

THE DEMOCRAT

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Select Miscellany.

A Fish that Eats Grass.

The menhaden, or sea cow, is a huge amphibious animal. It is found in the St. Lucia river. It has a head like that of a sea lion and it looks like a gigantic seal.

It feeds upon the rank grass growing upon the marshes of the St. Lucia. The menhaden has ribs as thick as a man's arm.

Last year Dolph Sheldon and Frank Sams caught one alive near the mouth of the river, intending to send it North for exhibition.

The animal weighed over 1,500 pounds. Unfortunately it was tied to the boat so firmly that the rope cut into the flesh, and it died before the party reached the head of Indian river.

The porpoise devoured the body. Florida is the only place in which the menhaden is found on the North American continent.

Formerly it was abundant, but it is now nearly extinct, and becomes more scarce every year.

Its meat is greatly relished, and tastes like the best New York beef.

The whippersaw resembles the sturgeon, its mouth is filled with two ivory rocks, and between it cracks the clams on which it feeds.

It reaches an enormous size.

The porcupine fish has a round body filled with quills. It is small, and good for nothing.

The cow fish or curious fish. It has the head of a pig, with two horns above the ears.

On the bottom it is as smooth as a flat iron.

The mojar is the shape of a sheep's head, and has a lustrous brown sheen above the tail.

It is as handsome as the angel fish, and is good eating.

The spade fish also looks like a sheep's head, but it has no hard fins.

Fish Culture in the Olden Times.

This subject is attracting so much attention that any fact which throws light on its history seems important.

The following extract is copied from Grahame's Colonial History (page 207, vol. 2), and is quoted by the intelligent traveler Kalm as his authority.

"A discovery was made several years before this period (1750), in New England, by Josiah Franklin, the father of the American Pythagoras, of a method of attracting the resort of herring from the sea to a river he had never visited before.

Observing that two rivers, whose mouths were not far asunder, one was regularly frequented at the spawning season by the fish, of which none was found in the other, he was struck with the notion that the herrings were directed by some secret instinct to spawn in the same channel where they were originally hatched; and verified his conjecture by catching some of them and depositing their spawn, which he extracted in a net of the neglected river, which from thence afforded a plentiful supply of fish.

In this simple, ingenious and useful experiment we recognize the parentage of Benjamin Franklin's understanding, the qualities by whose early impress the foundations of his mind were laid and the bent of his genius imparted."

Where They Meet.

Between the 43d and 47th degrees of north latitude, in the neighborhood of the Banks of Newfoundland, the Gulf stream coming from the south west, meets on the surface of the sea the polar current discovered by Cabot in the year 1497.

The line of Demarkation between these two oceanic rivers is never absolutely constant but varies with the seasons. In winter—that is to say, from September to March—the cold current drives the Gulf stream toward the South, for during this season all the circulatory phenomena of the Atlantic winds, rains, and currents, approach more nearly the southern hemisphere, above which the sun travels. In Summer—that is to say, from March to September—the Gulf Stream in its turn resumes its preponderance, and forces back the line of its conflict with the polar current more and more toward the north.

The Banks of Newfoundland, that enormous plateau surrounded on all sides by abysses five or six miles deep, is undoubtedly due in great part to the meeting of these two moving liquid masses. On entering the tepid waters of the Gulf Stream, the icebergs gradually melt and let fall the fragments of rocks and loads of earth which they bear into the sea.

This bank, which rises gradually from the bottom of the ocean, is a sort of common moraine for the glaciers of Greenland, and the polar archipelago.

To Avoid Thinking.

Susan Elchert, the woman who was executed at Preston, Georgia, lately while in prison waiting away the solitary hours by making friends of the rats that had access to her cell.

A man called to see her a few days before her execution, and after some conversation told her that he had understood that she had some pets.

She tapped on the floor, when out of their holes came the rats, with no less than fourteen of them had answered the call.

They clung upon her lap, and upon her shoulders, and crawled about over her head, suffering her to caress and handle them as she pleased, and not one of them manifested the smallest symptom of alarm.

Amusing Scene on a Street Car.

The passengers on one of the Riker's street cars laughed some the other morning at a scene between the conductor and a well-dressed young man from Georgetown.

As the car was passing down the avenue the young man at the time standing on the platform taking it easy, with one foot on a trunk, he was approached by the conductor and his fare demanded.

He quietly passed over his five cents. Conductor: I demand twenty-five cents for that trunk.

Young man (hesitatingly): Twenty-five cents? Well, I think I will not pay it.

