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Miscellaneous.

BREAKING DOWN.

The assertion that we are weaker than our forefathers, (says a London paper,) and break down sooner, is one of those statements which people make or deny according to their preconceived opinions. Our notions of the last generation are, of course, taken from the old people whom we have known; but this is judging from picked specimens. Men like Lord Palmerston, Lord Lyndhurst, and Lord Campbell, of course, give their juniors the impression that they belonged to a race of giants; but the fallacy is obvious. We may reasonably hope that of those who read these lines in the vigor of their age, a certain number will forget them at least half a century before their death, and will live to excite the wonder of another generation at the vigor which distinguishes their eightieth or ninetieth year. It must, however, be admitted that the advance of knowledge and civilization has in no way a direct tendency to lower the average vigor of the race. It keeps many weakly persons from dying.—Sanitary reform and the progress of medical skill tend to destroy a sort of invisible sieve through which people used to be passed, and which, if the human race regarded merely from the cattle-breeder's point of view, was a highly useful institution. It is often said that the change of medical treatment shows a diminution in strength; that people in the present day cannot stand bleeding, which thirty years ago was universal. This is one of those assertions which cannot be tested with accuracy. It is hardly possible to say whether the change is in the practice or in the patients. A doctor who was lately developing the ordinary view upon the subject to one of his patients, was asked how long was it since he had bled any one. He replied, "Upward of ten years." "Then how can you tell," was the rejoinder, "what would have happened if you had bled them?" If we look to specific facts there does not appear much reason to think that the present generation is losing its physical vigor. Armies in the field both march as well and fight as well as ever. The taste for athletic amusements has grown into something approaching to a passion. The average length of life has considerably increased, and though this, for the reason given above, is consistent with diminution in average vigor, it is prima facie evidence of the reverse. Above all, the habits of life are far healthier than they ever were. Our laboring classes are better fed, better housed, better educated; the middle and higher classes take infinitely more exercise than they used, and are, in all their habits, more sober and temperate.—Many diseases which used to ruin the constitution, have been greatly tamed, and some have been almost extirpated; and if these causes do not improve the race, it is impossible to say what will.

POSITION IN SLEEPING.

It is better to go to sleep on the right side, for then the stomach is very much in the position of a bottle turned upside down, and the contents of it are aided in passing out by gravitation. If one goes to sleep, on the left side the operation of emptying the stomach of its contents is more like drawing water from a well. After going to sleep let the body take its own position. If you sleep on your back, especially soon after a hearty meal, the weight of the digestive organs, and that of the food, resting on the great vein of the body, near the back bone, compresses it, and arrests the flow of the blood more or less. If the meal has been recent and hearty, the arrest is more decided; and the various sensations, such as falling over a precipice, or the pursuit of a wild beast, or other impending danger, and the desperate effort to get rid of it, arouses us, and sends on stagnating blood; and we wake in a fright, or trembling, or perspiration, or feeling exhaustion, according to the degree of stagnation, and the length and strength of the efforts made to escape the danger. But, when we are not able to escape the danger—when we do fall over the precipice—when the tumbling building crushes us—what then? That is death! That is the death of those whom it is said, when found lifeless in the morning—"That they were as well as they ever were the day before," and often it is added, "and as hearty as common!"

This last, as a frequent cause of death to those who have gone to bed to wake no more, we give merely as a private opinion. The possibility of its truth is enough to deter any rational man from a late and hearty meal. The truly wise will take the safe side. For persons who eat three times a day it is simply sufficient to make the last meal of cold bread and butter and a cup of some warm drink. No one can starve on it; while a preservation in the habit soon begets a vigorous appetite for breakfast, so gratifying a day of comfort.—*Ball's Journal of Health.*

REFINEMENT OF BEHAVIOR.

