

The United States is the youngest and the richest of the great nations of the world.

California has one of the most remarkable timber belts in the world, embracing 4,124 miles.

The Indian mail steamers are running so fast nowadays that England is as close to Bombay as to New York by a slow steamer.

George F. Becker of the United States Geological Survey, has made a report on the gold fields of the South. He thinks they offer good prospects for investments.

Edward Atkinson has ciphered it all out, and says 10,800,000,000 eggs are laid in this country in a year. They are worth \$140,000,000—as much as the pig iron and wool crop together.

The Aluminum World states that since 1894 the total production of that metal has increased from 150 pounds to 39,629 pounds, and that the price per pound has fallen from \$9 per pound to seventy-five cents per pound.

Washington is as rich as any state of the Union in its Indian names. Several counties bear such names, and many streams, lakes, and villages. They are fine, many syllabled, mouth-filling words, curiously different in character from the Indian names of the South and East, but doubtless full of picturesque significance lost to our ignorance.

Professor Holden, of Lick Observatory, writes in the New York World that before the art of photographing the moon can be carried to greater success there must be plates of greater sensitiveness and finer grain. Now the photograph of a volcanic crater on the moon's surface will appear like a grain of the silver on the plate unless the crater is over a tenth of a mile in diameter.

Bicyclists are carefully looked after in France. The wheel is very popular there, and along country roads stations are set up to help out any unlucky fellow whose wheel may need sudden repair. At these places some one stays who can lend a helping hand, and there are, besides, tools, air pumps, liquid and solid rubber for pneumatic tires, and even extra saddle springs if needed.

Doubtless Alaska will before long become a favorite hunting and fishing ground for sportsmen that are content with nothing less than primitive nature, predicts the New York Sun. The journey to the coast of Alaska is no longer a serious matter, and, while the interior is still difficult to reach, it has an agreeable summer climate, and is no worse region for camping than many another frequented by hunters and fishermen. The Indians are good and faithful guides, though they have a way of eating up at a sitting the sweets provided by travelers for a long journey.

The Japanese may well claim remarks the New York Mail and Express, that "Peace hath her victories as well as war." From Kioto it is learned that the industrial exposition recently opened there indicates the great potentialities of Japanese manufactures. Home made fibers, textiles, leather, machinery, upholstery, hoisery hardware surgical and scientific instruments, chemicals, glassware and other goods are shown at prices distancing all possible foreign competition, and "the native visitors study the exhibits eagerly, confident of conquest in the industrial world."

For those of us who are accustomed to the wasteful extravagance of American forest destruction, it is hard to realize the care and attention paid to the growth and culture of forest trees in lands where their preservation is regarded as a duty, observes the Farm Field and Fireside. Even in Switzerland, which we are apt to think of as nothing but mountains and forests, the same careful scientific methods of culture are adhered to. A school of forestry at Zurich turns out a number of thoroughly educated foresters each year. There are about 300 branch experimental stations and several large experimental reservations. The age, rapidity of growth, and best conditions of culture for every variety of tree are made the subject of the most careful research in these stations, and volumes of carefully prepared statistics are published each year for the guidance of other students of forestry. The value of forests on temperature and rain fall of a district has also been proved beyond a doubt. How long will it be before our great nation appreciates the value of such work, and establish schools for the scientific study of the obj. c.

The Clock.

"Tick, tock, tick, tock,"
Sings the little round-faced clock
"Soe how fine I am, fine folks,
Hear my voice; it never croaks,
Nor stings out with ancient drawl
Like old granther on the wall.
I'm a jolly, merry, clock,
Where the dancers love to flock
And to dance till break of day
There I lightly tick away.
"I'm no striker, you see
When 'our young man' comes to tea,
And to stay a wee bit o'er,
I don't strike out 'There's the door,'
When full midnight finds him here.
Nay, I tick so sweetly clear,
In each tick I put such bliss,
Sweethearts cannot help but kiss.
Babies come at my soft call;
But old granther on the wall
Strikes and croaks in such a way,
Frightened sore, they will not stay.
"Tick, tock, tick, tock,
I am just the sort of clock
For the bright ones of the earth.
All life's merry hours from birth
To old age I lightly tell,
With a rhythmic rise and swell
As if hours were dancers gay
On the golden floor of day.
Tick, tock, tick, tock,"
Sings the merry, cherry clock.
—M. PHILIPS DAWSON, in Leslie's Weekly.

