The Roupell Mystery

By Austyn Granville

CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

"But it is quite likely that she would give us any clew to the whereabouts of one who was almost a son to her. Besides, I thought you said you couldn't find Madame La Seur."

"I had some difficulty at first; but I have had one of my men on the track for the past two days. He now reports her as residing in Belleville. I shall move up into that neighborhood to-night, and commence my investigations. In the meantime I want you to continue to watch Monsieur Chabot and report what steps our deluded friend the prefect of police is taking."

So they parted, Cassagne to his lodgings to assume such a dress as would harmonize with the humble quarters of the town where he proposed to pursue his investigations, D'Auburon to his club, where he had an appointment with M. Jules Chabot, and in whose company he would presently repair to the drawing rooms of the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Valair.

At about half past eight the next evening, anyone who had taken the trouble to look might have seen enter the Rue Banquiere by its western end, a man dressed in rough garments, who looked like a well-to-do workman, with his heavy shoes and lime-bespattered corduroys. He wore no collar on his check cotton shirt, but around his throat was loosely tied a red pocket handkerchief. A bag containing a few tools was slung over his shoulder.

Presently he stopped, ostensibly to purchase some fruit, which a hawker in one of the barrows in the middle of the street was vociferously offering for sale. As he stood there chatting in a friendly way with the peddler, however, his gaze in reality fixed upon a scene before him unique even among the curious phases of life to be encountered in the Rue Banquiere.

In a shop which in point of size was double at least that of either of its adjoining neighbors, a crowd of the very poorest of Belleville had gathered. There must have been thirty or forty men, women and children inside the doors, at the very least, and as many more waiting outside on the pavement.

Over this shop swung a sign-board, on both sides of which was painted the figure of a man-cook, in a white cap and apron, industriously carving an unnaturally red round beef; and underneath, apparently unharmed by the steam and the gravy, for it was plainly to be read, was the democratic legend, "I carve for the people."

Inside the shop a gentleman similarly habited, but a trifle less corpulent and dignified than his counterfeit presentment on the sign, was at that moment actually engaged in the very occupation which the legend advertised. He was engaged in carving for the people.

In place, however, of operating upon a round of beef, he was engaged in slicing, with great rapidity, a meat pudding. This pudding itself, apart from the hungry crowd waiting to devour it, was an object worth looking at. It was at least five feet long and as thick as a ship's cable. As the cook cut off a slice, a stout woman of about fifty-five years of age would seize it, wrap it up in a piece of newspaper, and hand it to someone in the crowd, not letting go of the appetizing morsel, however, until she had received in exchange therefor two coins in copper, a great heap of which lay in a drawer beside her.

The workman at the huckster's barrow finished his apple and bought another. The intent gaze which he kept fixed upon the cook shop at length attracted the attention of the vender

"You seem to be amused," he said. "Have you never seen a pudding cut before?"

"Not such a pudding as that," replied the man with the bag. "It's quite a sight, ain't it? Why, there's another."

"That's nothing. They'll keep that thing up for an hour yet. Old Mother Merchant's puddings have a reputation, I tell you, in the Rue Banquiere."

"The shop, then, belongs to Madame Merchant, who, I suppose, is that old lady?"

"Yes, and not only the shop, but the house as well. She has not been cutting puddings all these years for nothing. She's a pretty good-hearted woman, though, and nobody begrudges her her money. In the winter time she lets me sell hot pies right in front of her shop here, though it's against her own trade."

The glare of the petroleum lamps flickered up less brightly. The night crept on apace. The fierce glare of the street changed to a dingy twilight. It was as if the footlights had been turned half-way down in some realistic melodrama. The crowd melted away at last.

Only the stub end of one of the puddings remained on the greasy counter. The drawer was piled full of coins. A wretched woman, gaunt with famine, was the only customer left. She was bargaining for a bone with which to make soup. Her two starving children, clinging to her tattered gown, eyed with wistful looks the remnant of the pudding; but it was a luxury beyond their mother's means.

The workman took up his bag, and nodding good-night to the huckster, crossed over into the shop. The man in the cap and apron was resting from his labors. The workman called to him and he came up to the counter.

"A slice of pudding," said the workman.

The man in the cap and apron cut it.

"There's no more paper," he said. "You'll have to take it in your hands. It's nearly cold now, anyway. Why didn't you come in when it was hot? It was grand then, I tell you."