Conductor: Then I shall put the trunk off.

Young man: You had better not, or you may be sorry for it.

Conductor pulls strap, stops car, dumps trunk on the avenue, starts car, and after going some two squares approaches the young man, who was still as calm as a summer morning, and in an angry mood says: Now I have put your trunk off what are you going to do about it?

Young man (coolly): Well, I don't propose to do anything about it; it's no concern of mine; it wasn't my trunk.

Conductor (fiercely): Then why didn't you tell me so?

Y. M.: Because you did not ask me, and I told you you'd be sorry for it.

C. (furious): Then go inside the car.

Y. M. Oh no! you're good enough company for me out here.

At this juncture a portly German emerges from the car, and angrily says to the young man, where is mine trunk?

Y. M. My friend, I think that is your trunk down on the avenue there.

Who puts him off? I have the monish to pay him. I will see about that.

The car was stopped and shortly afterwards the conductor was seen to come sweating up with the trunk on his back, a part of the performance he did not enjoy half as well as the passengers.

"I Don't Care If I Do."

In olden time, before Maine laws were enacted, Wing kept the hotel at Middle Gravelly and was well stocked but furnished accommodations to man and beast.

He was a good landlord, but terribly deaf. Fish, the village painter, was affected in the same way.

One day, they were sitting by themselves in the bar-room; Wing was behind the counter, waiting for the next customer, while Fish was lounging before the fire, with a thirty look casting sheepy eyes occasionally at Wing's decenter, and wishing most devoutly that some one would come in and treat.

A traveler from the south, on his way to Brandon, stepped in to enquire the distance. Going up to the counter, he said: "Can you tell me, sir, how far it is to Brandon?"

"Thirty?" says the landlord, jumping up. "Yes, sir, I have," at the same time handing down a decanter of the precious liquid.

"You misunderstand me," says the stranger, "I asked how far it was to Brandon?"

"The call it pretty good brandy," says Wing. "Will you take sugar with it?"

Seeing as he spoke, for the bowl and toddy-snick. The despairing traveler turned to Fish.

"The landlord," says he, "seems to be deaf; will you tell me how far it is to Brandon?"

"The you," said Fish, "I don't care if I do take a drink with you."

"The stranger treated, and fled.

Rather Hawky.

An Iowa correspondent sends the following: A man in Iowa being bothered with hawks, tried his chickens, and conceived the idea of getting rid of them in the following manner: He set a pole up in the middle of the field about twenty feet high.

On this he fixed a cross piece, so balanced that when a hawk lit on it, it would drop down a little and touch a piece of iron on the side of the pole.

With this piece of iron there was connected a wire which went down the side of the pole and connected with a galvanic battery. On the top of this cross piece of iron at the top of the pole a little nitro glycerine was to be placed and when the hawk lit on the iron cross piece it would be immediately connected with the battery, and the nitro glycerine would go off and finish the hawk.

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Garm and Fireside.

Water as a Preserver of Butter.

J. R. Taylor in the Utica Herald says "most of the so-called agricultural papers of the country, have from time to time something in them in regard to keeping butter in good order after having been duly made and packed; but no way as yet suggested seems to have proved entirely successful, as how to do it is yet an open question.

After all, it may be a very simple thing to do. After being duly packed water-tight, the packages may be placed in good, cold, wholesome water, such as is found in good wells and springs any where.

Any such good well of water may be used for this purpose, only be sure the package is completely under water always; and if under water several feet deep, it is no detriment, but probably an advantage. It is not necessary, but probably best, that the packages should not rest on the clean ground at the bottom of the well—not that any harm would happen to the butter, but the outside of the package might get soiled and muddy.

Adopting this, kept full from a flowing spring and continually flowing may be the desirable reservoir for keeping the butter in, if the tank is well covered and kept from freezing. The best way to feed such a tank is to let the feed pipe pass down in the tank to the bottom, and the surplus water pass over its top, so as to keep a motion in the water all the time and chat the water in the tank continually. Any well used for the purpose should be one from which water is taken liberally every day, so that the water may never become stagnant. No one need be surprised if butter stored in this way may be kept for years as good as when packed. Possibly hard and some other articles of food as well as canned articles, may be stored in this way advantageously.

Sheep Eating Their wool.

Instances of sheep eating their wool are quite common, especially during the latter part of winter and the early part of spring. Some have thought the cause resulted from the presence of small parasites—a minute as the red spider of some flowering plants—which produce an irritation, and to allay this, the sheep acquire the habit of chewing its own skin, and thereby eating its own wool.

