

# A HOUSE OF CARDS

Old "Pop" Steifel's Great Sacrifice as a Memorial to His Daughter Mina.

By ARTHUR JONES.

"Bends?" queried "Pop" Steifel scornfully. "Huh! If you fellers wasn't in such a blame hurry to get out of the caissons so as to knock off work you wouldn't be in danger of them."

"Though he was only fifty-five, everybody knew old Steifel, the foreman of the construction company, as 'Pop.' It is not often that a German is found in charge of a gang; and when he is he is apt to be a man of authority. But everybody revered 'Pop' Steifel because he was known to be a man devoid of fear.

"You see, boys," he would explain to the newcomers, "them bends is caused this way. Under two, three, four pressures the blood gets full of air. Now you got to go back slow, or else when you gets back to one pressure them air bubbles hasn't busted yet, and it's going to get into your heart and kill you, maybe." Which was as nearly scientific as was necessary for their comprehension.

"Bill's anxious to git back to meet that girl of his when the Smith building turns out its people," said one of the men.

Everybody knew Bill's girl. Bill was the popular sobriquet for Mr. William Allen, whose uncle was junior partner in the construction company that was sinking its caissons deep into the edge of the East river, adjoining the Smith building. Allen was qualifying for an engineer by learning the practical details of the work. Miss Elizabeth Strickland was employed in the Smith building, a little three-story structure soon to be pulled down because of age and general decrepitude. It was rarely that the men going to work did not see Miss Elizabeth seated at her desk beside a window on the top story, and looking out to wave her hand to Bill. "Pop" Steifel, the sentimentalist, as most Teutons are, was once found almost in tears, though he stoutly attributed his condition to the onion which his landlady had placed in his lunch basket that morning.

"Say, you fellers—when I see a nice young feller like that feller Bill, it sort



The Quivering Mass Was Temporarily Halted.

of makes me think of my Mina," he said.

Old Steifel's wife had died two years before, and his only daughter had been killed in a railroad accident a year later. He lived absolutely alone, for at fifty one does not often make new friends.

"What I'm afraid of," he continued, munching his luncheon, "is that that rotten old Smith building's going to fall. Yes, fellers, them foundations is rotten—rotten, fellers. I've been down and I've seen them. Some swindling contractor must have set them down on the mud of the river bed. There ain't one inch of concrete under 'em, fellers. And if that old building falls"—he paused impressively—"I tell you, from the way them foundations is twisted, she falls plumb into the East river, like a house of cards. But don't you say nothing to Bill."

Miss Elizabeth always waved a welcoming hand to "Pop" Steifel. He would have died for her. She had whispered to him, before anybody else was told, the secret of her engagement to Allen, and had told him he was to consider himself a privileged guest at the little bungalow which was being built for them out on Long Island. She reminded "Pop" more than ever of Mina. He went away, wiping the tears out of his eyes. Soft-hearted and stout of soul, Steifel was exasperatedly German, from his blunders to his spectacles and his thatch of iron-gray hair.

He had gone down in the caisson. Under several pressures of atmosphere the men were pushing the great shield forward, scooping out the soft, cheese-like clay of the river bank and sending up the debris. When the gang's hour was ended old Steifel remained down alone. He wanted to inspect those Smith building foundations again. He had been worrying about them. Three months remained before the old, condemned building was to be closed. Of course it was not likely that within three months they would give way. They must have been rotten for fifty years; three months made little difference.

Suddenly Steifel became conscious

that something abnormal was happening. In fact, the air pressure had been slightly lowered and a little silt was drifting in. That in itself was not of the greatest consequence. Probably there was a leaky valve somewhere which lowered the atmosphere tension. It had happened before and meant only a few hours' work lost. But this was something different. It was no leaky valve—he saw that now—but a sudden influx of quicksand, probably propelled by the sudden releasing of the pressure of the dead weight of clay that had confined it in its original limits. And it was flowing, not from the south, as it should have flowed, but from the west—from immediately beneath the Smith building.

"Pop" Steifel knew what that meant. The rotten foundations would simply be swept away. The building, resting on nothing, would collapse as surely as a house of cards falls when the under cards are withdrawn.

The sweat poured down his face. He looked round him in agony. Then he rushed back to the air lock and entered the chamber with the next pressure of atmosphere. One man was waiting there, and he was just about to pass back into the upper air. "Run!" shouted Steifel, plucking him by the sleeve. "Run like all you was worth, you feller, and tell 'em the Smith building's going to fall!"