There dwelt in Verona a Bishop who possessed natural abilities, and was well read in the Scriptures; his name was Giovanni Matteo Giberti. Among other praiseworthy habits, he was courteous and liberal to the noble gentlemen who visited him, entertaining them with a magnificence, not extravagant, but such as became a Churchman. It happened that a nobleman styled Count Richard passed that way, and spent many days with the Bishop and his family, who were, for the most part, well bred and educated men. The agreeable manners of the gentle cavalier gained for him the esteem and commendation of his hosts. But he had one little bad habit, of which the Bishop became aware, and taking counsel with his attendants, he proposed that the Count should be informed of it, lest it should be of some prejudice to him. For this purpose, he summoned a discreet attendant, and directed him to mount his horse the next morning, and to accompany the Count, who had already taken leave, for some distance on his way, and at a proper opportunity to make to him the proposed communication. The attendant, whose name was Galateo, was a man advanced in years, very learned, extremely agreeable in his manners, of good address and of a gracious aspect, and one who in his day had lived much at the courts of great princes. Riding along with the Count, he entertained him with pleasant discourse, until the time came for him to return to Verona; when, as the Count was taking leave, he thus addressed him with a pleasant countenance, and mild accents: "My lord, the Bishop, my master, returns your lordship infinite thanks for the honor you have done him by entering and sojourning at his poor house; and as a return for so great courtesy, he has given it in charge to me to make you a present on his part, and most kindly prays you to receive it with a cheerful mind. You are the most graceful and polished gentleman whom the Bishop has ever seen. For this reason he has attentively observed your manners, and examining them particularly, has found nothing which was not in the highest degree agreeable and commendable, except an ugly motion of the mouth and lips when eating, accompanied with a noise very disagreeable to hear. It is this which the Bishop has sent me to make known to you, and he prays you to endeavor at once to rid yourself of the habit, and desires you will receive in the place a more costly present, this his loving reproof and advice, being assured that no one else in the world would make you such a present."—The Count, who had never been aware of this bad habit, blushed a little at this reproof, but like a brave man, taking heart, he said, "Tell the Bishop that if all the gifts which men make to one another were like his, men would be much richer than they are. For his great courtesy and liberality to me, I return him infinite thanks, and assure him that I will hereafter diligently guard against my bad habit. God go with you."—*G. Della Casa.*

A Persevering Woman.

A young married woman in Brandon, Vt., whose husband enlisted in the 6th Vermont regiment, could neither read nor write. Being devotedly attached to her husband, and cut off from all communication with him except by letter, she could not endure the thought of being compelled to submit his epistles, designed for her alone, to others to read them for her. And with the refined instinct of a true woman and wife she shrank with aversion from committing the secrets of her own heart to the pen of an amanuensis. So, day after day since her husband's absence, she has taken her two little ones by the hand, and led them to the district school, laid aside her bonnet and shawl, seated herself upon a bench by the side of her children, and devoted herself to study. Within a brief period of time, so earnestly has she set herself about the task, this devoted wife and mother has surmounted every obstacle, and (although alien born), has acquired the rudiments of an English education. She now writes a fair hand, and reads with fluency.

DON'T WANT ANY MORE.

A private in one of the New Hampshire regiments, now with the army of the Potomac, writes home that he now has two pair of shoes, six pairs of stockings, five pair of drawers, four pairs of shirts, three pair of pants, five coats, two caps, one hat, one pair of gloves, and three blankets, and concludes his letter with the very modest request to "send no more at present."

The distinction between liking and loving was well made by a little girl six years old. She was eating an egg at breakfast, which she seemed to relish very much. "Do you love it?" asked her aunt. "No," replied the child, with a look of disgust; "I only like it. If I loved it I should kiss it."

OF WOMEN.

I do not hesitate to say that the women give to every nation a moral temper which shows itself in its politics. A hundred times have I seen weak men show real public virtue because they had by their sides women who supported them, not by advice as to particulars, but by fortifying their feelings of duty, and by directing their ambition. More frequently, I must confess, I have observed the domestic influence gradually transforming a man, naturally generous, noble, and unselfish, into a cowardly, common-place, place-hunting, self-seeker, thinking of public business only as a means of making himself comfortable and thus simply by contact with a well-conducted woman, a faithful wife, an excellent mother, but from whose mind the grand notion of public duty was entirely absent.—*De Tocqueville.*

The Lilliputian Couple.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Stratton (General Tom Thumb and Miss Lavinia Warren) arrived in Washington on Thursday. They attended the hop given at Willard's hotel Thursday night, in which they participated, and were, of course, the "observed of all observers." A number of ladies and gentlemen (among the latter many members of both Houses and officers of the army and navy) were presented to the General, who introduced them to his lady. Friday morning the Lilliputian couple were waited upon by many high officials, and afterwards paid their respects to the President and Mrs. Lincoln, to meet a number of guests who had been invited by Mrs. Lincoln. On Thursday they drove out to Arlington Heights to visit a brother of the bride, who is in the Fortieth Massachusetts regiment.

ANOTHER VICTIM.

