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Financial.

THE PHANTOM OF DEADMOOR TOWER.

At six o'clock one fine autumn morning, Seymour and I stood on the deck of a London steamer, which was easing, and stopping, and turning astern, and going on, in her endeavors to lay herself alongside the quay of a foreign town, without smashing any of the smaller vessels which were in her way.

The passage had been very prosperous, the weather fine and warm, the sea as smooth as glass, the passengers few and rather amusing. And the old town looked charming; quite a fairy city—all cathedral, palace, and grand square, without black-slums, dirt, vice, or crime, fit to be photographed as a model for seaport towns. Our luggage was examined, landed, put on a truck, and wheeled off to the hotel fixed upon, we following on foot at our leisure.

"Let us turn into the Place, and have a nearer look at the cathedral," proposed Seymour. "Every scrap of tracery looks as sharp and clear, in this early morning air, as if it were under a microscope. Holloa! what's that?"

"That" was a hum and tramping, distant at first, then louder and nearer. When we entered the Place, we found numerous groups scattered about; fresh-comers were perpetually arriving from all the streets which concentrated upon that large open space, and presently the head of the large crowd, whose march we had heard in the distance, debouched upon the scene.

In the centre of the square, a scaffold had been erected, around which all these people were gathering. Seymour, a good German scholar, made inquiries. Yes, there was to be an execution. A man, supposed to be an Englishman, had committed a very horrible murder, attended by circumstances of revolting treachery and ingratitude, and his head was to be cut off in half an hour at furthest.

Now, I certainly should never have gone out of my way to see such a sight; but being there, a sort of fascination bound me to the spot. As for Seymour, he was glad of the opportunity of seeing any foreign customs; and since he had served in the cavalry during a bloody Indian campaign, it was beyond the power of a headsman to spoil his breakfast, even if the fellow bungled. Some of those languid, fine gentlemen you meet in Pall Mall, and think effeminate, have seen and done, and suffered things which could not be read of by many of their critics without a shudder.

There were immense numbers of people present, but no crowd in the English sense of the word; for the open space was very extensive, and the stage on which the tragedy was to be performed visible from every part of it, so that there was no reason why the spectators should jam themselves together; and as they were free from that propensity to push to the front which animates all ranks and both sexes of the British, there was plenty of elbow-room, and a sensitive lady might even have fainted without being trodden to death in consequence.

"You will have an opportunity of seeing with what force the blood is always pumping through our arteries," said Seymour. "Barbarous? not a bit. Far more humane than hanging, I take it. Curious, though, that they have not introduced the guillotine into this country; perhaps, because it is French."

"I see no block."

"They do not use one. The culprit sits in that chair, and the executioner snicks his head off with his sword as you would a thistle with your cane. But here they come."

It was with a sickening feeling that I watched the executioner, the priest, and the murderer step on to the scaffold. The last was a middle-aged man of light, agile form, and delicate features, relieved by black hair and moustache. He was in his shirt, which was open at the neck and turned back, and his arms were bound. To the hardihood which supports many a miscreant in his last hour, and enables him to "die game," he could lay no claim, for his face was blanched with terror, he trembled in every limb, and was evidently nearly fainting.

The mental agony of the poor wretch added so much more to the horror of the scene, that I could bear it no longer, and I was turning to go, when an exclamation from my companion stopped me. Seymour was habitually so quiet, indifferent, and almost sleepy in his tone, that anything like energetic speech from his mouth was perfectly startling. I had known him from a boy, and never remembered his being excited before, so that I had come to look upon him as a well-dressed Red Indian, or dandy Stoic, and half doubted at the moment whether the cry of surprise could possibly have come out of his mouth. One glance at his face assured me of that, however, he was leaning forward and gazing at the scaffold with parted lips and straining eyes.

"Lend me your glass," he cried; and after looking through the binocular a minute: "Yes it is the man himself; no doubt about that. But there is one thing that I want to make out, and can't. Here; your eyes are better than mine; take the glass, and examine his face, it is turned this way now. Well, do you see any mark upon it?"

"No. Yes, I do; there is a broad scar on his cheek.