The man caught the horrified look on the old German's face and turned and obeyed. Then Steifel turned back into the lowest chamber again and waded through eight inches of swampy sand.

"Five minutes!" he muttered. "Five minutes and she falls. But we'll save her!"

He knew that a slight obstruction often checks a vast momentum for a short space of time. And he, with his ponderous body—what better purpose could he serve? So he sat down heavily in the mud, which reached almost to his armpits. As he did so he became conscious that the quivering mass was temporarily halted, like some wave meeting a breakwater. The rippling surface undulated away from him; then slowly it crept round and upward. But he had saved a minute. And a minute meant the margin between death and safety.

He looked at his watch. "Four minutes," he said. "Five. Good. Now let her come!" And the mass rose to his neck and gulped his watch and the hand that held it, and lapped at his chin and nostrils. The old man tilted back his head to breathe. "She looked like Mina," he muttered, as though in extenuation of his sacrifice. And suddenly he saw Mina beside him, her arms outstretched, a look of ineffable love in her eyes. "Mina! he mumbled thickly. "I'm coming, my dear!" And the lapping sands no longer oppressed him, nor the mud waves that now surged over him.

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## DULL TIME FOR ROYAL CHILD

Heir to the Throne of Russia Knows Very Little of the Genuine Joys of Boyhood.

The czarvitch cannot look back upon the joys of early life in the way that most children born to a throne are in a position to do. Nor will any of his European colleagues envy the crown prince of Russia.

From the day of his birth the little prince was put under the care of a Cossack guard, who is held answerable with his life for the safety of his charge. The soldier never leaves the child; he sleeps in the anteroom of his bedchamber. The room is locked, but a series of bells would at a touch communicate with the outside world. Two sentries parade in front of the bedroom door, and a few paces further on is another double guard.

Little Alexis was four years old before his eyes fell on any sight beyond his own small garden bounded by the wall of a courtyard. He did not even play as other children do, for while he was digging in the sand or running about with his only companion, the son of a lady in waiting, other children were acting as his ghosts and running about in another part of the garden to distract attention and make security doubly sure. His own Cossack guard guarded the imperial child of Russia, while a second Cossack guard simulated duty over the other little ones.

An English tutor entered upon the service of the czarvitch when he was seven years old, but all lessons are done in the presence of the Cossack and of a lady in waiting. Friedberg was the first place the little boy saw outside his own secluded playground, later he beheld the grounds of the imperial residence, and from the decks of the Standart his eyes greeted the Baltic.

On one occasion only was the son of the czar at a military reception, and the precautionary measures adopted were of the strictest kind. The czar and czarina have tried to prevent any possible risk of their child being poisoned, attacked or kidnaped. He eats nothing until it has been examined by his own special "taster," who makes trial of every dish before it appears on the table.—Neues Wiener Journal.

## Tough Luck.

"Why so disconsolate?"  
"I've such a fine formula for getting rid of red ants," pouted the bride.  
"Well?"  
"And I have no red ants to get rid of."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

## Often the Case.

The Fat Man—What line are you in?  
The Bearded Man—I'm manufacturing a safety razor. What's yours?  
The Fat Man—I put up an anti-fat preparation.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

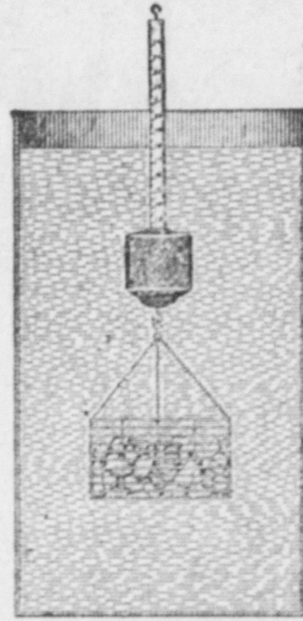
## ALCOHOL FROM POTATO CULLS

"Denatured" Liquid Suitable for Manufacture of Varnish and Other Commercial Articles.

(BY A. O. WENTE.)

Alcohol is a substance produced by the fermentation of sugar. In practice there are two possible sources of sugar for this purpose: First, plants naturally containing sugar ready to be converted into alcohol by simple fermentation, such as sugar cane, sugar beets, sorghum, fruits, etc.; second, materials containing starch which may be changed into sugar by the action of malt or acids and then fermented, such as potatoes, grains, etc. Alcohol has been and is now being made from sawdust, but as the processes employed are trade secrets this material will not be discussed.

