

FOR THE YOUNG FOLK.

THE TUFTED TITMOUSE.

His coat is like a wintry sky
When once the sun has set
And in the west a single line
Of red is smouldering yet.
Above his black, courageous eye
He wears his soldier's crest;
No bitter, rude, nor screaming wind
Can daunt his martial breast.

I met him in a leafy dell—
A brook ran sweet and clear.
As if he called from paradise,
He shouted, "Here, here!"
In busy thought the moments flew;
I pondered, "Then so near?"
Far o'er a hill his voice replied,
"T is here, here, here!"

In winter's frost we met again,
When every leaf was near.
"Where is your heavenly country
now?"

He answered, "Here, here!"
—W. C. McClelland.

SNAKES THAT LIKE THUNDER.

One of the wonders of the bare, sandy plains of New Mexico are the thunder snakes. They are by no means common, yet they are often encountered by prairie travelers, especially before and after thunderstorms. Flashes of lightning and claps of thunder, which are so terrifying to bipeds and quadrupeds, seem to have the greatest charm and delight for these members of the serpent family. Whenever a thunderstorm comes up they have a regular picnic. They come crawling out of holes, from behind rocks and rotten stumps, and enjoy the fun while it lasts. Their nature is quarrelsome, their character fierce, and they are aggressive in a high degree, although their markings are very beautiful. They are not poisonous, however; their bark is worse than their bite.

MEN WHO MAKE NESTS.

It seems funny enough to read of men who actually make nests like the birds. Yet such men actually exist both in Africa and Australia. The bushmen of the latter country, who are among the lowest orders of men, do not know enough to build even the simplest huts, so they gather grass and twigs, exactly as a bird would do, and carry them to a thicket in the jungle and make for themselves comfortable nest homes. Here whole families curl up together like so many little puppies and sleep very snugly. As the bushes grow up around the nest they often come together overhead and form a kind of natural shelter, but further than this the bushman has no protection from the rain. There are hundreds of these nests in the "bush," as it is called in Australia, but the bushman, although very ignorant, never fails to find his own home again, nor mistakes one other nest for it. And if he is taken away blindfolded for miles and allowed to go he will start straight for home as unerringly as a cat that has been carried from her old home in a bag. Indeed, the bushmen possess this homing instinct to a remarkable degree, and in this respect they are far ahead of civilized man with all his intellect and reasoning power.

AN INDUSTRIOUS COMMUNITY.

A celebrated naturalist has been studying ants in Australia, and he tells some very wonderful stories of what he has found. The Australian ants are giants in comparison with the ants that we know, and certainly are very much more intelligent than the ants of our dooryards. They belong to the class known as the termites. They are white and very strong. This naturalist tells us that if they attack a human being they can injure him seriously. Their homes are like mammoth slabs of stone, and look very like sandstone. The homes are always built running from north to south, and a close study of the ants showed that the points of the compass had a great deal to do in governing their movements. These ants are found in North Queensland, in the interior. One mound examined was a groined columnar construction eighteen feet high. This student of natural history tells us that originally he believes this mound was in the shape of a cone. The doors through which the ants went in and out were about a foot and a half from the top, and the grooves made in the side of the column, this naturalist believes, were made by the incessant traveling of the ants up and down the same pathway; and it is this, he believes, that gives the columnar formation. It was evident on close examination that at some time there had been different points of entrance to this home of these ants, and that they had been walled up. When the interior of the mound was examined, it was found to contain a large central court, with hundreds of tiny cells built in regular order on the inside, resembling galleries terraced one above another. Connection between these galleries was made by stairways, which, on examination, were found to be built with architectural exactness. The cells were uniform in size, and the interior as hard and smooth as marble. At the bottom of the mound were found the storerooms. It was evident that this colony of ants had all gone to the cellar for their provisions. Another strange thing was discovered. On one side of the mound the rooms, or cells, were very much larger, and from their construction it was decided that they were intended either for the dignitaries of the colonies or for visitors. The floors of these rooms were perfectly smooth, but the ceilings were round, and at one end was found a carefully raised dais.

Another mound examined was in the form of a pyramid, with a winding ascent in the interior, the cells constructed around the edges of a huge

court. Here there was no evidence of any preparation for the entertaining of officials or visitors of distinction, but the storerooms of the second pyramid or mound were at the bottom, just as in the mound where it was evident there was a difference in the social standing of the inhabitants.