"Which cheek?" cried Seymour, grasping my arm so hard that it hurt me.

"The left," I replied.

"Then, by heavens, I guessed right!" exclaimed Seymour, drawing a long breath.

At another time, curiosity would have dictated a question, but at that moment the headsman began to bind the eyes of his victim, and, by a strange revulsion of feeling, I could not now help watching him. The business was neatly done; one sweep of the large sword, and the plotting brain was separated from the bad, cruel heart.

We walked to the hotel, which was close by; and after a bath and a change, I found that the scene I had witnessed had made less impression upon me than I anticipated, and I was quite ready for a good breakfast.

When the meal was over, and we were lolling in chairs in the pleasant court-yard, I remarked on the singularity of Seymour's landing on that particular morning in time to assist at the decapitation of an old acquaintance.

"Yes," he replied, in his ordinary tone now, "most extraordinary thing that ever occurred; the beggar had a try at my life once and I gave him that scar."

"Was it in India?"

"No; in Yorkshire, or Lancashire; I'm not certain which. One August, some years ago, when I was in the cavalry, I got two months' leave of absence, and thought I should like some shooting. So I looked over the advertisements in *Bell*, and pitched upon one inserted by a Mr. Bantyen, who intimated that he was ready to provide board, lodging, and grouse-shooting, for a certain sum on the Yorkshire moors.

"I wrote, agreeing to his terms, on the sole condition that the game proved to be as plentiful as he represented; and received directions how to find Deadmoor Tower by return of post.

"The nearest place of any importance was Halifax, and that was thirty miles off: so I slept there, and started off early on the following morning in a gig, driven by the only man the people of the hotel could discover who had the slightest idea whereabouts Deadmoor Tower lay. He got on very well while what they called roads lasted, but when we were well on the moors, and had only tracks, which generally led to old quarries, or places where turf had been dug, to follow, he was naturally puzzled. In fact, we only got on at all by asking our way at every opportunity, and as we rarely met any one to ask, our progress was tortuous. Fortunately, the horse, though very deficient in speed, was a wonderful stayer, and we did reach the place we were looking for before sunset.

"The people who first called that tract of country Deadmoor had a very fair idea of proper names, for a fitter place for a national cemetery I never saw. Of course, all moorland is wild and desolate; but it is generally broken up into steep hills; and a hill, somehow, is always company, promising something new on the other side; and though the two sides sometimes prove to be much alike, when you get to the top, there is generally a good distant view from it; and at any rate, you have the satisfaction of having got there. But Deadmoor was mostly table-land, and the undulations were too gradual to please the eye. Deadmoor Tower just suited Deadmoor. It was a real tower, a regular, old-fashioned roundabout place, with thick walls, windows like loop-holes; and a flat leaden roof, with battlements round it.

"The proprietor of this mediæval place was a couple of centuries or so in advance of it, certainly; but still he was very old-fashioned. He met me at the gate in the most courtly manner; indeed, I took him at first for a sort of heraldic butler and very nearly addressed him with: 'What, ho! seneschal.' But, fortunately, he introduced himself as Mr. Bantyen before I had time to say it.

"He showed me up to my room himself, was extremely anxious to make me comfortable, and apologized for everything

"He was a portly old gentleman, with gray hair prominent eyes, and rather, a weak, undecided expression of countenance, and he was dressed in a short-waisted coat—cut very high in the collar—a table-cloth rolled round his neck for a tie, pantaloons and pumps.

"When I was left alone, I inspected the room, the furniture of which would have set up a curiosity shop. It was pancelled with oak; and the heavy high-backed chairs, the table, the tall wardrobe, were all of the same dark material. There was a queer mirror, composed of three pieces, set aslant the further end of the room, so as to reflect everything in it in a distorted fashion; and a pair of duelling-swords were crossed over the high, carved chimney-piece. But the bed filled half the room, and must have been originally intended for an entire family; the hangings were thick and heavy and the top like that of a hearse. Just the bed to lie in state in.

"It was not altogether a cheerful apartment, but I could hear the grouse crowing through the open window, and that sound was lively enough to subdue any amount of upholstering gloom.

"I was sufficiently up in history to know that my host was dressed for dinner, so I put on evening things and went down-stairs.