It is generally believed, however, that the habit is analogous to that of hens eating their own feathers, and of the abnormal appetite of cows for old bones, woaden rags, etc.; and is caused by an exhaustion of the phosphate in the soil. Old pastures and fields that have been long cropped, are deficient in these elements, and there is a want of them by the animals.

As a preventative, mix a small quantity of bone meal with corn meal, and give them an occasional feed. Sulphur, also has been found to be a preventative of the habit, and many farmers keep their stock constantly supplied with it. It no doubt assists in giving a healthy tone to the system.

How to Keep Oats from Lodging.

Oats are very apt to lodge, especially if sown on rich ground, and this lodging matter into consideration and leaving something of the chemical nature of the straw. I came to the conclusion that the principal cause of their lodging was a deficiency of lime in the soil to dissolve silica, with which to form a soluble compound which when taken up by the roots and carried into the stalk, the oat forms or acts as stiffening, which prevents them from lodging.

Acting from these considerations, when ready to sow, I put my oats into a tub and wet them thoroughly, and then sifted on slack-lime stirring them until coated with the lime and dry, then sowed them on to a piece containing about four acres. The result was a heavy crop of oats, bright straw and none lodged on the piece.—E.

Unfermented Manure.

Many excellent farmers have an idea that manure to be most efficient, in its condition should be well rotted, but this is a mistake. Manure loses heavy percentage. Fresh manure dripping with animal urine hauled directly from the stable to the land ploughed under is worth nearly double that which has decomposed to supernatant consistency. When it is convenient for farmers to haul manure on corn ground from the stable as fast as it is made it saves handling it twice and forwards the work in busy spring time.

No fears need be entertained that the atmosphere will carry off the strength of the manure if left on the surface. The only danger to be apprehended by this being frozen and covered with snow, and ice when the manure is applied if upon sloping land the virtue of the manure might wash away, but on level land there is no exception to this plan of operation during the entire fall and winter season.

Benefits of Thinner Seeding.

T. C. Jones, of Delaware, Ohio, in an agricultural essay on Delaware country, says one of the most successful corn growers instructs his dropper, when he comes to the intersection of the furrow or hill: "There do not stop and stand there till the day of judgment, if necessary, until you deposit three grains. Mark 'you, not three or six, but three; no more, no less." One field of wheat, one half sown short, one and a half bushels per acre, the other half, one and five-eighths bushels of seed per acre, yielded 16 bushels per acre. One field of corn, four to six grains of seed per hill, yielded 49 bushels (by measure) of ears and stubble. Another field, three to four grains per hill yielding 45 bushels (large ears) per acre.

Your cattle may do out early to the pastures—it will do the cattle good, and if there are too many of them, it may perhaps do the pastures good too. The common practice is generally in the direction of over-feeding pastures, but this is such a thing as feeding cattle off too long, so that the grass grows up too good to seed and is of little value for feed besides, being in the way of a later growth which would follow if the pasture had been judiciously fed in early Spring.

A singular whale loss of cattle by a farmer named Cartwright between Rochester, Oakland county, and Utica, Michigan, recently is reported. Mr. Everts sent his hired boy with his herd of eight cows to Pains Creek for water.

The cows waded into the stream, much swollen from recent rains, and while drinking were struck by a large cake of ice, which pressed them under, and ere it had passed on its course seven out of the eight were drowned.

Hotels.

VALLEY HOUSE.

JUST OPENED AT

Great Bond, Pa.

This Hotel is situated near the Erie Railway Depot, and but a short distance from the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad, and is a

Largo and Commodious House.

It has undergone a very thorough repairing from Collar to Garret, and is supplied with elegant

Newly Furnished Rooms,

and Sleeping Apartments, and the tables and all things comprising a

A FIRST-CLASS HOTEL,

are not surpassed in the Country. Way-farers will truly find this a

TRAVELERS HOME.

Business men either from New York City or Philadelphia, will find it a very desirable place as a summer resort for their families. A few hours ride will enable them to spend their Sabbaths with them and return to business on Monday.

HENRY ACKERT, Proprietor.

Great Bond, May 14th, 1873.—

TARBELL HOUSE.

OPPOSITE THE COURT HOUSE.

JOHN S. TARBELL, Proprietor.

Eight Stages leave this House daily, connecting with the D. & W., the Erie, and the Lehigh Valley Rail Roads.

Groceries.

DOWN TOWN NEWS.