A great deal can be taught little children who are willing to study these tiny creatures that are to be found wherever we go in the country. A group of little children, now big children, formed a colony of white ants in the center of a little miniature lake on the lawn of the house where they were living in Connecticut. Probably if you should meet these young ladies and gentlemen now, they would be astonished to find how much they know about ants—the various kinds, how they differ in habits of life, and what different things they ate; and all this knowledge began with these men and women when, as little children, their father encouraged them to form a colony of ants on a little mound in the center of a pond about three feet wide. No dolls, or tennis-racket, or express wagon, or dolls' dishes ever entertained this little group as their ant friends did for two and three hours every morning. They can give you descriptions of how the ants made boats out of a leaf and floated across the water; of their house-building and bridge-building; of the selection of the food which they ate each day, and that which they stored away for winter use. All this these little people discovered for themselves without the aid of books, for it was when they came back to New York in the winter that they began reading the books that told about ants, and they understood them because they had studied, without meaning to, all summer. They had a vast storehouse of information all gathered in play. They had followed the example of their little friends, the ants.

THE KITTEN AND THE BEAR.

Chris Burns, the veteran First Sergeant of Troop D, had a kitten which during the summer camping of the troop at the Lower Geyser Basin, made her home within the Sergeant's tent. Here, curled up on a pair of army blankets, she defied the world in general, and dogs in particular. When the latter approached, she would elevate every bristle on her brave little back, her eyes would glow like live coals, and her tail would swell up threateningly. If dogs approached too near, she would hiss, and exhibit the usual signs of hostility, until the intruders had vanished from her neighborhood.

One day, when the camp was bathed in sunshine, and every soldier in camp felt lazy, an inquisitive black bear came down the mountain-side, and, whether because he was in search of adventure or because attracted by a savory smell from the cook's fire, began to walk about among the white tents of the cavalry command. Suddenly the kitten caught sight of him. Dogs by the score she had seen, but this particular "dog" was the largest and the hairiest dog she had ever seen. But she did not hesitate. It was enough for her that an enemy had invaded her special domain. Hissing forth her spite, while her little body quivered with rage, she darted forth at the bear. The onslaught was sudden, and one glance was enough for Bruin. With a snort of fear, Bruin made for the nearest tree, a short distance away, and did not pause until he was safely perched among the upper branches! Meanwhile, the kitten stalked proudly about on the ground beneath, keeping close guard over her huge captive, her back still curved into a bow, and her hair still bristling with righteous indignation, while her tail would now and then give a significant little wave, as if to say, "That's the way I settle impertinent bears!"

The soldiers, who meanwhile had poured forth from their tents, could scarcely believe their eyes; but there was the bear in the tree and the kitten below, and there were those who had seen the affair from beginning to end. And perhaps the strangest part of it all was that the bear would not stir from his safe position in the branches until the kitten had been persuaded to leave her huge enemy a clear means of retreat! Then he slid shamefacedly down from his perch, and ambled hastily off towards the mountain.—Lieut. Charles D. Rhodes, U. S. A., in St. Nicholas.

Turf Monument.

A turf monument over 1,000 years old is the White Horse, of Uffington, England. It is on the almost perpendicular side of a hill, and lies like a patch of snow on the grass. It measures 355 feet from head to tail and 120 feet from ear to heel. The whole design bears the stamp of barbaric crudeness, but resembles, however, a constantly recurring type on Gallic and British coins, which is a guaranty of its age. Tradition declares it was carved there in the turf by the soldiers of Ethelred and Alfred after their great victory over the Danes. A white horse was the emblem of the Saxons. There are innumerable other white horses to be found throughout England, all noted in history and gigantic in size. The eye of one is twenty-five feet in circumference.

Francis Warlop, the cook of the Lakeside Club, Grand Rapids, Mich., thought he could prepare toaststools to make them dainty eating. He ate a few of them and died.

Though for fifty years a lumberman and much of the time in the deer country, a Man-ha, Maine, man never shot a deer until this season.

Infant schools began in New Lanark, Scotland, in 1815; in England not until 1818.

THE FARM AND GARDEN.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ON AGRICULTURAL TOPICS.