"The table was laid in the hall, and as I had to pass through it to reach the drawing-room, I saw that the party was to consist of three. Mrs. Bantyen? or a son? or another gun?

"Neither. On opening the drawing-room door, I was received by a charming girl of twenty or thirty—I can never guess at the beardless dears' ages while they have figures and smooth eye-corners—and Mr. Bantyen intimated that he was a widower, and that this young lady, his only child, kept house for him.

"And very well she kept it, too, and a nice little dinner she gave us. A capital manager she must have been, for everything had to be fetched from a tremendous distance, and a trifling slip of memory might have left the household without oil or Worcester sauce for a week.

"She was a little bit shy at first, but quite self-possessed, and evidently ruled the household, her father included. She was well educated; read the papers and magazines, played the harp, sang, and was rather glad, I think, to have a civilized being to talk to.

"I have shot over moors in Scotland where the grouse was more plentiful, certainly; but still the spot was very fair, quite good enough for my purpose. The old gentleman went out with me every day, and shot very fairly, too, with an antique Manton, which had flint locks; he could do nothing with a percussion-cap. In the evenings, I played at piquet with him, or at chess with his daughter; and after a pretty surfeit of balls and dinners, that little bit of domestic quiet came in most acceptably. We soon got very friendly together, and in a fortnight I was quite like one of the family, and Mr. Bantyen told me all his private affairs.

"The family property had once been very good, but a succession of extravagant possessors had mortgaged all that part upon which money could be raised, and the barren heath with its tower was all that was left. However, the old gentleman had not always been quite so much straitened as he was at present, but misfortunes had befallen him during the last few years, the principal being a scampish nephew of his dead wife's who had got his unfortunate uncle-in-law to be security for him in some affair, and had then been guilty of a dishonest trick, which that unoffending relative had to pay.

"You may well understand that I did not ask for any details upon so unpleasant a subject; so, whether his black sheep had done anything which was absolutely felonious, I did not learn. At any rate, it had cost Mr. Bantyen so dearly to get him out of the scrape, and then start him of to America, where he was supposed to be at present, that he had determined to try and raise a little money by letting his shooting.

"It was an evident relief to the old gentleman to tell me all this, for he was a hospitable soul, and felt uncomfortable to taking my money. So, to relieve him, I told him anecdotes of rich men who let their shootings, and noblemen who sold their game.

"September came, and the birds got wild, but I liked my quarters so well that I stopped on.

"One evening as we came towards the tower, after a hard day's walking, we met Miss Bantyen, who was in a state of great agitation. 'O papa, Raymond is here?' she cried. Raymond was the troublesome nephew who ought to have been on the other side of the Atlantic.

"Poor Mr. Bantyen was very much perturbed by the news, and began apologizing to me; but I assured him, with perfect truth, that *I* was fond of studying different samples of my fellow-creatures, and counted several scamps amongst my intimate acquaintances. In truth, I have enjoyed the society of many a man who, from his youth up, has been a source of anxiety to his friends; but I never met a cooler card than this Raymond Fletcher.

"I did not much like the look of him; I missed the rollicking, reckless look of the genuine *mauvais sujet*. His expression was crafty, greedy, and malicious as well as impudent, and he impressed one as being bad rather than mad.

"He spoke of his unexpected appearance as a good joke, and compared himself to a bad shilling. He did the honors of the house, and attempted to patronize *me*. He tried likewise to impose upon me in the matter of the society he had mixed with, asking if I knew this man of the Blues, and that man of the Rifle Brigade. At last he mentioned one of my own regiment, and then I had to shut him up.

"'There must be some mistake,' said I. 'I will not deny that you are the bosom friend of every man of position in every corps in the service, if you say so, but none of the ——th know you, I am certain.'

"That cooled him a bit, and a minute or two afterwards I intercepted a look which told me that he honored me with his particular hatred. Nevertheless, he rather courted me, and tried his best to make himself agreeable.

"'Have you seen the ghost?' he asked me in the course of the evening.

