blunt. The black-legged kind are the most juicy. In capons the comb should be short and pale—in cocks, short and bright red. If fresh, the vent will be close and dark; when stale, it will be tainted and the eyes sunk.

Turkeys.—The same remarks apply to these as to fowls. When young the toes and bill are soft. Some persons prefer the tom turkey to the hen. I will here remark that to my notion, the flesh of the hen is whiter, tenderer and sweeter eating than that of the tom. For my use I prefer a hen turkey of ten or twelve pounds, though for a "show piece" your five-and-twenty-pounder is a grander spectacle to the eye; and as to sweetness and flavor in the turkey, I could never see that size had anything to do with it. The flesh of the wild turkey is much darker and more perfumed than that of the domestic turkey.

Geese.—The flesh should be of a fine light pink tint, the liver pale, the fat white and soft, and the breast full and plump. In a young goose the feet and bill are yellow; in an old one reddish.

It ought to have very few or no hairs on the body.

Ducks.—Young ducks are distinguished in the same manner as young geese; the belly should be firm and thick. The drake is the best eating.

Pigeons.—The breast should be full and plump and the feet elastic. When not fresh they are flabby and the vent discolored.

GAME.

Wild Fowl, when young, have soft quills, and should be plump and hard in the vent. Old birds are distinguished by rigid bills, tough leg sinews, and long, sharp spurs; they require longer keeping than young ones. Small field birds should always be used fresh.

Venison.—The flesh of good venison is dark, fine grained and firm, and the fat clear and bright, lying thickly on the back. When young, the cleft of the hoof is smooth and close.

Rabbits are fresh when the body is rigid. Young ones have the claws smooth, sharp and close, and the ears tender and easily torn.

FISH.

A stale fish furnishes such unmistakable evidence of its condition, both to smell and sight, that the merest novice who should purchase it would be inexorable. When perfectly fresh, the body is stiff and elastic; the gills close, red, difficult to open; the fins, lying flat to their sides; the eyes bright and full, the scales glistening and firmly attached to the body. When stale, it is the reverse of all this, and has, besides, a strong, offensive smell. The best fish of all kinds have small heads and tails, thick bodies and broad shoulders.

Lobsters and Crabs should weigh heavy; when light, they are filled with water, which may also be known in lobsters by the berries being large and brownish. In crabs after being boiled, the water, if there be any, may be heard rattling on shaking them. The male is better than the female, and is distinguished in the lobster by a narrow tail, and in the crab by a narrow breast. The lobster, when in perfection, has a hard, firm shell, and may be considered very superior if incrustated with marine animals.

Prawns and Shrimps are usually sold boiled. They are good when their tails turn strongly inward and when they have no unpleasant smell, and best when very red and free from spawn under the tail.

Oysters and Clams if alive and healthy, will close upon the knife when being opened.

VEGETABLES.

All green vegetables of the cabbage kind should be chosen with large, close, firm hearts. When fresh leaves are crisp and brittle; when stale they are limp and drooping. They ought to be used as quickly as possible after being gathered, as they are apt to spoil by long keeping. Such perfect freshness is not so necessary in roots, such as potatoes, turnips, etc.

SWEET HERBS.

Sweet herbs for winter use may be preserved in the following manner: Sweet marjoram, summer savory sage, thyme, chervil, orange and lemon thyme, burnt basil, must be hung up in bunches, in a dry, warm atmosphere, until well dried. Pluck the leaves from the stalks, and press them closely together; then wrap them in stout paper. Label each package and keep them in a dry closet.

These dry herbs may also be rubbed to a fine powder with the hands and then put into tight jars or boxes. Herbs excluded from the air, and kept in a compact body, will retain their flavor for two or three years, but if merely kept in loose bundles, as is the usual method, they soon lose their fragrance.

Postal Cards.

When postal cards were first issued, about six years ago, their novelty provoked some fault finding, and they were made fun of as "stinky," "slabby," "unsafe," etc. But they were cheap, and the people used them and the critics soon followed the example of the people; now (as an exchange remarks) the postal card has only two enemies—the man who receives duns on it, and the manufacturer of writing paper.