Buckwheat and Corn—Stunting Pigs Before Birth—Growing Beet Seed—The Eumelan Grape—Etc., Etc.

BUCKWHEAT AND CORN.

From my experience in growing buckwheat it is a bad crop to precede corn, as not only does the buckwheat come up thick as a weed, but the land seems unfavorably affected for the crop. If I were growing buckwheat, I would always seed if possible to clover with the buckwheat, and I would sow both crimson and common clover, so as to have two chances for a stand.—Waldo F. Brown.

STUNTING PIGS BEFORE BIRTH.

It is not so generally appreciated as it should be that the breeding sow while she is bearing her young needs just the kind of nutrition that the growing pig will require. Sows fed heavily on corn fatten, and bring thin, stunted pigs, with very little ability to care for themselves. Such pigs will never do so well as those whose dams were fed milk and wheat bran with some kind of roots while bearing their young. These will have good digestion and will grow rapidly, while the stunted pig will never fully recover from the improper nutrition it received before it was farrowed.

BROWING BEET SEED.

Beet seed is so easily grown that it is always very cheap. Yet we believe in farmers growing their own beet seed, provided they will grow the best. It is not the beet that produces the most seed that is best for planting. If beets, or any other roots for that matter, are planted so early in spring that they grow tough and stringy roots, such roots will produce a great amount of seed, but it will produce if sown at any time plants that are like its parent. It is thus that roots degenerate into something like their original wild condition. A moderate-sized root grown quickly after mid-summer, and in very rich ground, will be tender and good until late in the spring. Such a root will not produce as much seed as a tough, stringy one, but its seed will bring much more satisfactory crops.

THE EUMELAN GRAPE.

Almost everybody at times becomes tired of the very musky grapes which are the principal varieties offered on the market. The old-fashioned Clinton grape, which was the product by cultivation of the wild frost grape, is entirely free from this objection. But the Clinton did not ripen until late, and was commonly allowed to hang until frost had blackened the grape leaves. To those who have grown and liked the Clinton grape, the Eumelan can be safely commended. It has a clear, sweet juice, is black in color, and ripens as early as the Delaware. It has a blue bloom, in this resembling the frost grapes, from which it was originated. The only reason why it is not much more widely known is that it is difficult to propagate. The wood is very hard and will not root except in hothouses where bottom heat can be applied. But we have frequently layered this variety to secure specimens to give to friends. Most of the nurseries now send grape vines so cheaply that it is not worth while to layer bearing vines, as it undoubtedly does injure the vine and delay ripening of the fruit to grow layers from it.—Boston Cultivator.

AMMONIA IN PLANT CULTURE.

While the ordinary kerosene emulsion and solution of copper have proved an immense boon to the cultivator of fruits and trees in the open air, Meehan's Monthly is authority for the statement that they are usually objectionable to the small amateur flower grower, to whom something clean and easily applied to small plants is a great advantage. For these the various lactides and fungicides for sale by the florists offer some good recommendation. Where these are not to be had it is said that a wash of ammonia is effective. As the ammonia bottle is now one of the supplies of every well-ordered household it may be put into use readily. All these articles, however, require some little care in their first application. One should always try a little at first on some plants that are of no considerable value before risking them in a wholesale way. For instance, the scale on orange leaves and the leaves of oleanders, or the leaves of some similar plant affected with any kind of insect, can be tried first. If no injury follows, then it may be applied on a somewhat more extensive scale. A few plants and a brush to paint with, a considerable quantity can be gone over in a short time.

PEAR BLIGHT.

The following on treatment for pear blight is incorporated in the report of the New Jersey State Horticultural Society: First, aim to put the tree in a condition to render it the least liable to attack. This means to so manure and cultivate that the tree will not grow rapidly. Thus, the more a tree is fed the worse it will fare when attacked by the blight. Trees that are richly fertilized with nitrogenous manures are especially liable to blight. In short, overstimulation with manures is to be avoided. Good tillage in the same way, while it makes a tree bear, also tends to increase the susceptibility to blight. Anything that retards the growth is beneficial so far as the disease is concerned. The orchardist must stimulate by manures and cultivate sufficiently to give a good crop and

shut that which will do more. Soil and situation will determine largely whether soil or cultivated may be best to resist the blight.