"I had thought something wanting in Deadmoor Tower, and this question reminded me what it was. It ought to be haunted; it was absurd that it should not be haunted; and I at once demanded the ghost of Miss Bantyen. She told me that there certainly was the usual spiritual legend connected with the old place. A Jesuit conspirator, priest and soldier, had been taken and killed, after a desperate resistance, in my bedroom; and witnesses, credible upon other matters, had declared that they had seen his spectre, enveloped in a cloak, pistol in hand, in the fatal chamber, and had been duly frightened into temporary insanity.

"I suggested that the witnesses had taken too much liquor when they saw the ghost, and that the after-illness might be delirium tremens. Mr. Bantyen smiled politely, and said it was possible; but though he considered that the Jesuit had been laid several years, probably by getting out of purgatory he evidently had a latent suspicion that he really had haunted the place at one time.

"My host had procured me some partridge-shooting at a few miles distance, so I stopped on, though the tower was no very agreeable residence now. Fletcher was an odious snob, and Mr. Bantyen, instead of kicking him out of the house, was so weak as to let him bully him.

"I soon saw that the fellow was smitten with his pretty cousin, and hated me worse than ever for flirting with her, which of course one was bound to do a little; and as she evidently disliked and feared him, and was glad to talk to me in order to avoid him, I dare say there was a little apparent cause for his jealousy. Besides which, the presence of a stranger no doubt interfered with his designs on Mr. Bantyen's purse.

"My leave was drawing to a close, however, and as I intended to spend the last week of it in London, the time came for me to leave Deadmoor; and on the last night an extraordinary thing happened—I saw the phantom.

"It was a wet and chilly night, and with that anxiety to make me comfortable which had actuated the Bantyens during my stay, a fire had been lighted in my bedroom. The first fire of the season is always pleasant, and I sat up later than usual to enjoy it. I wrote several letters, and then, wheeling my chair round to the hearth, I stirred up the coals, left the poker between the bars, lit a cigar, took up a book, and made myself happy.

"I was sitting with my back to that part of the room where the bed was, and consequently facing the queer old mirror I told you of, which was set aslant at the other end. At about one o'clock one of my candles began to splutter in its socket, and looking up in consequence from my book, I saw reflected in the mirror the figure of the Jesuit. I have no more faith in spirits than a Sadducee, yet I was horribly frightened; so much so that I was very near starting up. Fortunately, however, I kept my presence of mind, and neither did that, nor stared at the glass, but put out the flickering candle, brought the other nearer to me, leaned back in my chair, and had another surreptitous look at my mirror over the top of my book. It was no fancy. There close to the foot of the bed, not three yards behind me stood the figure, in a slouching cavalier hat, and wrapped in a riding-cloak with buff boots and spurs, a mask on his face, and a pistol in his hand.

"Why the mask? I was reassured in a moment: it was a burglar acting the ghost, to frighten the household into non-resistance—not the spiritual father himself. The poker, which had been left between the bars of the grate, was now red-hot; I grasped the handle, and began stirring the fire, at the same time whistling a tune. Then I drew a common chair towards me with my foot, as if meditating putting my legs upon it, until I could get hold of the back with my left hand.

"These little preparations completed I suddenly jumped up, and turned around, with the chair held before me as a shield, and the red hot poker in my right hand.

"'Now, my ghostly friend,' said I 'just drop that pistol.'

"Instead of complying with this reasonable request, he cocked and levelled it at my head.

"I instinctly raised the chair, and thrust the hot iron at him, touching him on the left cheek at the moment the pistol exploded.

"I supposed he escaped through a sliding panel or a trap-door; I know that I went over backwards, chair and all. The bullet had gone through the seat, and then grazed my temple, not doing any serious damage, but stunning me for a minute or so; so that when the household, alarmed by the report of the pistol, arrived, they found me and the chair lying all of a heap, and the poker burning a quiet hole in the floor.

Mr. Bantyen and his daughter were excessively distressed; and the house was searched and a deal of fuss made—the most energetic member of the household being Raymond Fletcher, who did not indeed put in an appearance, but whose voice was heard at the front door, intimating that he was going for the police. As he would have a good fifteen mile ride through the rain and over a dark moor before there was a chance of his meeting with any member of the force, this readiness inspired me with a suspicion, which is now turned into a certainty. Raymond Fletcher lost his head this morning, and I burned the left cheek of it that night with a poker."