A few days since, Mr. Edward S. Terry was found dead at a low drinking house of New York city, his death resulting from an inordinant use of ardent spirits. A few years ago, he was a lawyer of eminence and ability, moving in good society, and at one time he was a law partner of Charles O' Connor, a leading lawyer of the New York bar.

THE MOTHER MOLDS THE MAN.

When I lived among the Choctaw Indians, says one, I held a consultation with one of their chiefs respecting the successive stages of their progress in the arts of civilized life; and, among other things, he informed me that at their start they made a great mistake. They only sent boys to school. These boys came home intelligent men, but they married uneducated and uncivilized wives; and the uniform result was, the children were all like their mothers.—The father soon lost all his interest both in wife and children. "And now," said he, "if we would educate but one class of our children, we should choose the girls; for when they become mothers they educate their sons." This is the point, and it is true. No nation can become fully enlightened when mothers are not in a good degree qualified to discharge the duties of the home-work of education.

The Richmond Prisoners.

Prisoners from Richmond say that the rebel prisons in that city are filled with loyal citizens from Eastern Tennessee and Northwestern Virginia, and that they are treated ten times worse than the prisoners of war.—About a week before the prisoners left Richmond, an order came from the rebel Secretary of War ordering the release of two citizens of East Tennessee, who had been in confinement for eighteen months. The jailor, to whom the order was addressed, upon looking over his books, found that the two men whose names were specified, had died three months previous.

North Carolina.

The Salisbury, N. C. *Watchman*, learns from good authority that a large number of deserters and Tories have banded together in that section of country, where the counties of Moore, Randolph and Montgomery join, and have committed numerous and serious disturbances against the lives and property of true Confederate citizens.

Praise, when the reasons for it are given, is double praise; censure, without the reasons for it, is only half censure.

Pride and Opulence may kiss in the morning as a married couple; but they are likely to be divorced before sunset.

He who brings ridicule to bear against truth finds in his hand a blade without a hilt—one more likely to cut himself than anybody else.

It is lamentable to think what a gain must ever separate men of principle, when office want, from men of no principle who want offices.

THE DEPTH OF SPACE.

In 1837, Prof. Bessel, of Germany, commenced a series of astronomical measures for getting the exact distance to the fixed stars, a thing that had never been done.—The instrument which he used, in connection with a powerful telescope, in his experiments was called an Heliometer (sun-measurer). After three years hard labor, he was so fortunate as to obtain a parallax, but so very minute, that he could hardly trust his reputation upon it. But after repeated trials, and working out the results, he was fully satisfied that he could give the true distance to 61 sygins.—But who can comprehend this immense distance? We can only convey an idea to the mind of this distance by the fact that light, which travels 120,000 miles in a minute, requires not less than ten years to reach us! Just let any one try to take in the idea. One hour would give 720,000 miles; in one year, then—8760 hours—this gives 6,307,200,000, and this multiplied by ten gives 63,072,000,000. This according to Prof. Bessel, is the distance of the nearest fixed star to the sun. And all astronomers confirm the correctness of Prof. Bessel's calculations. But this distance, great as it is, is nothing to be compared to the distance of the Milky Way. Sir Wm. Herschel says that the stars or suns that compose the Milky Way are so remote, that it requires light, going at the rate of 12,000,000 miles in a minute, 120,000 years to reach the earth. And he says there are stars, or rather nebulae, five hundred times more remote! Now make your calculation: 120,000 years reduced to minutes and then multiply that sum by 12,000,000, and the product by 500. What an overwhelming idea! The mind sinks under such a thought; we can't realize it; it is too vast even for human comprehension. David says, Psalm ciii. 10: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom (or government) ruleth over all."

SCHOLARS AND STATESMEN.

It is nothing new for English statesmen to be accurate and profound scholars. Curran, the Irish orator, carried his Virgil always in his pocket; and his biographer found him crying over the fate of the unhappy Dido, in a storm at sea, when every other person on board would have seen Dido hung up at the yard-arm with indifference. Fox, the English orator, statesman and historian, complains in his letters of the interruptions of politics, while he speaks with delight of whole days devoted to the classics. Sheridan poured over Euripides day and night, and drew from the Greek poet the inspiration of his eloquence. Pitt was the best Greek scholar in the kingdom—so says Lord Greenville, who was his constant companion in such studies. His apartments were strewn with Latin and Greek classics; and they were, at all suitable times, his favorite theme of conversation. Sir Robert Peel won the first honors of the University at Oxford, both in the classics and the mathematics. In his inaugural address when entering on the lord-rectorship of Glasgow University, he declares that "by far the greater proportion of chief names that have floated down and are likely to remain buoyant on the stream of time, are those of men eminent for classical tastes." "Take the Cambridge Calendar or take the Oxford Calendar for two hundred years," says Lord Macaulay, "look at the Church, Parliament, or at the Bar, and it has always been the case that the men who were first in the competition of schools were first in the competition of life." And so thoroughly are the leading minds in Great Britain convinced of this truth, and the practical interest which it involves, that by a recent law of Parliament civil and military appointments at home and in India are based upon competitive examinations in classical and mathematical studies. We are not surprised, therefore, when we see statesmanship and scholarship go hand in hand in Great Britain.—*Biographical Sketches.*