The second method is the extermination of the blight germs, which seems to be the only direct remedy. This is done by cutting out and burning all blighted portions of the trees. Every tree of the pome family, including the apple, pear, quince, crab, mountain ash, service berry and hawthorn, should be treated in the same manner. Particular attention should be paid to the active blight of late autumn, cutting it out and burning the branches before spring arrives. It is important to cut out the blight whenever seen, but all should be removed before the next growing season begins.

To put the treatment in small compass, all blight should be removed as soon as seen while the trees are growing. A thorough inspection needs to be made in the late fall for any branches showing blight. After these are cut out a sharp outlook should be kept for the disease in the orchard the next spring. In connection with pruning and burning the trees should not be stimulated beyond what is required for a fair growth of wood and the production of a profitable crop.

THE PURSLANE TREE.

We have heard farmers who wished to be very emphatic without being profane in condemning something declare "It was meaner than pusley," or purslane, which is indeed a nuisance in cultivated fields. How would they like the purslane tree, which belongs to the same family as our well-known weed and the familiar flower portulaca, but which grows to the height of ten or twelve feet, with a trunk one foot in diameter? They have it in New South Wales. In the botanical garden, and the Agricultural Gazette is quite enthusiastic over it as a fodder plant for the arid regions, or great Australian desert, where other plants will not thrive, and recommends its trial for the following reasons:

It may be readily propagated, rooting readily from cuttings, and even from solitary leaves, during the greater part of the year. It has no thorns or prickles, nor any objectionable characteristics that I know of. Like many succulents, it attains its greatest luxuriance in hot, dry weather. Stock are fond of it, its succulent leaves providing both food and water for them; it is reputed to be moderately nutritious.

If it develops as many seeds as the common garden purslane, and is as ready to spread not only in hot, dry soil, but into all other, and is as difficult to exterminate, we fancy they will find those characteristics very objectionable, and they will wish it had been left in its native land of South Africa. The rapid spread of such weeds as the thistle and the daisy, introduced from foreign countries, makes us a little shy of such experiments, even though the new plant may have much to recommend it in certain localities.

And the experience of Massachusetts with the gypsy moth and other sections with the San Jose scale leads us to urge caution upon the botanical garden and experiment stations against introducing anything which may prove an addition to our already long list of weed and insect pests.—American Cultivator.

FARM AND GARDEN NOTES.

Wear an ill-fitting collar, and then imagine how the horse likes to wear one.

Cabbage may remain out without danger of injury from frost after beets, carrots and turnips should be stored for the winter.

If you want horse radish to use before the frost is out of the ground in the spring, dig it and pack away in sand or soil where it will not freeze.

If you have bean poles standing in the ground pull them up and store somewhere under shelter. If they are worth using they are worth caring for.

It is said that the hydrangea, when grown out of doors permanently, has a decided tendency to give blue flowers instead of the pinkish-purple-white usually found on it.

An Eastern gardener pulls up the poles that have any beans on them when frost comes, and puts them away, vines and all, where frost cannot get them, and in this way is able to keep the beans fresh for some time.

Roots will keep nice and crisp till late in the spring if pitted. Those intended for use by the family through the winter may be put in barrels or boxes. Pack them as closely as possible and fill all the spaces with fine sand or earth.

A new gladiolus, recently exhibited by J. L. Childs, is Canary Bird, and is reported to be the best yellow sort yet obtained. It is very slightly tinged with red deep down in the throat, where it is hardly recognizable. The flowers are of excellent size, also.

Even the wild flowers are subject to curious variations brought about by hybridization. A plant of *Lobelia cardinalis*—a plant famous for its intense red—was recently found at Wynnewood, Pa., which had pale pink bloom. Pure white flower spikes have sometimes been found.

No two flocks can be fed alike, and no two feeders can feed alike. Because our way of feeding gives us success, it is no guarantee that it will give our neighbor success. Every little detail counts for much. After all, it is not so much the food as it is the whole method of handling.

The ornamental varieties of asparagus need an abundance of nutriment while making their growth. After such a period, which may be two months or more, the plants should be reported in very rich soil; then, as they are growing, supply well with water and twice a week give liquid manure.

THE FROG INDUSTRY.

NEW YORK EATS MORE FROGS THAN ANY PLACE ON EARTH.

A Tank Filled With a Thousand Big Bullfrogs—Used For Scientific Purposes—Where the Croakers Come From and How They Are Caught.