The little postal causes a decrease of from twelve to fifteen million dollars every year in the business of the writing paper trade of this country.

Postal cards are made at Holyoke and forty men are continually employed in their manufacture. The card board is furnished in packages of three thousand each, and every sheet is made into forty postal cards. Three presses are kept going night and day. A machine splits the sheets into strips of ten cards each and these in turn are cut into single cards, dumped in piles of twenty-five each, when they are packed by girls, in paste-board boxes, containing five hundred cards. A government officer is constantly on hand to see that no pilfering of cards is done. The Holyoke manufactory turns out about one million cards a day.

Scientific Economy.

The *Marine Register* complains that New York harbor is being seriously injured by ashes and refuse dumped into its waters almost daily.

Twenty years ago it required five tons of coal to make a ton of iron rails. Now a ton of steel rails may be produced from the ore with half that amount of coal.

Basaltic lava, near Mount Etna, which has been examined by Professor O. Silvestri, contains small cavities filled with a waxy, yellowish paraffine, melting at 56° and soluble in ether or alcohol.

Belt manufacturers may find it of interest to know that the experiments of Mr. Jenatry, of Brussels, disclose that under uniform loads caoutchouc takes increasing elongations, until it becomes quite twice as long as it was originally, and that then the elongations decrease until rupture ensues. The weight necessary to quadruple the length is three times that under which the length has become doubled.

Monkeys, says Alfred R. Wallace, are usually divided into three kinds—apes, monkeys and baboons; but these do not include the American monkeys, which are really more different from all those of the Old World than any of the latter are from each other. Naturalists, therefore, divide the whole monkey tribe into two families, one having its habitat in the Old World and the other in the New World.

Says the *Manufacturers' Gazette*: Some years ago the officers of an American railroad required its engineer to get his plans for iron bridges approved by English experts before beginning the work. Now a famous English engineer, whose work has been criticised, cites the opinion of an American engineer to support his position, saying that the American has built more big bridges himself than there are altogether in Great Britain.

The Western Union Telegraph Company has estimated the duration of telegraph poles, as follows: Cedar, 16 years; chestnut, 13; juniper, 13; spruce, 7 years. Cedar, chestnut and spruce are used in the Northern States; juniper and cypress in the Southern States and red wood in California. Poles cut in the summer will not last as long as those cut in the winter by five years. Soil and climate, of course, make a difference with the life of poles.

According to an English paper there are now being built on the Clyde, Scotland, four steel steamers, to make thirteen knots an hour, for the Canadian Pacific Railroad. They are to run on Lakes Huron and Superior. After they are constructed and tested in Scotland they are to be taken down, shipped in sections, and put up in this country. The *Mechanical Engineer* thinks that when this extra work is taken into account they might have been made as cheaply in this country.

Experts of the Federal Polytechnicum, Switzerland, have tested the new blasting material known as amidogen, and are stated to have found it entirely free from danger. It appears from their report that this explosive can be ignited only by exposure to an electric spark or the naked flame or by heating it to 180° C. But amidogen even if ignited will not exert its explosive effect unless firmly incited. The explosive effect of amidogen is said to be midway between that of powder and that of dynamite.

The *Oesterreicherischer Liquor-Fabrikant* states that Messrs. Boeket & Machard now prepare both alcohol and paper from wood: 2000 kilos. of wood shavings are treated in wooden vats with 8000 kilos. of water and 800 kilos. of hydrochloric acid for ten to twelve hours, steam being passed in the whole time, so as to keep the mass on a constant boil. When this operation is over the acid liquid is run off, neutralized with chalk, and fermented in a temperature of 24°-25° C. The ligneous residue in the vats is washed and dried and worked up for paper.