The wretched mites clinging to the tattered skirts of their mother, moved reluctantly toward the door. The woman had secured her bone. Soup in the immediate future was of course excellent; but here was meat pudding being eaten under their very eyes. They would have liked to stay a while. Perhaps the workman would have dropped some.

"You are right," said the man with the bag. "These puddings are better hot. Here, little girl. I've—I've lost my appetite."

"Give it to me," cried the gaunt woman. "I will divide it fairly."

"No, let the children have that," replied the man with the bag. "Cut another slice for madame."

The woman burst into tears. Even the man with the cap and apron was affected; but it was at the generosity of the man with the bag.

It was getting late. The Rue Banquiere was becoming deserted. The hucksters outside had covered up their wares and were beginning to take their departure.

The man with the bag, however, still loitered in the cook shop. He had made a few purchases, and had chatted pleasantly with the man in the cap and apron on the latest local sensation, a raiding which had resulted in the death of two officers.

"Not but what it serves them right," remarked the man with the bag. "Why don't these swells of the police let Belleville folks alone?"

"And they must have known the kind of place into which they were going," added madame, speaking for the first time.

The man with the bag applauded her sentiments. Of course they did. Madame was a woman of good sense. If madame had her way, perhaps, she would have the police let the people of Belleville alone altogether, and never come near them. Madame was emphatic that she would, "for some of the worst of them were her best customers," she remarked, laughing.

"I am in the door and window business," replied the man with the bag, significantly.

"I thought you were not in a straight line when I first saw you," said the cook. "Your hands ain't rough enough, and you look altogether too fat. Workmen don't live as you've lived."

"Oh! they feed us well enough where I've just come from," replied the workman; and he kept his eyes steadily fixed on madam's face. "I've just spent five years in the prisons of Toulon—why, what's the matter, madame? You never had anyone there, did you—no friend of yours?"

But madame was deadly white, and clutching spasmodically at the greasy counter.

"It is nothing," she gasped at length. "It is the heat—it is—I am not well. Monsieur will call again. I hope he will be a good customer. We have many like him."

"And I'm all right, you know," said the man with the bag. "The police can't touch me, for I've served my time."

He slung his bag over his shoulder, picked up his parcels, and wishing the pair good night, passed out on to the nearly deserted street, with the hang-dog look of a man who had been hunted often, and dreaded to be hunted again. He trudged on to the top of the Rue Banquiere, and gained a broader thoroughfare. Immediately around the corner there was a cab in waiting. The man with the bag entered it, and raising the trap door in the roof, said to the sleepy driver:

"Home!" And as he rattled along on the pavement, he said to himself: "Mendotti was right. The woman is undoubtedly Madame La Seur. Of course she would change her name when she married again. How she blanched when I spoke of Toulon. And another thing I'm sure of: she never bought that house and lot she owns by cutting up puddings in Belleville. She must be watched and followed night and day."

CHAPTER XX.

"The woman you want went in there!" It was Mendotti, one of Cassagne's men, who spoke to his employer, as both stood in the deep shadow of a tree, whose furthest branches spread over the narrow street and beyond a high brick wall opposite.

"She went in there, not twenty minutes ago," repeated Mendotti, pointing with his finger to a wooden door, which was let into the wall. "I at once sent you a message. I have not moved from here except to do that. She's in there yet. I don't know whose house it is."

"But I do. It is the residence of Colbert-Remplin, the rich banker of the Place de l'Opera. That door leads into his garden. Tell me how she got in. Did she have a key?"

"No, a woman admitted her."

"What kind of a woman was she?"

"An elderly woman. She looked as though she might be a housekeeper, or an upper servant. I crept up near enough to hear her say, 'My mistress is busy now, but she will see you in a few minutes. Go into the summer house.'"

Cassagne thought deeply for a minute or two. At last he said:

"Run around in front of the house and see what is going on. The house is well lit up. The Colbert-Remplins are not people who entertain much; but there must be something on to-night. Do I not hear the sound of music? Whoever is to meet the woman," continued the detective, "is to meet her in the summer house. Oh, to be able to scale that wall, and get into those grounds!"

Looking around him his quick eye fell upon the tree immediately over their heads, along the branches of which he thought he might possibly work his way and so drop into the garden.