Frequenters of Fulton Market have been much interested during the past week at the sight of nearly one thousand big bullfrogs swimming contentedly in one of Commissioner Blackford's big tanks. I chanced to be among the spectators, and with others conceived the popular belief that the frogs had been brought to the market to be killed and eaten.

Commissioner Blackford, however, set this idea all awry when I said "frogs" to him.

"The live frogs that you see out there," said the Commissioner, "are brought to New York solely for sale among the schools and colleges. The frog is a very popular subject in the class room, and there are ever so many ways in which he is used to demonstrate the circulation of the blood. His vitality is very great, and under a skillful knife you can see the complete working of his heart. Scientists use him for experimenting also. Students or messengers take the frogs away in kettles or boxes and we charge them \$3 a dozen.

"The frogs meant to be eaten are shipped to New York already dressed. That means that we receive the back legs or the saddle packed in ice and ready to sell to the consumer. If they should ship the frogs alive the cost in transportation would be enormous and would make the price so high that only wealthy people could afford to eat them."

"Are there many frogs' legs eaten in New York?"

"There is not a city in the world," said Commissioner Blackford, "that consumes so many frogs' legs as New York."

"More than in Paris?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the Commissioner. "While, years ago, the French were commonly known as frog eaters, the New Yorkers to-day should more properly be called 'frog eating people' rather than the Parisians. I seldom found the dish on the menus in the restaurants of Paris, while in New York you can get them at nearly every first-class hotel and restaurant. This dish is not common in London, and only a few of the high grade restaurants there prepare it."

According to Commissioner Blackford's figures, fully seventy-five per cent of the frogs for the New York market are shipped from the Ontario district, in Canada. The remaining twenty-five come from the Adirondacks and the State of Maine. Frogs are very plentiful in all these districts, and they multiply so rapidly that there is no danger of a decrease in the supply for years to come. About six of the saddles of these frogs weigh a pound and retail at seventy-five cents.

The largest frogs in the world come from the State of Missouri, but they are scarce and do not figure largely in New York's market. Three of these saddles will make a pound. Great quantities of frogs are to be found in the New Jersey meadows, but they are so small that a pound of dressed legs cannot be obtained from less than two or three dozen frogs. Occasionally a farmer's boy will bring forty or fifty of these frogs to market, but the price is so small compared with the amount of work required in the hunt that no one makes a regular business of searching the adjacent meadows.

The frog taking season begins about June 1 and continues steadily till September 1. Throughout Canada there are many men who make a regular business of frog catching, while in the Adirondacks the work is done by the guides during their spare hours. The animals are caught with a hook baited with red flannel and suspended from a rod about ten feet in length. There is a strange fascination about the red flannel that the ordinary croaker cannot resist. The moment it is dangled within a few inches of his nose he makes a wild leap at it, with jaws wide open, and is promptly hooked. He is released and placed in a big basket carried on the back of the frog hunter.

Sometimes the frog is found to be sleeping. Then the hook is placed under him and a quick jerk lands him. When the basket is filled the frogs are carried to a pen in one corner of the pond near the huts of the hunters, and are kept there until there is a demand for them from New York. They are then scooped out of the pen with a net and killed and dressed.

This operation is very simple. The frog is stunned with a blow on the head and immediately the head is severed. The saddle is separated from the body with one blow, and the legs are folded together as one would fold his arms. They are packed in boxes of chopped ice and are ready for shipment.

During the summer months the New York market receives from 5,000 to 10,000 pounds of dressed saddles daily. The retail price then reaches the lowest notch of twenty-five cents per pound. At present the about 2,000 pounds pass through the market every day. As it is impossible to take the frog during the winter immense quantities of the saddles are frozen during the early autumn and stored in ice boxes. The meat retains its full flavor, and is as good as if it had been killed the day previous.

A great many attempts have been made toward the artificial propagation of frogs from the eggs, but none has ever succeeded. Seth Green, one of the most successful fish culturists in the country, made many tests several years ago, but met with failure. During the past summer Commissioner Blackford received several orders from France for live bullfrogs, which were to be used in stocking the ponds in

that country, as the supply was found to be falling below the demand.—New York Herald.

Chinese Wheelbarrows.

