

MARK TWAIN.

THE HUMORIST'S ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT
PREACHER'S FARMING OPERATIONS.

Mark Twain has written of Mr. Beecher's old farm on the Hudson river as follows:

Mr. Beecher's farm consists of thirty-six acres, and is carried on on strict scientific principles. He never puts in any part of a crop without consulting his book. He plows, and reaps, and digs, and sows according to the best authorities, and the authorities cost more than the other farming implements do. As soon as the library is complete the farm will begin to be a profitable investment. But book farming has its drawbacks. Upon one occasion when it seemed morally certain that the hay ought to be cut, the hay book could not be found, and before it was found it was too late, and the hay was all spoiled. Mr. Beecher raises some of the finest crops of wheat in the country, but the unfavorable difference between the cost of producing it and its market value after it is produced has interfered considerably with its success as a commercial enterprise. His special weakness is hogs, however. He considers hogs the best game a farm produces. He buys the original pig for \$1.50, and feeds him \$40 worth of corn, and then sells him for about \$9. This is the only crop he makes any money on. He loses on the corn, but he makes \$7.50 on the hog. He does not mind this, because he never expected to make anything on the corn. And any way it turns out, he has the excitement of raising the hog, whether he gets the worth of him or not. His strawberries would be a comfortable success if the robins would eat turnips, but they won't, and hence the difficulty.

One of Mr. Beecher's most harrassing difficulties in his farming operations comes of the close resemblance of different sorts of seeds and plants to each other. Two years ago his far sightedness warned him that there was going to be a scarcity of watermelons, and he therefore put in a crop of twenty-seven acres of that fruit. But when they came up turned out to be pumpkins, and a dead loss was the consequence. Sometimes a portion of his crop goes into the ground the most promising sweet potatoes, and comes up the infernalist carrots—though I have never heard him express it in just that way. When he bought his farm he found one egg in every hen's nest on the place. He said here was just the reason why so many farmers failed; they scatter their forces too much; concentration was the idea. So he gathered those eggs together and put them all under one experienced old hen. That hen roosted over that contract night and day for eleven weeks, under the anxious personal supervision of Mr. Beecher himself, but she could not "phase"

those eggs. Why? Because they were those infamous porcelain things used by ingenious and fraudulent farmers as "nest eggs." But perhaps Mr. Beecher's most disastrous experience was when he tried to raise an immense crop of dried apples. He planted \$1,500 worth, but never one of them sprouted. He has never been able to understand to this day what was the matter with those apples.

Mr. Beecher's farm is not a triumph. It would be easier on him if he worked it on shares with some one, but he cannot find anybody who is willing to stand half the expense, and not many that are able. Still persistence in any cause is bound to succeed. He was a very inferior farmer when he first began, but a prolonged and unflinching assault upon his agricultural difficulties has had its effect at last, and he is now fast rising from affluence to poverty.

VEGETABLES AND SALADS.

All vegetables have an effect on the chemistry of the body so that we cannot speak too highly of their importance at table. Asparagus is a strong diuretic, and forms part of the cure for rheumatic patients at such health resorts as Aix-les-Bains. Sorrel is cooling, and forms the staple of that *soupe aux herbes* which a French lady will order for herself after a long and tiring journey. Carrots containing a quantity of sugar, are avoided by some people, while others complain of them as indigestible. It is the yellow core of the carrot that is difficult of digestion—the outer, a red layer is tender enough. The large, sweet onion is very rich in those alkaline elements which counteract the poison of rheumatic gout. If slowly stewed in weak broth, it will be found to be an admirable article of diet for patients of studious and sedentary habits. The stalks of cauliflower have the same sort of value, only too often the stalk of a cauliflower is so ill-boiled and unpalatable that few persons would thank you for proposing to them to make part of their meal consist of so uninviting an article. Turnips are often thought to be indigestible, and better suited for cows and sheep than for delicate people; but here the fault lies with the cook quite as much as with the root. The cook boils the turnip badly, and then pours some butter over it, and the eater of such a dish is sure to be the worse for it. Try a better way. Half boil your turnip, and cut it in slices like half-crowns. Butter a pie-dish, put in the slices, moisten with a little

weak broth, dust once with bread crumbs and pepper and salt, and keep in the oven till it gains a bright golden brown. This dish, which is the Piedmontese fashion of eating turnips, is quite unsuited to cows, and ought to be popular. Our lettuce has a slight narcotic action, of which an old French woman well knows the value, and when properly cooked it is really very easy of digestion. But in our country, though lettuce is duly grown in every garden, you often hear the remark, "I can't eat a salad," and as few cooks know how to use the vegetable which has been refused in its raw state, the lettuce is all wasted, and so is the garden in which they were grown. Oh, it's wilful waste, and consequent woful want, of our English tables and kitchens!—*Mrs. Reeves's Cookery and Housekeeping.*

The LaConner oatmeal mill is fast nearing completion, and will be ready to commence operations in about one month.

We are in receipt from Rand, McNally & Co., of a book recently published, entitled "The West." It is the work of Robert P. Porter, Special Agent of the Census Bureau of the Government. After an examination of the work, we can thoroughly appreciate the wisdom of the recent appointment of Mr. Porter as a member of the Tariff Commission.

It is not a mere compilation based on the last census. It takes the facts of our growth and throws upon them other facts calculated to interest and attract the attention of every student and scientist. The labor incident to the work, must have been very great, and the conclusions drawn, together with the manner of connecting one industrial fact with that of another, gives the work a permanent value.

By the aid of diagrams and tables arranged to a nicety, and requiring rare skill, Mr. Porter makes statistics absolutely eloquent. The progress of the States and Territories in the development of natural resources, growth of population, of politics, spread of industries and manufactures, in social and commercial aspects, are set forth with noon-day clearness and in such a manner as to rob the examination of the dryness usually incident to such a work. The nice details into which Mr. Porter has entered indicate a spirit of truth and exactness that enhances the value of the work.

No section of the country has been overlooked, everything that concerns national greatness is ably treated, the work contains no puffery of any particular section. All seems to be solid facts. "The West" should be in every library as a work of reference and value. Every farmer should have it.

The Farmers' and Mechanics' store, 184 First Street, is one of the busiest places in the city. Their straightforward way of doing business is now pretty generally understood, and that accounts for the extensive patronage they are receiving.