The so-called "denatured alcohol" is prepared by the addition of such ingredients as will make the alcohol unfit for drinking purposes. It is used extensively in the manufacture of varnish, explosives, chemicals, and many other commercial articles. It



Apparatus for Determining the Starch Contents of Potatoes.

may also be used in various household appliances, both for lighting and heating purposes with much more safety than either kerosene or gasoline. Its cost previous to the enactment of laws making it tax-free was such as to prevent its use in engines and motors, consequently very little was done toward their adaptation to its use. It is, however, being successfully used in both stationary and traction engines in other countries where it can be had at a moderate price, and under similar conditions of economic manufacture would undoubtedly be so used in this country.

Potatoes have been successfully used as a source of cheap alcohol in other countries and conditions in this country indicate that large quantities of potato culls with the necessary starch content are available for this purpose at a price which would permit of the profitable manufacture of alcohol therefrom. Experimental work of the agricultural department distillery has shown how potatoes can be economically handled and practical instructions in the method of manufacture can now be given. This work has been done in a small distillery such as would be suitable for large farms or communities of farmers working in co-operation. Farmers may, if they so desire, obtain from the government data which will enable them to convert frosted or inferior grades of potatoes into a source of revenue, as it has been shown by experiments that these may be made into alcohol at a fair profit.

The percentage of starch in potatoes may be easily determined by means of a specially prepared instrument. An average sample of the potatoes is washed and thoroughly dried. Exactly ten pounds are placed in the wire basket (one potato may be cut if necessary to get the exact weight). The instrument with the basket attached is floated in a tank containing clear water at 52.5 degrees Fahrenheit. The stem is so graduated that the percentage of the starch can be read directly from it. Potatoes average from 14 to 20 per cent of starch and one pound of starch in practice yields about 0.071 gallon of absolute alcohol, or 0.079 gallon of denatured alcohol at 180 degrees proof. One hundred pounds containing 17 per cent of starch would yield approximately 1.3 gallons of denatured alcohol.

## Sulky Plows.

Many farmers have the mistaken idea that sulky plows are not for rock soils. It is on such soils that we find their economy the greatest. Only the driver is required and the weight of the plow holds the shape to its work where often three men—one at the beam—would not be able to do half the work of the sulky nor nearly as well. Their draft will be from 5 to 10 per cent greater than that of the walking plow, dependent upon the skill in adjusting the center of draft right.

## Care of Hives.

When the hives are well distributed in a certain space their inmates may be more easily handled. It seems to improve their disposition, especially if there are some trees or shrubs about it. Robbing is not so prevalent, either, and the absence of that always helps to make bees better natured.

## Care of Water Trough.

Try putting a pinch of coppers in the watering trough once or twice a month. Better still, scrub out the trough and spray thoroughly with a solution.

## FOWLS REQUIRE GREEN FOOD

Turnips, Cabbage, Beets and All Such Furnish Change That is Appreciated by All Birds.

During the spring, summer and fall it is not difficult to supply a variety of green food for the fowls, as any kind of tender growing vegetation is relished by them, but when cold weather sets in, it is very different, and things must be set aside during the fall season.

Turnips, cabbage, beets and all such make good food and furnish a grateful change, which the fowls appreciate.

The scraps and peelings may be fed raw, or they may be put in a pot on back of the stove and allowed to cook gently during the day, and then thickened at night with equal parts of cornmeal and wheat bran, and to be fed next morning as a mash, using care not to give too much, as when the fowls are satisfied they will stand about and refuse to scratch and take sufficient exercise.

## SOME COMMON HEN DISEASES

Treatment Prescribed for Several Kinds of Ailments—Sickly Birds Should Be Isolated.

All diseased birds should be isolated.

Colds and Roup.—Disinfect the drinking water as follows: To each gallon of water add the amount of potassium permanganate that will remain on the surface of a dime.

Chickenpox.—Apply a touch of iodine and carbolated vaseline to each sore.

Gapes.—New ground and vigorous cultivation will very often remedy this trouble.

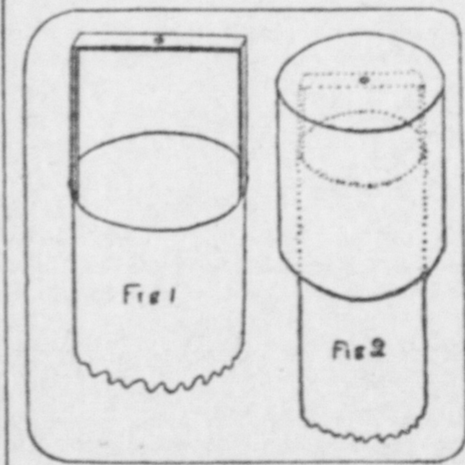
Scaly Legs.—Apply vaseline to the affected parts, and after twenty-four hours soak in warm, soapy water. Repeat treatment until cured.