How to Select Flour.

First look at the color. If it is white, with a slight yellowish or straw colored tint, buy it. If it is very white, with a bluish cast, or with black specks in it, refuse it. Second, examine its adhesiveness; get and knead a little of it between your fingers; if it works sticky it is poor. Third, throw a little lump of dry flour against a dry, smooth, perpendicular surface; if it falls like powder it is bad. Fourth, squeeze some of the flour in your hand; if it retains the shape given by the pressure, that, too, is a good sign. Flour that will stand all these tests it is safe to buy.

A Windfall.

A poor carpenter, named Cyrus Holmes, living at Plattsburg, Ohio, has lately fallen heir to property in Westchester county, New York, valued at \$214,000.

If you would be venerated, be tolerant. If you would bear the truth, tell it. If you wouldn't be troubled, don't be troublesome.

GEN. MITCHELL AND THE NEWS-BOYS.

It happened once to the writer of this to hear the late Gen. Mitchell address a company of newsboys. On an invitation from his friend, Mr. C. W. Field, he came down on Sunday evening to attend the meeting for the newsboys. At his very first words to the lads, it was apparent that he was deeply moved. The sight of the ragged, shoeless, weather-beaten little fellows seemed to call up his own hard struggles in childhood. "Boys," said he, "I feel that when I see you that I am one of you! No one of you can be poorer or more friendless than I was once. I have known what poverty is!" It may be imagined that with such an introduction there was a deathlike stillness. Every boy's eye was fastened upon him, and his tones seemed to vibrate to each one's heart. He went on to tell his story, but with a simplicity and feeling which it is impossible to recall now.

When I was a boy of twelve years I was working for twenty five cents a week with an old lady, and I tell you, I had my hands full; but I did my work faithfully. I used to cut wood, fetch water, make fires, and scrub and scour of mornings for the old lady before the real work of the day commenced; my clothes were bad, and I had no means for buying shoes, so was often barefooted. One morning I got through my work early, and the old lady, who thought I had not done it, or was specially ill humored then, was displeased, scolded me, and said I was idle and had not worked. I said I had; she called me 'a liar.' I felt my spirit rise indignantly against this, and, standing erect, I told her that she should never have the chance of applying the word to me again. I walked out of the house, to re-enter it no more. I had not a cent in my pocket when I thus stepped out into the world. What do you think I did then, boys? I met a countryman with a team. I addressed him boldly and earnestly, and offered to drive the leader, if he would only take me on. He looked at me in surprise, but said he did not think I would be of any use to him. 'Oh yes, I will,' said I; 'I can run down and water your horses, and do many things for you, if you will only let me try.' He no longer objected. I got on the horse's back. It was hard traveling, for the roads were deep, and we could only get on at the rate of twelve miles a day.—This was, however, my starting-point. I went ahead after this. An independent spirit, and a steady, honest conduct, with what capacity God has given me—as he has given you—have carried me successfully through the world.

"Don't be down hearted at being poor or having no friends. Try, and try again. You can cut your way through, if you live to please God."

"I know it's a hard time for some of you. You often are hungry, and wet with the rain or snow, and it seems dreary to have no one in the city to care for you. But trust in Christ, and he will be your friend! Keep a good heart, and be determined to make your own way, honestly and truly, through the world.—As I said, I feel for you, because I have gone through it all—I know what it is. God bless you!"

The boys were most deeply touched by this. Shirt-sleeves moved furtively up to eyes not used to such emotion, and other boys found it necessary to whisper some very good joke to one another, in order to prevent any feminine display. In thinking of this simple, feeling-full word to those outcast boys, one could understand the power he is said to have had in his speeches. His heart was full of compassion. He was from the people, and he felt for them.