HOW THE FLORIDA KEYS WERE FORMED.

BY MRS. E. C. AGASSIZ

Just outside the lower extremity of Florida are a number of islands,—the easternmost almost touching the main land, while the western lie a little further off.

In consequence of this peculiarity in their disposition, the space left between these islands and the Florida coast, marked on the map as mud flats, is broad and open at the western outlet, but almost closed towards the east. It is important to remember the form of this broad intervening space, stretching between the keys and the main-land, because the narrower and more shallow and may easily be filled up with sand, mud, &c. If you will look at the map, you will see, by the flats at the eastern end of this once open channel, that such a process is actually going on. In fact, a current sets towards the channel, drifting into it sand, mud, and *debris* of all sorts.

I hope to show you that these flats, being gradually consolidated into dry land, will at last make a bridge between the islands and the lower extremity of Florida, uniting them solidly together, so that the former will cease to be islands and will become part of the main land.

Indeed we shall find that Florida herself, so far as her structure is known, is only a succession of such rows of islands as now lie outside her southern shore, united together, by flats exactly like those accumulating at this moment between the present islands and the coast. These islands are all called the Keys of Florida, and are distinguished from one another by a variety of appellations, such as Sand Key, Key West, Indian Key, Long Key, and the like. They are of various sizes; some—like Key West, for instance—are large inhabited islands, planted with fruit and flower gardens, where cocoa-nuts and other palms, orange-trees, and banannas, grow in great luxuriance, while others are mere barren rocks scarcely rising above the surface of the ocean, washed over by the waves, and wholly destitute of verdure.

Suppose now that in fancy we sail out from the keys on their seaward side, choosing a bright, calm day, when the surface of the ocean is still. The waters of that region are always remarkably clear; and under such influences of sky and atmosphere they are so transparent that the bottom may be seen at a considerable depth, distinct as a picture under glass.

Sailing southward to a distance of some four or five miles from the keys, we find ourselves in the neighborhood of a rocky wall rising from the ocean bottom. As we approach it, if we look over the side of the boat, we shall see that we are passing over a floating shrubbery, a branching growth spreading in every direction, its lighter portions swaying gently with the movement of the sea. It is not green, like land shrubbery, but has a variety of soft bright hues,—purple, rosy, amethyst, yellow, brown, and orange. If circumstances are favorable, and the water crystal clear, as it sometimes is, we shall have glimpses of bright-colored fishes swimming in and out amid this tangled thicket, or here and there we may discern a variety of [illegible] their soft feathery fringes fully expanded.

This wonderful growth over which we have imagined ourselves to be sailing is the top of a coral wall. Reaching the surface of the water at intervals, it forms little rocky islands here and there, divided from each other by open channels, through some of which vessels of considerable size may pass. This wall is in fact a repetition of the same process as that which has formed the inner row of keys, though in a more incomplete stage; it is built up by the coral animals from the sea bottom. Wherever circumstances are most favorable to their development, there they grow most rapidly. In such spots they bring the wall to the sea level sooner than in others.

This done, however, the work of the coral animals ceases, because they cannot live out of the water. But in consequence of a process of delay and decomposition, which I shall describe when we examine the structure and life of the animals themselves, such a wall—or coral reef, as it is called—is surrounded by coral sand and fragments worn away from it by the action of the sea.

Materials of this sort, mixed with sea-weed, broken shells, &c., soon gather upon the top of the reef wherever the coral growth has brought it to the sea level. By degrees a soil is collected upon such spots, raising them more and more above the surface of the water. In this way the islands have been formed which we call the Keys of Florida; and in the same way the little patches now rising highest on the summit of the Reef will enlarge gradually into more and more extensive islands, though at present many of them are scarcely visible above the water level.—*Our Young Folks* for March.

THE FOOLISHNESS OF INTEMPERANCE.