Diarrhoea in Hens.—Low grade wheat flour or middlings is good for this trouble.

## VENTILATOR KEEPS OUT RAIN

Device for Use in Building or Cave May Be Constructed From Joint of Stovepipe.

It is often desirable to have a building or cave, well ventilated, and still have it so that no rain can enter through the ventilator. Such a ventilator may be constructed from a joint of stovepipe and a can, which is at least an inch larger in diameter than the stovepipe it is to cover, and several inches high. A brace, made from a piece of strap iron, should be constructed as illustrated in Fig. 1



Rainproof Ventilator.

and riveted to the sides of the pipe, says the Iowa Homestead. The can is then slipped over this and riveted through its bottom to the brace. Have the lower edge of the can about four inches below the upper edge of the stovepipe; this should leave a space of a couple of inches between the bottom of the can and the top edge of the stovepipe, to allow for the free circulation of air as shown in Fig. 2.

## GARDEN and FARM NOTES

Fifth and health are arch enemies. Recklessness is a short road to failure.

The garden acre should be the best on the farm.

Cut the cost of production by using machinery wherever you can.

The thing that counts is to make every foot of land a producer.

Thanks to scientific methods, the drudgery of farm life is being forced back into the limbo of time.

It doesn't cost any more to be cleanly than otherwise. And there's more profit and satisfaction in it, too.

Scientific farming has joined hands with practical farming in the great work of feeding the nation and the world.

Water containing sufficient mineral to be detected by the naked eye is unfit for either man or beast to take into the body.

The manure that is taken from the barn yard to the field is out of the way before spring work and it makes a great improvement in the farm surroundings.

Root crops, such as parsnips, beets, and carrots, may be prevented from shriveling in the winter if they are covered slightly with dry sand in the bin or box.

A plump, heavy kernel will produce a stronger plant and nourish it better than a shrunken, light one, or than one which has size without proportionate weight.

The farming business is getting to be a big proposition. Farm life of today means more than the daily round of chores, with the long, idle winter spent reading the almanac.

## What They Brought.

The teacher, after telling the Christmas story, was questioning the infant class.

"Now, who can tell me what the wise men brought to the baby Jesus?" she asked.

Six-year-old Alexander waved a chubby hand.

"I know, teacher! Gold an' Lincoln cents an' myrrh," he triumphantly exclaimed.

## Worldly—and True.

Apropos of Miss Lois Campbell's "billion-dollar debut" in St. Louis, Claude H. Wetmore, the author, said:

"The marvelous growth and prosperity of our city is a phenomenon that holds the eye of all America. Before such wealth as ours one thinks involuntarily of the worldly cynicism:

"There are other things in the world besides money—and money will buy them all."

## Really Not to Blame.

"Don't you know I tol' you not t' go swimmin' wid no white trash chillun, eh?" sternly asked Sambo Johnsing.

"But he wan' white befo' he went in," replied Sambo's small son.

## For SUMMER HEADACHES

HICKA' CAPUDINE is the best remedy—no matter what causes them—whether from the heat, sitting in draughts, feverish condition, etc. Use 50c and 50c per bottle at medicine stores. Adv.

## Real Test.

Gabe—How do you tell a genuine diamond from a fake?

Steve—Try to hook it.

Married women like to board and pretend that they are doing light housekeeping.

It keeps wives as busy providing for the inner man as it does husbands providing things for the outer woman.

Dr. Pierce's Peppermint Cure, sugar-coated, easy to take as candy, regulate and invigorate stomach, liver and bowels. Do not gripe. Adv.

Adam lost out when he parted with one of his ribs.

## PAINFUL, TRYING TIMES



Housework is hard enough for a healthy woman. The wife who has a bad back, who is weak or tired all the time, finds her duties a heavy burden. Thousands of nervous, discouraged, sickly women have traced their troubles to sick kidneys—have found quick and thorough relief through using Doan's Kidney Pills.

The trying times of woman's life are much easier if the kidneys are well.

A North Carolina Case

Mrs. J. W. Wilkinson, Statesville, N. C. says: "I suffered acutely from almost total suppression of the kidney secretion. My usual weight was 140 lbs., but I had run down to 90. Doctors said an operation was my only hope, but I would not consent, and was given up to die. Doan's Kidney Pills cured me completely."

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