A technical journal gives a simple receipt for preserving silver and plated articles from turning black, as they invariably will if not kept constantly in use. The same plan could with advantage be applied, we should think, to any metal subject to change or rust from the action of the atmosphere. Plain collodium—that is, not photographic collodium—is diluted with twice its bulk of spirits of wine, and applied to the surface of the metal with a soft brush. The spirit soon evaporates, leaving an imperceptible and transparent skin, which can when required be removed with hot water.

La Tribuna, of Madrid, has a long account of the granting by the medical faculty of that city of a degree of medicine on Senorita Martina Casella Bellaspi. She is the first Spanish woman who has ever studied medicine and taken her degree. The paper speaks in warm terms of her as a lady who, in spite of much opposition and national prejudice, has won high honors.

Another Spanish lady is following in Senorita Casella's footsteps. Finding the Valencian School of Medicine had closed its doors against her, she is now studying in Madrid, where she has met with a more friendly reception.

A German scientist, Herr Liebermann, employs electricity in determining the melting points of metals and alloys fusible at low temperatures. He interposes in an electrical circuit provided with a bell of the metal or alloy to be experimented with, and plunges this rod into a bath of some suitable substance, the temperature of which is given by a thermometer. The circuit being closed the bell will ring but as soon as the bath attains the temperature necessary to fuse the metal the circuit is broken and the noise ceases, and the reading of the thermometer taken at that instant will give the melting point of the metal or alloy in question.

Elephants are very sensitive to insult, and appear frequently to be more annoyed at anything derogatory to their dignity than actual pain. In a well-known work on natural history, styled "The Menagerie," it is stated that as an elephant was passing through the streets of London a man seized it by the tail, an indignity that so offended it that it grasped him with its trunk, and placing him against some iron railings kept him prisoner until persuaded by the keeper to let him go. Captain Shipp has recorded in his "Memoirs" that an elephant drenched him with dirty water for having put cayenne pepper on its bread-and-butter.

A Sheffield (England) letter writer says: "Some of our local dressing-case makers have found a useful material for tops—that is, the lids of soap-dishes, brush-trays, etc.—in the new aluminum bronze, and which, I am informed, is now being experimented with by a few of the local white-metal houses with the view of testing its value as spoon and fork metal. The great advantage which the dressing-case makers find in the bronze—which is obtained in both silver and gold color—is that, unlike the plated tops, mounts made from it do not tarnish, and consequently, no matter how long the goods may have to be kept in stock the bright parts retain all their gloss and beauty."

Outcome of a Spelling School.

A graduate from the High School in this city had a call from a country school about two hundred miles north of Detroit, and he went his way, provided with several written recommendations and a whole cart load of enthusiasm. He found the school house to be a one story affair, made of logs and large enough to hold thirty scholars in case the teacher stood in the door. When school commenced the score of scholars could only muster a geography printed in 1848, an arithmetic a few days younger, a dozen leaves of a speller and the half of a broken slate. The teacher, however, went to work to hammer knowledge into their craniums, and he had convinced most of them that the world was round and that the sun neither rose nor set in that country, when it came time to have a spelling school. For convenience sake it was held in a big barn, and the turn-out included everybody, from the boy who spelled "corn" the same as "horse," for convenience sake, to the old man who always put "in haist" on his letters to his brother in Vermont. It wasn't much of a contest until the last half dozen towered aloft. "Cataarrh" and "photograph" laid 'em out by the dozens, and when only the champions were left "Constantinople" floored all but two like a bolt of lightning. Then came the word "parasite." One rendered it "parysight," and the other gave it "perry-site," and when the teacher shook his head one cried out: "I've writ that word over a hundred times, and I guess I know it!" "And I've seen 'em every day of my life for forty years, and I don't sit down for anybody," added the other. "It is parasite," replied the teacher. "I dispute it!" "So do I." "That's the way Webster gives it." "Who's Webster?" "Yes, trot him out." Then the friends of either rose up. In the shindy the teacher came in for two black eyes, a cracked rib, kicks in the shin and bites on the ears, and the minute he could get clear and over the fence he headed for Detroit, and reached home in want of so many repairs that it took two months to make him presentable. He had a few dollars due him, and he left a change of clothes up there, but he doesn't want to hear from the directors. They may think he has resigned, and any parasite desiring the situation can have the vacancy without paying bonus.