The night was tolerably dark. But few people were passing in that fashionable quarter. After a moment's hesitation he determined to attempt it. After first instructing Mendotti to await his return, he then climbed upon his assistant's shoulders, and was just able to reach the lower limb of the cedar.

"I am all right," he whispered, and he commenced to work his way very cautiously along one of the branches. It bent tremendously with his weight; but he put up his hand and drew down an upper bough. Thus distributing the burden, he managed to pass the wall, and continued to creep along the branches until, they gradually bending with their load, he was enabled to drop noiselessly into the garden.

"I will go and wait for my lady in the center of the lawn, and I had better be quick about it," he said.

Relying upon his general knowledge of the construction of a Parisian garden, M. Cassagne walked rapidly forward, struck his foot against some unforeseen obstacle, tripped, stumbled, and the next moment found himself struggling in the water. He had overlooked the fact that some gardens have fountains.

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"Where have you come from, and what have you been doing?" was the astonished inquiry of Charles D'Auburon.

He had been aroused from his bed at midnight by a thunderous knocking at his door, and on going to see what all the noise was about, had discovered Cassagne, standing, the picture of misery, under the lamp on the landing.

Dripping yet with the moisture which ran from all his garments; minus his hat, and shivering like an aspen, the famous detective presented a picture well calculated to excite the utmost commiseration; but a gleam of triumph was in his undimmed eye; and he wore the air of a conqueror rather than of a man who had met with a humiliating accident.

Cassagne entered into a circumstantial relation of his adventures. When he arrived at what he facetiously termed the "frog-pond incident," D'Auburon could not restrain his mirth, and it was so contagious that Cassagne, though the joke was against himself, could not refrain from joining him. The two men roared until the room shook again. When their merriment had somewhat subsided M. Cassagne took up the thread of his narrative in this wise:

"I had hardly got my head out of water, and cleared my ears and eyes, before I heard a door open and shut, in the back part of the house. I crept softly out of the fountain and lay extended at full length upon the grass. Straining my eyes in the direction of the house, I perceived the figure of a woman coming toward me. She was a woman daintily dressed in full ball costume. I had no difficulty in following her. She had slipped unperceived from the ball room, and no doubt believed herself to be entirely free frnm surveillance. I crept along on my hands and knees and got close to her as she came around the bend in the gravel walk. As she neared me, the moon, which had hitherto been concealed by passing clouds, shone out a little and gleamed upon her soft silk dress and her white shoulders. In that brief moment I saw and recognized her."

"Who was she?" exclaimed D'Auburon in a tone of almost breathless interest.

"She was the woman I expected. She was Madame Colbert-Remplin, the banker's wife."

"You are joking," exclaimed D'Auburon. "Both Mendotti and yourself must have been mistaken. The light was uncertain, you say. It was some young lady of the household going to meet her lover."

"It was nothing of the kind. It was Madame Colbert-Remplin, going to meet Madame Mechant, nee La Seur, who has learned some secret of hers and is trading upon it to her own advantage."

"Impossible!"

"It is a fact. I can understand now how Madame Mechant is able to become a property owner by selling meat puddings in the Rue Banquiere. She is a blackmailer. I myself heard money pass between them. The chink of gold pieces. It is a sound which I cannot be deceived in."

D'Auburon knew the almost marvelous gift which his friend had received from nature in the matter of hearing. No stag in the forest could catch a slighter sound than his highly trained and exquisite organ.

"You are probably correct," he said. "Were you able to glean any particulars of their secret?"

"I was not. The interview was very brief, and what little conversation there was was carried on in a very low tone. In fact, only once or twice did I catch a broken sentence. Once they spoke louder than usual. Madame Mechant was threatening the banker's wife; and Madame Colbert-Remplin was begging the other not to expose her."

"She has her thoroughly in her power?" asked D'Auburon.

"Undoubtedly, and that her secret is in some way connected with Philip Graham, I feel convinced."

"Why?"

"There was one other sentence I heard, 'if you have no mercy for me, do not ruin my child. At least respect the feelings of his unhappy mother.'"

(To be continued.)

Turning Waste to Use.

Skimming a river for a living may be said to be one of the most striking examples of the utilization of waste. This is done in Paris. There is one individual, at least, in the French capital who makes it his daily business to skim the Seine. He is out at early morning in an old flat-bottomed boat, armed with a skimming pan. With this he skims off the surface of the river the grease which collects there during the night, and which he disposes of to a soap factory. Generally he makes a quarter or so by his morning's work, which enables him to live.