His words of kindness and encouragement to the newsboys will not soon be forgotten by them.—*Independent.*

BEDS AND BEDROOMS.

How A BED SHOULD BE MADE: We have observed, in the preceding notice, that about five-eighths of all we eat and drink, passes out of the system in the form of worn out, effete matter, through the pores of the skin, and that consequently our beds soon become saturated with these poisonous gases. Hence our beds should be often cleansed or changed.

MATERIAL OF A BED: The best material for a bed, is one which can be most easily stirted and exposed to the air, and which will be less liable to hold the impure gases.—Good clean rye straw, or the slit husks of corn are in all respects the best material for either man or beast to sleep on. They are sufficiently flexible and answer best the two conditions named above.

How to MAKE THE TICK: Make the tick of common material and in the usual way, except that it should be left open in the middle the whole length from head to foot, and the edges of the opening should be made to lap over each other about a foot, and provided with buttons so as to

button up close. Then in filling the tick these lappels can be thrown open and the straw laid in smooth and straight. In making the bed it can be opened, and the straw thoroughly stirred and exposed to the air, and the foul gases allowed to escape. The labor of emptying and filling is thus rendered very easy.

How OFTEN CLEANSED: If the straw is good and clean, and proper care is taken in making the bed, it need not be changed oftener than once in two months in winter, and once a month in summer. But certainly as often as the straw should be taken out, the tick thoroughly washed and boiled, and carefully dried and aired, and then filled again with new clean straw.

OBJECTION: The objection has been raised to this plan, that it would 'ake so much straw, and be so much trouble to take care of, a bed if emptied and filling, that it would not be feasible. But if you had a horse you would not hesitate to furnish him fresh straw for his bed every night. And is your own bodily health and purity of less consequence than that of your horse?

BEDSTEAD: A bedstead should never have a high head-board or foot-board to confine the air. In this respect the cottage bedstead with its little banisters at the head and foot is commendable. It should be of medium height; as carbonic acid gas being heavier than the pure air, sinks to the floor.

VALANCES: Valances, or the little short curtains which are sometimes seen around the lower part of a bedstead are an abomination. They keep a portion of the bed, which is constantly permeating up through the bed, and filling it with pestiferous vapors. If any person desires to smell what a nasty smell is always found under a bed surrounded by such curtains, let him put his head under, and he will be convinced. There should be no obstruction to the free circulation of the air under a bed, from all four sides.

SLEEPING-ROOM: The bedroom ought to be the largest room in the house, always so in sickness, and should be on the sunny side of the house where the bed can be exposed to the direct rays of the sun every day, except in the very hottest weather of summer, and then it should be sunned a little while every morning. The bed should stand in the middle of the room.

TWO PHASES OF FARM LIFE.

Farming, like every other calling, has its advantages and disadvantages. The farmer is the most independent, and the most dependent man in existence. With farming, as with every other branch of business, judgment, prudence, and economy are requisite to success. To the man who possesses these, an agricultural life brings the pleasure of independence, with all the charms of variety. To such, the fluctuation of trade, the rise and fall of stocks, the rumored protests, or rumored bank suspensions, have little or no terror. Life has charms for him which it has not for men of other professions. He welcomes the changes of the seasons at their approach; he is not afraid of being behind-hand with his crops—being overtaken by early frost, or disconcerted by a premature spring. He welcomes every change of the seasons, being always well prepared for their coming.

But with some it is far different—they are never at ease—everything around them goes wrong. With them it is too hot or too cold—too wet or too dry. No matter whether the sun shines, or whether the clouds drop rain, snow or hail—the weather is always wrong. No matter whether the market price of wheat is fifty cents per bushel—it is always too low, and the higher it goes up, the less inclined are they to sell. Their cattle and hogs are helping themselves to corn at home, or plundering their neighbor's. In this way they are continually in trouble, and lead a restless, unsatisfied life. There is nothing more important on the farm than system and order. Never under-ake to do too much—do one thing at a time, and do it well. Lay down a plan of the work to be done, and do that first which needs doing the most, and finish it before you leave it. Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day; delays are proverbially dangerous, and to none more so than to the farmer. Never exceed your means by attempting to cultivate more than you can do well, and in due season.

Keep a memorandum of your work, household expenses, cost of labor, etc., and balance with the income of your business.

Under such management, you will, at times, understand the exact state of affairs. The farmer should know his profits and loss just as much as the merchant.

Observe these few hints, and you will find less, rough corners in the routine of your farm operations.