The New Hired Girl.

BY F. H. STAUFFER.

"Robert," she said, one morning, "you must put an advertisement in the paper for a girl today. Jeannette has already given me warning, and she only came on Monday. Was there ever anybody so annoyed and imposed upon as I am? These servants scorch your handkerchiefs, burn the pudding, neglect the children, break more than their wages amount to—and are altogether a lazy, saucy, disrespectful set! Once I get a good girl, I shall keep her, I know!"

The advertisement was duly inserted, and the next day Mrs. Goddard's nerves were constantly on a stretch, and so were the bell-wires. Applicants proved abundant, but Mrs. Goddard could not, or would not make a selection. She was determined to be pleased for once.

"Well, have you had any applicants?" asked Mr. Goddard, on his return in the evening.

"A score of them, Robert. One would think half the girls in the city were in want of places."

"Did you find one to suit you?"

"No, I did not. Some were shabby, others uncleanly, and most of them without any references. One in particular questioned me so closely and impudently that you would have thought our positions reversed, and that I had applied to her for a situation. There goes the bell now! Do go down, Robert, and see what kind of a thing she is!"

Mr. Goddard went down, and on opening the door, was pounced on by a young girl, who hugged and kissed him with vehemence. The light was burning brightly in the hall, and when the young girl threw back her veil, Mr. Goddard beheld the fair, fresh face of his young sister.

"Why, Sallie," he stammered, in glad surprise, "we were not looking for you!"

"That is an intimation that I am not welcome."

"Quite the contrary, sis. I see a chance for a capital joke, and you and I always 'took' to them with sympathetic gusto. We advertised for a girl, and have been overrun with callers, none of whom suited. When my wife heard the bell, she sent me down to answer it, supposing you to be another applicant. Her nerves are completely unstrung; latterly she seems to be possessed with more than her share of nerves, and that is the reason she has so much trouble with her domestics. She has never seen you; she shall engage you."

"I see the joke, Bob. It will be a lesson for her. But I cannot stay more than two weeks."

"That will be long enough, Sallie. Let me see—your name is—"

"Mary Anderson."

"That will do. Walk up into the library."

Arriving at that door, Mr. Goddard said to his wife:

"Julia, here is a girl who will no doubt suit you."

Sallie made a courtesy, while Mrs. Goddard eyed her critically, confessing to herself that her face was at least prepossessing.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Mary Anderson."

"You dress remarkably well."

"I hope you will allow me that privilege. I desire to impress you favorably."

"What can you do?"

"Almost anything."

"That smacks of conceit," said Mrs. Goddard. "Is there no specialty you pride yourself upon?"

"No, ma'am. I am not proud."

"Have you any references?"

"No, ma'am."
"How does that come?"
"I came on from Prattville today, fifty miles away. References are not made a requisite there."

"What do you want a week for?"

"Three dollars."

"That is too much."

"You will find me worth that."

"You had better give her a trial," whispered Mr. Goddard.

That was enough; the fictitious Mary Anderson was at once engaged. At the end of the first week Mrs. Goddard was delighted with her; before the close of the second she would have trebled the girl's wages on the merest intimation.

"I have at last been so fortunate as to get a good girl—the most excellent of her kind. She is neat, tractable, obedient. She does her work well, and in the manner I instruct her to do it. She is kind, respectful, even-tempered, and loves the children as if they were her own. She is no ordinary girl, and must have seen better days. The fact is I can hardly keep from taking her into companionship, she is so sprightly, witty, scholarly—with a large share of sound, practical sense. She has shown me, too, how much I have been at fault with my domestics, and why I have had so much difficulty to retain them."

"Was not that presumptive in her?" asked Mr. Goddard, soberly.

"I did not think so—she did it in such a mild, truthful, deferential way."

"I am glad to know that you like her," replied Goddard, repressing a smile.

On Saturday evening Mrs. Goddard's nerves were again reaching out in every direction in their sensitiveness.

"Robert," she said, "Mary Anderson has given me warning. She is going to leave on Monday."

"Is that possible? What occurred between you?"