That scoundrel, Brick Pomeroy, is evidently being pricked in conscience for his crimes. His first attempt at atonement is an assault upon the bulwark of the Democratic party. Hear the half-penitent wretch:

The habit of liquor drinking is, to our mind, the most foolish, inexcusable piece of destructive nonsense in the world. The money poured down the throats of men each year is greater than the amount expended for improvements. If a man is tired, he drinks. If he is at work, he must drink. If doing nothing, he must have a nip each hour. If too warm, he takes a mint julep. If too cold, a hot whiskey. If he is by himself, out comes a flask or bottle. If in company, he stands treat till his money is gone: then, like a dead beat, sits around till some one calls him up. A man on a moderate salary steps into a saloon, invites a half dozen friends to drink, pays half a dollar or more and walks out. Three or four times a day he repeats this, and always drinks when asked. It is social. Men mean nothing by it. But during the week half of a man's salary has been poured down his throat, destroying his stomach, weakening his nerves, over-exciting his brain, robbing himself and family of his money needed for other purposes. But it is social! Drink in the morning—at noon—at night, and then a few times between drinks. The brain whirls—the hand grows unsteady—the pocket grows empty—the home ones suffer—the eye looks red and tremulous, as if ashamed—ambition is drowned or poisoned. Pretty soon the poor fellow is unfit for business. He makes mistakes. He is sick, unable to work. He is not the man to be relied on. He leaves his place, and in time finds a poorer one. Then he feels blue—drinks still more—suffers—he leaves his place again, and at last dies a wretch. But it is social!

A FRENCHMAN, having heard the word "press" made use of—to imply persuade, press that gentleman to take some refreshments, press him to stay, etc.,—thought he would show his talents by using (what he imagined) a synonymous form; and he, therefore, made no scruple to cry out in company, "Pray, squeeze that lady to sing!"

AGRICULTURAL.

THOROUGH DRAINING AND DEEP CULTURE THE BASIS OF IMPROVEMENT IN AGRICULTURE.

The fact is patent to the most superficial observation, that the total sum of the vast production of our agriculture is the yield of an average depth of cultivation of the soil not exceeding six inches—comparatively a mere film of the earth's surface. All the inorganic matter needed by plants, and all other elements of their nutrition and full development that come from the earth, must be supplied within this limit, while all the soil below this depth is unemployed and inert. The roots of the grain and grasses do not ordinarily extend much below the depth cultivated; and the average of this in our country is insufficient either for protection against drought, for adequate returns for the labor of cultivation, or for full supplies of farm products for national consumption. We may not be able to calculate the precise amount of increase in the production due to an additional inch in depth of cultivation, but experiments have shown that in many soils it bears, relatively, a near proportion to the increase in depth of culture; so that where the soil is now worked to six inches, an inch greater depth of cultivation would give nearly one-sixth more production. The agricultural produce of 1867, of those articles which would be influenced by depth of cultivation, has a total value of at least $1,500,000,000. Now, an increase of even one-tenth of this amount by an additional inch of culture, would add $150,000,000 to the value of the annual production of the country.

An erroneous impression exists relative to the depth to which the roots of the cereals and clover, as well as many other plants, will descend in an aerated and healthy soil. In ravines that have been filled with surface soil, or wherever the mould is of suitable texture and condition, carrots and parsnips are often found of a length of three feet or more; clover roots from three to four feet, and instances have been given of still greater length of the the roots of wheat and oats. With the prevalent mode of culture, in very compact soils, wheat-roots are so very near the surface as to be thrown out by the mechanical displacement of freezing and thawing, and, if not utterly destroyed, they struggle fruitlessly to pierce the unbroken subsoil, packed, perhaps, by the tread of cattle for a century, and finally yield to the blasting power of an early drought, blighted, shrivelled, light, worthless for seed, and of little value for bread. The drill, planting the seed firmly in the earth instead of scattering it on the surface, already saves half of the winter-killing in the fields where it is used; and deep culture, with proper drainings, would procure exemption from most of the remaining liabilities, and, ordinarily, from all danger of loss by drought. The advantage of additional depth of pulverization therefore, would be often far greater than the proportionate increase of depth, and the profit of the improvement would be increased in a corresponding ratio. In this country the average yield per acre of one of the principal staples, wheat, under our system of shallow cultivation, has been gradually lessened, until at the present time it does not exceed twelve bushels per acre, while England, with her deep tillage and rotation-system, has raised her average to 28 bushels. Estimating our wheat area at eighteen millions of acres, and allowing an increase of 10 bushels per acre under a system of thorough and judicious cultivation, the increased production would amount to 200,000,000 bushels; and wheat is but one of the staples to be benefitted by such improvement.