In Paris also there are a number of people who make a living out of waste corks, which they fish from the Seine. They collect on the river bank at daybreak, each with a short pole, at the end of which is a small improvised net. They set to work to gather in the floating corks, subsequently selling them to the cork merchants in the neighborhood.

When He Proposed.

He had just proposed.

She was an heiress, while he was poor, but otherwise honest.

"But," she protested, "do you expect to support a wife on your salary?'

"Well,' he replied, "I didn't propose to do anything like that."

Not the Same.

Merchant—I thought you told me he was a man of very good character.

Quibble—I guess you misunderstood me. I said he was a man of good reputation.—Philadelphia Press.

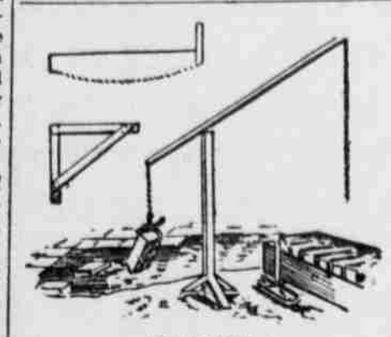
Ladoga is the largest fresh-water lake in Europe. Its area is 7,000 square miles. Seventy rivers run into Lake Ladoga.

Ice Harvesting.

Every year the use of ice increases. It is not merely a luxury, but becomes a necessity as soon as its value is known by experience. Ice in the dairy is almost indispensable for holding milk and cream at a proper temperature.

Ice should be cut with a saw into blocks of regular size, so that they will pack solidly into the ice house without leaving spaces between them. A regular cross-cut saw with one handle removed will answer the purpose.

The ice derrick is convenient and safer to use for lifting the cakes from the water and hoisting into the wag-



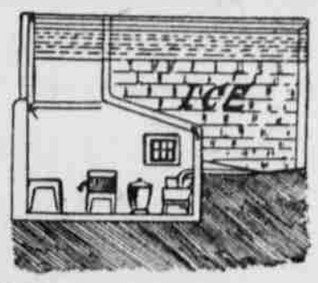
ICE DERRICK.

on or sleigh box. Use two strong white oak poles to make the derrick and sweep. The upright, B, may be cut from any strong piece of lumber, or made up by spiking together two pieces of 2x4 studding. It should be 12 to 15 feet long and well braced at the base, as shown in the sketch. The bottom should be smooth in order to slide freely over the ice.

The sweep, C, should be about 16 feet long, or over, with a rope attached to each end. The sweep is pivoted on top of the upright, B, from one-quarter to one-third projecting over, where the ice tongs are attached. The remaining portion, with the rope, D, attached gives plenty of leverage for lifting the heavy cakes.

After a "season" of cutting ice, the two icemen proceed to lift out and load up. One seizes the tongs and catches onto the floating cakes, while the other man presides at the rope, D. The sleigh should be in the handiest position to swing the sweep around and land the cake of ice into the box.

The combination style of ice-house represented in the illustration is not the best for all purposes, yet has some features to recommend it. The sides of the building are nine feet above the ground and the height of the dairy seven feet. The outside walls of the ice-house are made of two-inch planks, ten inches wide, set upright, with inch and a half planks nailed on the inside. They are weather boarded on the out-



COMBINED DAIRY AND ICE HOUSE.

side and filled with spent tan bark or other dry non-conducting material. The partition wall between the dairy and the ice-house and between the cool room and the ice-house is half the thickness, and not filled, thus forming closed air spaces between the studs.—Montreal Star.

Profits in Pork.

Why do not the farmers put up more of their pork, cure it and sell it in the summer? This would bring more profit than marketing the hog to the butcher.

