

BURNING CHARCOAL.

GREAT CARE IS NECESSARY TO FIRE A "PIT" SUCCESSFULLY.

Labor Is an Important Item in the Preparation of the Product for the Market. Manufacturers Generally Sell Their Own Charcoal.

"Do you keep charcoal?" asked a reporter of a large coal dealer in this city. "No, sir, we do not. I have sold lots of coal in my time, but never a pound of charcoal. I don't even know how it is made."

Leaving the wealthy coal merchant the reporter sought one of those nondescript coal hawkers who make a livelihood by attending to the wants in the way of calorific of the very poor classes in the by streets and alleys.

Having found one of these coal holes the reporter approached the almost carbonized specimen of humanity, who was for the time being resting from his labors, and propounded the question, "What's the price of charcoal?"

"Eight cents a peck," replied a gruff voice, and the little old man straightened himself out with an effort as he stopped filling the peck measure, which he judged to be about the newspaper man's capacity.

"We don't sell much charcoal," he continued, "only in small lots. Some manufacturers buy their charcoal by the great quantity. It is used in large lots by persons who make ice chests and beer coolers, as it is a poor conductor of heat. There's a lining of charcoal three inches thick in all sides of a beer cooler."

"Most country people bring their own charcoal to the city in wagon loads, and sell it for from fifteen cents to twenty cents a bushel. We retail it at about twenty cents to twenty-five cents per bushel, and it is a dull sale at that."

The reporter now left the charcoal man, and approached an individual who had just disposed of a wagon load of the material.

"Yes, I make charcoal," he replied in answer to an inquiry. "In the winter and spring is the time when charcoal is made to the best advantage."

"I am just clearing up a tract of woodland and am turning the refuse to account by manufacturing charcoal. Beech wood and hickory are the best for that purpose. Oak makes a very poor coal, and it is hardly worth burning."

Thank You, Sir.

Mr. Balfour, in his "Leaves from My Chinese Scrap Book," says that a most amusing chapter in the history of official etiquette in China might be written under the heading of "The Emperor is Thanked." He says he is reminded by this Chinese formality of a pedagogue who always insisted on his pupils' thanking him every occasion.

The constitutional maxim, "The king can do no harm," might, in Chinese official language, be translated, "The emperor can do nothing that is not benevolent."

An amusing incident occurred not long ago in connection with a Manchurian officer of high rank, Wulabsich-ungah, the president of the board of ceremonies. This gentleman returned thanks for the honor of having been invited to a sacrificial feast by the emperor, and the next day a terrible snubbing was administered to him.

It appears that the emperor had not invited him at all, and was much astonished. "His name," says the decree, "does not appear in the list of guests approved by us, and in thus thanking us he has been guilty of a great piece of carelessness."

Variations of the Compass.

Why the magnetic needle points northward has never been satisfactorily determined, but what perplexes and puzzles scientists most is its persistent variations. By observations in Paris it was found that in 1681 the magnetic needle varied 2 degs. and 30 mins. to the west; in 1865, less than 200 years later, 18 degs. and 30 mins. to the west. In London, between 1580 and 1692, the needle varied from 10 degs. 15 mins. east to 6 degs. west.

In Dakota the average variation is 13 degs. and 30 mins. east; in Minnesota 11 degs. east, while in Montana it is 20 degs. east. It does not point due north except in a few localities, and at no place does it continue to point with a given angular distance from the north for any stated length of time.

The baseball field is not the place where one looks for literary wit, yet now and then it happens that a good past saying is heard there which shows not only readiness but familiarity with literature.

It was on an occasion when a college nine was playing the nine from a fitting school, and the shortstop of the latter was an absurdly tall and thin fellow named Brown, apparently some ten years older than the boys with whom he was associated.

"He is like the Ancient Mariner," one of the college nine said; "he is 'long and lank and Brown.'"

"He is more like the Ancient Mariner," quickly and wittily returned the friend to whom the remark was made, "because 'he stoppeth one of three.'"

Character at the Table. At a grand hotel in Italy a guest had arrived who made a great display of wealth, and of whom none could learn anything.

Abuse of the Dog. I was on a steamer going to Norfolk. I had a young Laverack gyp, which I consigned to a waiter to take care of for me.

What He Most Needed. Uncle Charles—And are you going to buy me something for my birthday? Millie—Yeth, thir, I guesh thoe. Uncle Charles—Please may I know? Millie—Yeth, thir. I'm going to buy my dear Uncle Charlie a mithionary. Uncle Charles—A mithionary! I'm no cannibal. Millie—No. But grandma thays you're a puffed headthen.—Pittsburg Bulletin.

SWEET APPLE CIDER.

The Old and the New Methods of Extracting the Saccharine Juice. "The sight of a keg of sweet cider on the counter is more frequent in city restaurants nowadays than it was a dozen years ago. A piece of pumpkin pie and a glass of saccharine apple juice doubtless appeal to the country bred tastes of many a grizzled merchant and busy clerk, and call up recollections of rude old country cider mills and the great vats of amber liquor into which they once inserted the potent rye straw."

The romantic old time cider mill is being rapidly supplanted by the more thorough and trustworthy modern sort. In the old one the apples were often ground by horse power. But most frequently the cider mill was pitched beside a small stream, the power of which, half wasted on a great "overshot" wheel, was made to do the grinding.

The modern cider mill, however, shows by the puffs of steam that it does not depend on dams. To be sure, there may be a dam a foot high in the neighboring ravine, a fall of water enough to work a hydraulic ram and feed the boiler. The grinder revolves at a rate which makes the building hum. The ground apple, or pulp, falls down through the floor into canvas sacks, which are hastily closed and laid in a tier of a dozen on the platform of the hydraulic press. Then down comes the cover with irresistible power, and the essence of the apple gurgles into the vat.

Where Air Is Sold. The Bible house of Constantinople has been often described. I was conducted through it by the son of Dr. Bliss, so many years before had died at Assiout, on the Nile, as described in a former letter. The Bible house is very well adapted to its purpose, marked in all its departments by evidences of American energy, and also by indications of conservative management.

Left Court for the Field. Gen. Butler had a great practice before the war. For years he had two offices, one in Boston and one in Lowell, and a partner in each engaged in the preparation of cases. He was trying cases in court almost constantly for nine months in the year. Then, as now, he was punctual and methodical in his comings and goings between Lowell and Boston.

A Self Preserver. She—Who is that hearty, well preserved old man? He—He is a living monument to the value of taking care of one's self. She—Well, who is he? He—He's a French duelist.—Pittsburg Bulletin.

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