"Nothing, my dear."

Just then delicious strains of music came floating up from the parlor, accompanied by a voice of much compass and sweetness.

"Who is at the piano?" asked Mr. Goddard.

"Miss Spencer has probably dropped in," replied his wife.

"Of course we should go down," said Mr. Goddard.

Down the couple went. It was the "hired girl" who was sweeping her fingers so deftly over the keys.

She came toward Mr. Goddard and his wife, and the former taking "Mary Anderson" in his arms, beat back her face and kissed her upon the lips, tempting and luscious as a peach.

"Robert Goddard!" exclaimed his wife, aghast, her eyes snapping.

"My dear," said he laughing heartily, "this is my sister Sallie. We have been playing a little joke on you."

Mrs. Goddard did not know whether to laugh or cry, but being a woman of sense, she did the former.

"Mary Anderson," remained another week as a guest, and, profiting by her experience, succeeded in helping Mrs. Goddard secure a satisfactory girl.—Saturday Night.

Seeking Ancestors.

"My life is made miserable," said a librarian, plaintively, "by people who are anxious to become members of the Sons of the Revolution or the Daughters of the Revolution. Only about one-half of them succeed; but it takes a long time to prove to them that they can't succeed. The craze started only a few years ago, with the organization of these societies, and it is still on the increase."

"Most of the seekers of ancestors are women. A great many of them, I believe, have never been in a library before. They know nothing about how to begin a search. They ply me with questions. All I can do is to find out what State their ancestors lived during the Revolution and then turn over the State documents to them. Then, likely as not, they will ask me to help them search, but I draw the line at that. Their disappointment when they can't find a single private in their favor is something terrible. Sometimes they get angry and say the books are wrong, the library is wrong and everybody is wrong. Again they find, to their horror, that they had ancestors interested in the Revolution—ancestors who were ardent Tories."

—New York Press.

Toughened.

"Say," said the deputy, "I put No. 711 on the treadmill eight hours ago as a punishment, and I'll be dinged if he ain't goin' on just as chipper and happy as can be."

"Why, of course," said the prison warden, in tones of disgust. "Don't you know the feller was sent here for bicycle stealing? That sort of thing is right in his line."—Indianapolis Journal.

Stone Dust as a Fertilizer.

Upwards of forty years ago, a farmer living in Southern Michigan was grinding his scythe. The grindstone stood upon a sandy bit of ground by the back-gate, a place selected for the wood pile and a general "catch-all," partly because it was convenient, and partly because nothing would grow there. After a time, the man observed that directly beneath the grindstone, and just where the drip from the water-pan and the particles of the stone fell upon the barren soil, some tufts of grass were growing luxuriantly, and a little patch of wheat had sprung up, throwing up strong shoots, and indicating some quality in the soil far more nutritive than the gravelly waste around it.

Upon the idea started by this observation, the farmer saved all the drip and sediment from the grindstone, and poured it upon a few hills of potatoes planted in the immediate neighborhood. The yield of potatoes was something phenomenal.

Many a time did the experimenter bewail the limited condition of his finances which prevented the purchase of machinery suitable for grinding rock for fertilizer, for he firmly holds the theory that by this means the earth would be supplied with the elements necessary for its most productive state, and now a German chemist, Julius Hensel by name, has just published a book on the use of stone-dust as a fertilizing element for grain and grass land and also for fruit.

For years certain trees had given no fruit for all the manuring they had received, but a liberal application of stone-dust brought forth a full crop and great freshness in the growth and energy of the trees. According to the new discoveries in this direction, rocky land contains within itself a store of nutrition that will serve it for years to come.

The Ledger has on several occasions advocated the use of very large and deep subsoil plows and the systematic stirring of the earth to new depths, in order to bring within reach of the roots new stores of nutrition.—New York Ledger.

Grow Fat Without Beef.

In these days of high-priced beef the vegetarians are congratulating themselves that their habits save money. There is a vegetarian club at the University of Chicago, says the News. The members say that they fare as well as any of the students. There are thirty members in the club and the faculty is represented by Professor Starr, the anthropologist. The members of the vegetarian club pay only \$2.50 a week for their board and they say their menus are superior to those of \$3 and \$3.50 boarding clubs. They eat eggs, cheese and milk, which are not strictly vegetables but life is never sacrificed to their appetites. They eat sweet and Irish potatoes, porridge, toast, salads, macaroni, all kinds of vegetables and fruits, nut and raisins, and occasionally such dainties as Welsh rarebit.