The American Agriculturist has made a careful estimate of the waste in slaughtering hogs at home, which shows facts that will be profitable to the pork raiser. Take a hog weighing at home 200 pounds, on a basis of a 5-cent market, live weight. Its value is $10. If fat, the hog loses about 20 per cent, or 40 pounds, leaving 160 pounds edible portion. Approximately the dressing will be: Two hams, 30 pounds; two shoulders, 24 pounds; four strips bacon, 28 pounds; spare ribs, head, feet and backbone, 35 pounds, leaving about 45 pounds for sausage and lard. The meats to be smoked will increase about 10 per cent in weight in the pickle, but lose about the same as the dressing weight. The following are very conservative prices for a country-dressed hog: Thirty pounds ham, at 14 cents, $4.20; 28 pounds bacon, at 15 cents, $4.20; 24 pounds shoulder, at 9 cents, $2.16; 45 pounds lard or sausage, at 12½ cents, $5.60; 25 pounds backbone, spare ribs, etc., at 6 cents, $1.50; soap fat, about 25 cents; total, $17.91; cost of hog, $10; profit, $7.91.

Farmer Should Advertise.

The average farmer is too backward about advertising his products. One's county paper ought to be used more as an advertising medium. It helps the editor and publisher to make a better paper, and this in itself is good for a community, while the advertising, if one has good stock or seeds or anything of the kind to offer, will certainly pay.

How to Dress and Ship Poultry.

Birds that are to be marketed should be penned ten days before killing and well fed. Withhold all food for twenty-four hours previous to killing, but give plenty of clean water. Full crops injure the appearance and are liable to sour, and when this does occur correspondingly lower prices must be accepted than obtainable for choice stock.

Kill by bleeding in the mouth, hang the bird by the feet until properly bled. Leave head and feet on and do not remove intestines or crop. For scalding fowls, the water should be as near the boiling point as possible without boiling—160 to 175 degrees Fahrenheit; pick the legs dry before scalding; hold by the head and legs and immerse and lift up and down five or six times; if the head is immersed it turns the color of the comb and gives the eyes a shrunken appearance, which causes dealers to look on them with suspicion; the feathers and pin feathers should then be removed immediately, while the body is warm, very cleanly and without breaking the skin; then "plump" by dipping ten seconds in water, nearly or quite boiling, and then immediately into ice-cold water. The shaping of poultry is a very important point and well worth the extra trouble. The bird should be laid on its back on a table; the legs are drawn up against the sides of the breast, as though the bird were roosting; the wings are also folded against the body. Then, while in this position, a damp cloth is wrapped tightly about the carcass and fastened. Leave on a board to drain until the animal heat is all out of the body. Pack in boxes holding about 100 pounds and lined with manila or straw paper. Be sure to pack snugly, so as to prevent moving about in any way.

Turkeys should be handled in the same way, except that they should always be dry-picked.—E. K. P., in Country Gentleman.

Berry Culture.

An authority says that on an acre of rich, cultivated land $500 worth of berries may be grown, and that an acre should produce at the rate of 200 bushels.

Causes for a short crop may be laid at the door of land deficient in fertility or plant food. Such land should have composted manure applied and turned under and top dress. Ashes should also be broadcasted. Another reason is improper preparation of the soil. Plow deeply and harrow until fine, light and mellow. Again, there is a poor crop when varieties are planted that are not adapted to that particular kind of soil and climate. This can be determined either by the success of neighboring farmers of that locality, or by testing a limited number of plants. Failure often comes from setting poor plants; only hardy, vigorous plants should be purchased. Carelessly setting out plants will also cause a shortage. They should not be exposed to the sun or wind before setting. When put out the roots should be well spread and fine dirt firmed around them.

Using imperfect fertilizers is another cause. There is a sex in plants. Pistillates (female) must have staminates (male) set with them to insure good crops. Cultivation must not be neglected. The ground at all times must be fine, mellow and free from weeds.

Both frost and drought are enemies of a good crop, and the most difficult to overcome. Berry fields well cultivated are several degrees warmer than uncultivated fields, therefore less liable to damage by frost. Retain mulching as late as possible on strawberries in spring.

Selecting Dairy Cows.

While there may be no infallible rule by which a man can be governed in selecting a high-class dairy cow, there are many points that will assist and if carefully considered will prevent disappointment as a rule. Remember that a cow is a machine and is intended to change the different products on which she is fed into something of more value. There are two distinct types of these machines. One manufactures or converts feed into beef; the other into milk. There is a very decided and pronounced difference in the type of the animal that makes beef and the one which manufactures milk. In the dairy type we have an animal that is angular, thin, somewhat loose-jointed and with prominent bones. She is wedge-shaped from the front, with a lean head, moderately long face slightly dished and a general contented expression of the features. The muzzle is large, mouth large, nostrils wide and open, a clear, full bright eye, a broad, full and high forehead, ears medium size, fine texture, covered with fine hair and orange yellow inside. The neck is thin, moderately long, with little or no dewlap, and the throat is clean. Wide space between the jaws, the withers lean and sharp, the shoulders lean and oblique and the chest deep and wide, which indicates vigor and constitution.—Field and Farm.