The *Stuebenville Herald* says that a wig is used to cover a bald head and not to show that a man is vigorous. Pretty near, not quite. A man wears one to show that his wife has been very vigorous.

Not Much of a Show.

The other morning, while the urbane manager of Woodward's Gardens was smoking a four-bit cigar and meditatively listening to the muffled wails of a tomcat that had just been swallowed alive by the big anaconda, a tall, thin, scientific looking man, with a goatee and blue glasses, entered the gates and remarked in an insinuating manner:

"Of course you pass the scientific fraternity?"

"Of course we do not," said the showman.

"What, not the savans, not the pioneers in the great march of the mind into the hitherland of the infinite beyond?" returned the Professor, with great surprise.

"I will not deceive you," sarcastically replied the proprietor of the only salamander; "we pass nothing but the quills on the fretful porcupines—I mean the press. You can't see the ostridges unless you come down and put up."

"Dear me, dear me!" sighed the scientist, reflectively. "To think that a professor of cosmographic conchology should be denied admittance to a third-class Zoo! Has the skamgatibus been fed yet?"

"Skam—which?" asked the tiger importer.

"The skamgatibus. You've got one, haven't you?"

"Y-e-s-s; I believe we've a small female somewhere," said the grizzly's friend, doubtfully.

"I never knew a first-class collection to have less than two pair," said the Professor, contemptuously. "How do your azimuths stand this cold weather, eh?"

"Azimuths?" asked the Napoleon aggregator of curiosities; "what's them? Some new kind of bird—you don't mean ostridge?"

"Ostridges be hanged!" said the successor of Darwin; "ostridges are nothing. I've shot more ostridges with quail shot than you've got hairs on your head. You don't actually mean to sit there and tell me you haven't got a single azimuth to your back?"

"Don't believe I have," admitted the alligator breeder, mortified; "what are they like?"

"Oh, they're of the order Spinoliae spiniotis, about eight feet high. Fur peels off in the spring, you know—the Siberian species, I mean. I suppose you've got one of those rectangular African flipgoolies that reached New York the other day?"

"No; I'm darned if I did," said the much agitated showman. "Here I've been keeping an agent in New York on a big salary to look out for attractions, and he doesn't catch on to the first blamed thing. Spends all our money on second-hand panthers and kangaroos with the rheumatics. I'll bounce him by telegraph!"

"Haven't even got a flipgooly, eh?" mused the scientist, in a tone of great pity. "And I shouldn't be surprised if you didn't have a golden-crested cuspidor in your whole show."

"Neither I have; neither I have," replied the wretched promoter of pelicans, in a tone of great bitterness. "S'pose you just step in, sir, and look round; maybe there's something else you could say—"

"N-o-o, I guess not," said the tall man. "It would hardly pay me to spend so much valuable scientific time in a fourth-class show like this. Not even an azimuth, eh? I should think you'd be afraid of being actually mobbed some time. I'm sorry for you, my good man; sorry for you. I've no doubt you mean well, but—not a solitary skamgatibus? Great Scott!"

Two Kinds of Ladies.

As a young lady walked hurriedly down State street upon a bleak November day her attention was attracted to a deformed boy coming toward her carrying several bundles. He was thinly clad, twisted his limbs most strangely as he walked, and looked before him with a vacant stare. Just before the cripple reached the brisk pedestrian he stumbled, thus dropping one bundle, which broke and emptied a string of sausages on the sidewalk. Two richly-dressed ladies (?) near by held back their silken skirts and whispered quite audibly, "How horrid!" while several passed by amused by the boy's look of blank dismay, gave vent to their feelings in a half-suppressed laugh, and then went on without taking further interest. All this increased the boy's embarrassment. He stooped to pick up the sausages only to let fall another parcel, when, in despair, he stood and looked at his lost spoils. In an instant the bright-faced stranger stepped to the boy's side, and said in a tone of thorough kindness: "Let me hold these other bundles while you pick up what you have lost." In dumb astonishment the cripple handed all he held to the young Samaritan, and devoted himself to securing his cherished sausages. When these were again strongly tied in the coarse, torn paper, her skillful hands replaced the parcels on his scrawny arms, as she bestowed on him a smile of