The members of the club are as plump and healthy as those who eat meat three times a day, and some of them declare they have gained in health, strength and weight since becoming vegetarians. J. H. Moore, the originator and purveyor of the club, has made a specialty of the chemistry of nutrition, and is prepared to prove to any skeptic that beans and peas contain more flesh-forming material than beef.

Artificial Pearl.

It is possible to produce a film having much the appearance of mother-of-pearl at a very trifling cost. For this purpose are required one part nitro-cellulose, seven or eight parts of 100 per cent alcohol and twenty-one parts ether. Soluble glass is used as a solvent, ten parts of this to ninety parts of water being the proportion. A series of interesting experiments in color, brilliancy and consistency are made by adding bisulphite of carbon in the proportion of twenty-five parts to a hundred parts of the solution. Benzine may also be added, with the effect of changing the arrangement of the colors and varying their intensity.—New York Ledger.

Satisfactory Compromise.

"Alice, dear, will you marry me?" said a Pittsburg young man to his best girl.

"No, Charlie, but—"

"Oh, spare me from saying that you will be a sister to me. I can't stand that chestnut."

"I wasn't going to say that, Charlie."

"What were you going to say?"

"I was going to say that I could not marry you, but we could get a clergyman to marry both of us."—Pittsburg Chronicle.

EXTRACT MAKING.

How Flavors For Soft Drinks Are Obtained.

Impossible to Get the True Essence of Fruit.

Since soda water became the regular dissipation of the modern girl the extract-making industry has assumed enormous proportions. Where ounces of vanilla and lemon were used by housewives and chefs a dozen years ago gallons are now consumed in the corner drug store. To accommodate this great growth in business manufacturing plants have sprung up through the country and they are yearly adding to their equipment in order to supply the ever increasing demand.

Vanilla comes almost entirely from Mexico in the form of long, brown, shiny beans, which are tied up in half-pound bundles and kept in hermetically sealed receptacles, so that the rich odor may not be dissipated in the air. The bean grows on a peculiar vine which is said to derive quite as much nourishment from the air as it does from the soil. It is planted in cuttings by the Mexicans, and as it grows up it is trained on latices or palm trees. In the third year it begins to bear, and for thirty summers the crops continue good. In a single month the vanilla bean will grow to its full size, being from six to twelve inches in length, but it requires full six months longer for it to ripen.

After the beans are picked and their value depends largely upon having them neither overripe nor underripe, the peculiar rich aroma is developed by a complicated process of fermentation. They are first stored under cover until they begin to shrivel and then they are sweated by heating and inclosing them in air-tight boxes over night. In the course of two or three days the beans have obtained a rich brown color and present a moist appearance. After being exposed for several months in the sun to dry they are packed in little bundles and shipped to the United States, which is the greatest extract-making country in the world. Thousands of Mexicans make their entire living by raising and curing vanilla beans. The cost ranges from \$6 to \$12 a pound, according to the length and quality of the beans, the prices being now pretty high owing to the large demand and the insufficient supply. For this reason vanilla extract is frequently adulterated with tonka or snuff beans, which cost only \$2 a pound. They impart a very pungent odor and a somewhat sharp and bitter taste to the extract.

Extracts from the fruit of the strawberry, the pineapple, the raspberry, the banana, the pear and the apricot cannot be made although many experimenters have worked on the problem. These fruits contain so much water that it is impossible to get them condensed enough to secure the true essence. Artificial extracts with the flavors of these fruits may, however, be made. The process is entirely chemical and the flavors produced are really stronger than the fruits themselves. Many of these extracts are used in cooking, and the soda-water fountains, but they are all more or less injurious to the health. The proprietors of many of the best soda fountains refuse to use them, preferring to keep a supply of the crushed fruits always on hand. Peach extract is made from peach pits.—Chicago Record.

Origin of Spooning.