Anthrax and Earth Worms.

From recent experiments it is certain that earth worms are responsible for conveying the spores and anthrax from various buried carcasses to the surface of the earth and thus bringing about a reinfection. This process of reinfection was urged by M. Louis Pasteur, but without success.

Crop Rotation.

There are some crops that will not follow each other, nor will they follow certain other crops, while, on the other hand, there are some that will grow year after year on the same land and also follow any other crop.

The Signal Corps of the War Department has made public specifications for the construction of a dirigible balloon to be used in a series of tests at Fort Myer next spring. Proposals for furnishing the balloon will be opened at the department on Jan. 15 next. The balloon is to consist of a gas bag of silk, to be covered with an aluminum preparation. The material for the bag and the hydrogen with which it will be inflated will be furnished by the government. The dimensions and shape of the bag will be left to the bidders, except that the length must not exceed 120 feet. It must be designed to carry two persons having a combined weight of 350 pounds; also at least 100 pounds of ballast. A speed of twenty miles an hour in still air is desired, and the scheme of ascending, descending and maintaining equilibrium must be based on shifting weights, movable planes or some method which will not necessitate balancing or changing of position by the aeronaut. The balloon must have all the fittings necessary for successful and continuous flights. It will be accepted only after a trial flight to be held at Fort Myer next spring.

In a recent address at New York City Francis E. Leupp, commissioner of Indian affairs, took occasion to reply to some of the criticisms that have been made regarding the treatment of the Indians by his bureau. He outlined the present policy of the government as that of absorbing the Indian into the white man's civilization, thus reversing the old policy of assisting him in his ardent desire of keeping as separate from the white man as he possibly could. He expressed the opinion that the final solution of the problem would be reached by intermarriage. He described the success of the government in making the Indian work; even the Utes, he said, were now working on the railroads and helping to build up the country of which they were a part. The commissioner said it was true that about 85 per cent of the Indians that went to Indian schools, such as Carlisle and others, and went back to the reservations sooner or later reverted to the blanket. But their children started away ahead of where their parents did so that the schooling was by no means wasted.

An unusual view of the army has lately been presented in a complaint over the decrease in strength of the coast artillery regiments. The Tenth Company, for instance, which mustered a hundred and one men in 1900, was able to get out only fourteen in the ranks in October. The explanation offered is that the men in the coast artillery receive training in some branch of mechanics, and can get employment outside at good wages. One officer instructed his company in the art of telephone repairing, and made the men so efficient that the telephone company in the neighboring city offered them sixty and seventy dollars a month, and in some cases bought the discharge of the men, so that they might begin work before their enlistment expired. If the army can train its men as effectively as this, it ought to be a pretty good school.

If there are not forty-eight stars on the flag within a year or two it will not be for lack of effort on the part of Arizona and New Mexico. A convention of delegates from every part of New Mexico adopted resolutions the other day demanding the admission of the territory as a State. The governor of Arizona has reported that the statehood sentiment in that territory is stronger than ever before. Bills were introduced in the Senate on the first working-day of the session of Congress, providing for the creation of two new States out of the territories. As the effort to pass a joint statehood bill has been abandoned, it is now necessary for the two territories to convince Congress that they are worthy to be admitted to the family of States.

According to Terence V. Powderly, formerly grand master of the Knights of Labor and now connected with the government Bureau of Immigration, extensive railroad building in Italy, the approach of the presidential election and scare headlines in the newspapers, aside from the financial flurry, are the causes for the present exodus of aliens from the United States. "No alarm need be felt because of the ebb in the tide," he says. "There is more work to do in this country than there ever was before; there is a necessity for men and women to do it, and the first months of the next year will see a return of aliens, who will be able to find remunerative employment in this country."

The War Department has published a general order of the President requiring every field officer to make each year practice marches of three consecutive days of not less than thirty miles each. In his order the President says it is just as much the duty of army officers "to pursue such habits as will maintain a physical condition fit for active service as to cultivate their minds for the intellectual duties of their profession."