Deep cultivation is a prime necessity of root culture, which forms the basis of English agriculture, and enables the English farmer to pay annual rents equivalent to the fee-simple value of our farms. The growing of these "green crops" results in a more thorough admixture of the food-producing elements of the soil and its prompt permeation by water and the gases, which are so necessary to plant growth. France, following in our footsteps, or we in hers, in at least one particular—the want of a proper rotative system—has reduced the average yield of wheat to 15 bushels. The single fact that, while England has two acres in "green crops" for every acre in wheat, France has three acres in wheat for every acre in green crops, and that with us roots are scarcely raised as a farm crop, explains the cause of the great discrepancy in the yield of that valuable cereal in those countries.—*Agricultural Report.*

POTASH AS A FERTILIZER.

Potash forms one of the most essential constituents of a fertile soil, and one of the most important of all the fertilizing agents within reach of the agriculturist. In many plants it constitutes more than one-half of their ash, and in most at least one-third. In neutralizing acids in the soil and in the liberation of ammonia, it acts in the same manner as lime, but when it is desired simply to effect these last mentioned objects, the latter should be used, as being cheaper, and potash, generally available in the form of ashes, should be applied as a manure, using the word in its strictest sense, to indicate a substance that contributes directly to building up the structure of the plants. But considerable care should be exercised in the use of ashes, and they should never, as is the practice with some in manuring corn in the hill, be mixed with guano or the refuse of the hen roost, inasmuch as the first rain that dissolves them will cause the potash to displace the ammonia in the same manner that lime displaces it from barnyard manure and similar manures, as we have just mentioned; and, although the potash of the ashes and the phosphoric acid of the guano, or the like, would be left to benefit the plant, the ammonia would be dissipated and lost, and the value of the fertilizer depreciated. Analagous to potash in its action is soda, which, however, with a few exceptions to the rule, enters but slightly into the composition of plants, and may generally be replaced to a great extent, with potash. Turnips and Mangold Wurtzel, however, require a comparatively large amount of soda, the ash of the former containing upward of 28 per cent., and the latter a nearly equal amount. This may be most conveniently applied to the soil when required in the form of common salt.
—*J. A. Whitney, at N. Y. Farmers' Club.*

A GENTLEMAN once began his letter to his bride thus: "My dearest Maria." The lady replied: "My dear John, I beg that you will mend either your morals or your grammar. You call me your 'dearest Maria.' Am I to understand that you have other Marias?"

WHO GOVERNS BEST? — The Duchess of Burgundy said one day to Madame de Maintenon: "Do you know why the Queens of England govern better than the Kings? It is because the Queens govern by the advice of men, and Kings by the advice of women."

BOY'S GARDENING.

Mr. Edmond Morris, in a recent number of *The Journal of Horticulture*, gives an interesting account of a boy of his acquaintance as a gardener. He says: "A gentleman within two miles of me, by way of interesting his son (a young lad) in agriculture, gave him the free use of an acre to cultivate as he pleased. This shrewd boy located a half acre on one side of his father's barnyard, and the other on the opposite side. He could thus trundle out a dozen barrow loads of manure upon his ground whenever so disposed. He planted his acre in Lawton blackberries; cultivated them himself; and last year his gross sale of fruit amounted to six hundred dollars. The year preceeding, his clear profit from the same acre was four hundred and fifty dollars. I have walked through this magnificent creation of juvenile care and shrewdness, and must confess that no engineering of my own in the same line has been equal to it. The contents of the convenient barnyard told powerfully on the canes, but more powerfully on the quantity and the quality of the fruit. The fee of the land, though in the best location, was much less valuable than the annual crop. Within gun-shot of this field are ten acres of this same berry, which last year yielded a net profit of four thousand two hundred dollars—more than the land would sell for.