Appropos the recent disturbance in religious circles over the definition of "spooning" the Tennessee version of it is given:

"Spooning" parties are popular in some quarters. They take their name from a good old English word, which was intended to ridicule the alleged fantastic actions of a young man or a young woman who is in love. For some reason, which no one ever could explain, everybody pokes fun at the lover. In fact, that unhappy character is never heroic in real life, no matter what great gobs of heroism are piled about him on the stage, and in all the romantic story books. The girl in love and the boy in love, are said to be "spooning."

When a "spooning" party is given the committee in charge of the event receives a spoon from each person who attends, or else presents each guest with a spoon. These spoons are fancifully dressed in male and female attire, and are mated either by similarity of costume or by a distinguishing ribbon. The girls and boys whose spoons are mated are expected to take care of each other during the continuance of the social gathering.

Of course, the distribution of the spoons is made with the greatest possible carefulness, the aim being to so place them as to properly fit the case of the young people to whom they are presented. The parties are usually given by the young people of some neighborhood, where the personal preference of each spooner is well known, and they are the source of no end of fun. It is possible, also, that they serve as aids to matrimony as well, and are therefore commendable, since an avowal is made more easy to a diffident swain after he feels that his passion is not a secret, but that his weakness for a spooner maid is known to his friends and enemies on the committee which dispenses the spoons. It may be mentioned that after the spoons have been distributed among the guests, each couple retires for consultation regarding the reasons which caused the award of mutual spoons in their case. This consultation is known by the name of "spooning."—St. Louis Republic.

Tricks of Snake Charmers.

A large cobra de capello was sent home to Sir Joseph Fayrer, who wanted a supply of venom for analysis. It bit the spoon repeatedly without yielding any, and on examination was found to have none to yield, not only its fangs but the poisonous glands having been extirpated. A protective operation still more cruel is sometimes practiced by novices in the art of charming, and consists in securing the mouth with a stitch of silk passed through the lips in front; to perform this the poor beast's head is held tightly pressed to the ground by a short stick on which the foot rests, while the other foot restrains the writhing body, leaving both hands at liberty for the needle. Eleven apparently healthy cobras were on one occasion received at the London Zoological Gardens. They refused to feed and grew thin. When one died it was discovered that its mouth was sewn up so fine as to be invisible to any but the closest scrutiny. The rest of them did well on being restored to their normal condition.

In connection with this subject, I may mention that a rattlesnake was sent to me from up country when I was in Demerara, with the history that it had killed a coolie on one of the plantations. It had been badly injured about the spine, probably in capture, so that on reaching me it was not only dead but decomposed, and I was not able to make any very complete dissection; but I found that its lips were tied together with stitches—obviously the effort of an unpracticed hand, since the work was very coarse. This had apparently been preceded by an unsuccessful attempt to extract the long, erectile, needle-like fangs, for one of these was twisted halfround with its bony base, and had penetrated the lower lip when the jaws were forcibly closed. It is hardly possible that the duct was not occluded, but enough venom must have remained within the tube of the tiny delicate syringe to inflict a fatal scratch.—Chambers's Journal.

No Wonder the Prince Leads.

Some curious details have been published in London regarding the wardrobe of the Prince of Wales. It appears that he possesses seventy uniforms, at an average cost of \$750. It is added that he pays \$62.50 for a frock coat, about \$78 for a dress suit for trousers he pays \$21, his ordinary suits cost \$42 to \$52.50. In the London season the Prince wears two new frock coats a month and he uses about a dozen dress suits annually. He has an immense number of ordinary suits of clothes, and never wears one more than two or three times. In addition to his shooting suits cost \$1,500 a year. The Prince has three silk hats every fortnight, and never wears a pair of gloves twice. He is the best shod man in the United Kingdom.—New York Press.

A Curious Experiment.

It is a strange fact that the right hand, which is more sensible to the touch than the left, is less sensible than the latter to the effect of heat or cold. If you dip both hands simultaneously into two bowls of water of equal temperature, the left will experience the higher sensation of heat, and this will happen even if the thermometer shows that the water in the left bowl is in reality a trifle colder than the water in the right one. The reverse happens in the case of persons who are left handed.—New York Telegram.

More than fifty kinds of bark are now used in the manufacture of paper. Even banana skins, pea vines, cocoon fibers, hay, straw, water weeds, leaves, shavings, corn husks and hop plants are used for this purpose.