encouragement, and said: "I hope you haven't far to go!" The poor fellow seemed scarcely to hear the girl's pleasant words; but, looking at her with the same vacant stare, asked: "Be you a lady?" "I hope so; I try to be," was the surprised response. "I was kind of hoping you wasn't." "Why," asked the listener, with curiosity quite aroused. "Cause I've seen such as called themselves ladies, but they never spoke kind and pleasant like 'cepting to grand uns. I guess there's two kinds; them as thinks they's ladies and isn't, and them as what tries to be and is!"

College Jokes.

If all the funny sayings and witticisms uttered in college lecture rooms during a year could be collected, there would be material enough to make the most readable of books. Unfortunately, many of the best jokes are understood by the class alone, and when taken out of their setting lose their brilliancy. Some of the incidents, however, may be appreciated by the public.

The coolness of the average college student, was seldom better illustrated than by this incident:

The college term had nearly closed, when the president sent for a student who had not paid his term bill. The sum was a small one, and the president, after remonstrating with Mr. S— on his tardiness in complying with the rules said:

"Why, I should think you could borrow such a small sum. Any one would be willing to lend it to you."

"That's just what I thought," replied S—; "and so I will borrow it of you!"

It is told of the same student that he once returned to college from the Christmas holidays, a week after the beginning of the term. The president being strict in noting absences of this kind, S— soon found himself in the "awful presence," to give an account of himself.

"Mr. S—, why did you remain at home after the term opened?" demanded the president.

"Well, sir, the fact is, I was having such a jolly time there, that I did not want to leave."

"Well, well, Mr. S—, I want you to understand, sir, that we don't come to college to have a jolly time."

"That's just what I was thinking, sir."

The Old Novel Heroine.

The first essential was such perfect beauty of form and face that language was wholly inadequate to the description; the moral beauty corresponded with the charms of the person; she was the most devoted of daughters, the most tender of mistresses—the old masters of fiction always dropped the curtain upon the marriage—the most constant of friends, the most patient of sufferers, always ready to assume the crown of martyrdom on great or little occasions; her charity was as boundless as her purse was usually limited. She was always as accomplished as she was lovely and virtuous, although it must be confessed that her accomplishments did not extend to conversation, which was usually of the most amiable, insipid kind; if reared in a humble station, though of course it always turned out that she was somebody's long-lost child; nature and noble blood kindly supplied all her deficiencies in artificial culture; she was a portentious letter-writer, as the readers of her memoirs knew to their cost; her supply of tears was inexhaustible and in all embarrassing situations where she might have been called upon to show some decision of character she most conveniently swooned; she seldom ate or drank, and when she did it was only a little fruit and water. See was greatly addicted to poetry; her ideas were continually arranging themselves "in the following lines;" and although steeped in all the misery and misfortune that imagination could invent, she was very ready to apostrophize "Sweet Solitude," or anything else she could commence with a big O. Heroines of the more romantic school sometimes sang their verses, accompanying themselves upon their harp or flute; and how they contrived to retain these instruments amid all the hairbreadth escapes, the abductions, the sudden flights which it was their destiny to undergo, was not the least remarkable circumstance of their lives.—*London Graphic.*

The first society for the exclusive purpose of circulating the Bible was organized in 1805, under the name of the **British and Foreign Bible Society.**

REDUCTION OF POSTAGE to two cents, to take effect, we believe, July 1st, was ordered by the late Congress. We suppose the inconsistency of the service remains. A letter will be carried from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, for two cents, and delivered by carrier free a mile from the post office in the latter place; but if you or I drop a letter in the Philadelphia post office for the F. & M. Bank on the opposite side of Chestnut street, the charge is still two cents—which is too high, or which is too low, which?