The wheelbarrow man wears across his shoulders a strap, which is attached to the shafts on each side. Boxes, bales of goods, or whatever the load may consist of, are secured to the wheelbarrow by ropes. There are seating accommodations for four people, two on each side, and a cushioned seat is provided for the passenger, who generally sits with one leg resting on the front of the barrow and the other hanging over the side in a rope loop, which serves as a foot rest. On the Great Plain wheelbarrows are occasionally seen with a sail set, when a fair wind proves to be a great help to the trundling of the barrow over a level way.

Since the institution of cotton mills at Shanghai the wheelbarrow has been extensively used as a passenger vehicle, especially for carrying work-women to and from the mills. One man can wheel six women for a distance of about three miles, morning and evening, the charge being 1s. 6d. per month. The average earnings of a wheelbarrow man are about \$54 per day. About 4,000 licenses are issued monthly to the same number of wheelbarrows plying for hire in the streets of the foreign settlements at Shanghai, where, being under the municipal regulations, they are perhaps the best in China. Sometimes as many as fifty barrows may be seen in the streets, traveling one behind the other, each carrying two barrels of English Portland cement, and pushed by one man. Very frequently a load is carried on one side of the barrow only, and it is extraordinary to see a Chinaman skillfully balancing and propelling it. The upsets and accidents, too, are remarkably few, when it is considered that about 4,000 of these vehicles are in use in the streets, in addition to a large traffic of other kinds.—Cassier's Magazine.

Making Wax Lifelike.

"How long does it take to make one of these?" said the manufacturer in response to an inquiry. "Well, it depends entirely upon circumstances. It is not a mechanical operation, the finishing off of a wax model as true to life as this," and he pointed to the bust of a laughing child, whose rosy neck and bright eyes were framed by clustering curls. "To make these one must have studied anatomy, as well as drawing and modeling. We begin in the same way as a sculptor would to make a statue. After the wax has cooled the eyes are put in, the face is 'made up,' as theatrical folks say, and the wig is fastened on, and the wooden body is shaped. We make all our hands and feet from life, and they cost about \$10. If we have an order for an entire figure we always model it from life. The life-size wax figures of infants are among the finest things we manufacture, and they add much to the attractiveness of a show window, as was illustrated last winter, when a Washington street retail dealer displayed one during the holiday season. The head and shoulders, such as are seen in the milliner's windows, cost from \$40 to \$45. The wig makes considerable difference in the price, as we use the best hair, and it is expensive, especially the natural blonde, which is scarce. The children's heads cost \$20, or thereabouts."

"All the finishing off imaginable," he continued, "would not make a figure stand the test of a season behind the glare of a glass unless the wax has a natural pink tinge. The reason some of the models look so deathly is because the wax is bad and not properly colored. We use beeswax, slightly colored, and flesh tints are put on in addition."—Boston Transcript.

Collar Buttons for Insomnia.

A Topeka man was recently troubled with insomnia. He thought that some young medical student would be glad to take his case for the practice there was in it, and a small fee, if any. He sought out a medical student who seemed to have the proper appearance and laid his case before him.

"I think this prescription will be just what you need," said the coming practitioner. "Three at a dose."

"Pills?" queried the invalid.

"Yes, but just the kind you need." "How often shall I take them?" "When you feel as if you needed them."

The patient took the prescription to a nearby drug store and had it filled. The pills were placed in a small box and wrapped up. The man took them home, and, absent-mindedly, tossed them on top of the bureau. He went to bed that night forgetting all about his ailment and the pills. He was unable to sleep, and thought perhaps the pills would bring Morpheus to his rescue. He got up in the dark, groped around for the box, found it, unwrapped it, and was surprised to find but three. He took them and returned to bed and fell asleep in a few minutes.

He met the young student in the street the next day and told him of the wonderful effect that his remedy had produced. The young hopeful was quite elated over his success. The man returned home that night. During the evening's conversation his wife asked him if he had seen anything of a box of collar buttons that she had purchased the day before. "I put them on top of the bureau," she said, "but the box has been opened and they are gone."

A juror in Worcester, Mass., recently asked to be excused on account of deafness. The judge refused to excuse him, and he sat patiently through a trial lasting several hours. At its close the other jurors were for conviction, but he voted persistently for acquittal, on the ground that as he could not hear the testimony he could not vote for conviction.