"The father of the lad referred to was engaged in mercantile business in Philadelphia; but he had never realized such profits as he thus saw his enterprising son to be annually securing. The example set before him by the lad induced him to drop some one or two branches of agriculture and take to raising berries also. He began his plantings several years ago—for the son has long been harvesting very paying crops—and has been planting annually from the increase of his own fields, until he has now thirty acres of Lawtons. Last winter he cut down an apple orchard of large bearing trees to make room for more berries. The profit from the latter far outstripped the orchard in the country."

The influence of gardening upon the young is one which parents may be truly glad to take advantage of; not alone for the money which they make by it, but for the good health it will give. All young boys and girls may profitably learn how to plant and cultivate all kinds of fruit and vegetables very early in life. Even though they may follow a professional career, their education in out-door labor will tell favorably on their future lives. Physically they will be stronger, and in disposition more virtuous, and when old age comes on they will be more inclined to seek the retirements of a peaceful rural life, surrounded by the trees of their own planting. That the "Coming Educational System" will include gardening, we have not the slightest doubt.

—MENDING ROADS.—On this important subject the Springfield *Republican* says: "It ought to be made a statuatory offence to put a shovel full of dirt upon the highway after the 1st of June, except where the ground has been viewed by the County Commissioners, and the work ordered for the public safety. In general, all the repairing that is done should be finished three weeks earlier than that. The true theory of road-making is that the new earth should be added in the spring, while the frost is coming out of the ground, so that the new and old shall settle down together for the summer. When this is done, the addition is incorporated bodily, and never heard from afterwards. It is the only way in which hard firm roads can be obtained. On the other hand, when, as generally at present, the repairing is put off till after harvesting, we have bad roads all the fall, execrable roads all winter, except where the ground is deeply covered with snow; and, come spring, the passage to and from even the nearest localities, becomes a matter of serious consideration, well prepared for if inevitable, or altogether avoided, if this can be done."

A HOPEFUL CONVERT. — Recently the Methodists held a great "revival" in Wisconsin. Among the converts was one whose previous profession was "three card monte." Times being somewhat hard, he found little profit in his legitimate "practice," and became converted, as the Elders say. One night, at the suggestion of an Elder, he rose to edify the congregation with his experience, and thus delivered himself:—

"Ladies and gentlemen—I mean, brothers and sisters; the Lord hath blessed me very much—I never felt so happy before in all my life—(embarrassed)—I say, I never felt so happy before in all my life—(very much embarrassed)—if any one thinks I ever *did*, they can *get a lively bet out of me!*"

NEIGHBOR T—— had a social party at his house a few evenings since, and the "dear boy," Charles, a five-year-old dolt, was favored with permission to be seen in the parlor. "Pa" is somewhat proud of his boys and Charles was, of course, elaborately gotten up for so great an occasion. Among other extras, the little fellow's hair was treated to a liberal supply of Eau de Colgne, to his huge gratification. As he entered the parlor; and made his bow to the ladies and gentlemen—

"Lookee here," said he, proudly, "if any of you smells a smell, thats *me!*"

The effect was decided, and Charles having thus in one brief sentence delivered an illustrative essay on human vanity, was the hero of the evening.

QUIPS, QUIRPS AND QUODLIBETS.

The following is Aunt Betsy's description of her milk man: "He is the meanest man in the world," she exclaimed. "He skims his milk on the top, then turns it over and skims it on the bottom."

Creditors are like corns: they are always reminding one where the shoe pinches. The only way to get rid of them is to cut them—and that won't prevent them coming again.

When is the book of nature studied? When autumn turns the leaves and they are red.

Why is a flatterer like a microscope? Because he magnifies small things.

"Birds in their nests agree," because they would fall out if they didn't.

A Scotchman's definition of "reel" music—the bagpipes.

A wag call Grecian architecture the "stoops" that ladies use at present.

Not a proper place for a naval engagement—the Pacific Ocean.

A little tumbler will often throw down a big man.

The cranium in four parts—The head-quarters.

A desirable domestic bird—A duck of a wife.

The bent of understanding—The instep.

A pious perfume—The odor of sanctity.