TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

Dentists are dealers in extracts.

Buried treasure is as useful as concealed knowledge.

Self-reliance lifts a man up; self-conceit drags him down.

Poverty may pinch an honest man, but it never destroys him.

Nobility of birth does not always insure nobility of character.

A man doesn't have to work overtime when it comes to making a fool of himself.

There is nothing new under the sun except the methods of expressing old thoughts.

Tell a beggar to fill his basket and he will set up a howl because he didn't bring a larger one.

An old bachelor says that woman is the only animal afflicted with the bargain-hunting habit.

President Loubet in London told the King he was "more than touched" by the reception given him. But not so touched as when the Czar visited Paris and struck France for a loan at the same moment.

John Burroughs says that if there are not so many birds in the West as in the East, there are more wild flowers. Nevertheless there need be no sectional jealousy. The West can always say that a flower in the hand is worth two birds in the bush.

This talk about the Kaiser having impertinently "nosed" about the Kearsarge adds to William's list of versatile accomplishments that of expert engineer and shipbuilder. For he must have seen at a glance what the ordinary expert could have discovered only after the most minute scrutiny.

The good men do is not always interred with their bones. It was announced not many days ago for the first time that the five-thousand-dollar anonymous contribution which headed the national subscription for the relief of the starving Cubans, before the Spanish war, was made by William McKinley.

"I'll do anything in my power for the old soldiers, collectively or individually," said an officer who served in the Civil War, "except to attend Grand Army meetings, reunions and places where they assemble. To see them getting older and feeble, to see how the ranks are thinned year after year, makes me feel mighty uncomfortable. I keep up my affiliation in the post, pay all my dues and contribute to all the soldier charities, but I simply can't go among them at these celebrations. It makes me feel more as if I were attending a funeral than a festive occasion. I don't like to see the soldiers get old."

The great body of the Russian people are content with their government. It may be harsh, viewed from an American standpoint, but it does not seem so to them. They know nothing better, and although their material condition it poor they trouble themselves but little about political questions. The Russians are also exceedingly patriotic. They love their country fully as much as the people of Germany or France love theirs, and, as a rule, they are loyal to the Czar, of whom, however, they have but little personal knowledge. It will be difficult to stir poeple of this kind to join a revolution, especially against the government of the present Czar, who has in many ways shown a disposition to help them.

That a conflict between Japan and Russia is inevitable and not far off is evident to even a casual observer of political conditions in the Orient. The basis of the coming difficulty is neither sentimental nor insignificant, and moreover it is one that diplomacy cannot alter or avert. Japan has the largest shipping and carrying trade in Manchuria, having had 177 ships with a tonnage of 463,000 entering the port of Niuchwang in 1902, and a much larger proportion for the year 1903 up to the present time. Her imports at this port amounted to 2,160,329 taels and the exports from this port to Japan for the year 1902 amounted to 8,749,458 taels. The Russian shipping amounted to one steamer, and her imports and exports were—none. Japan's exports to Korea in 1901 were 11,372,550 yen and her imports from Korea were 10,052,438 yen; while Russian imports and exports were merely nominal. Japan's exports to all of China amounted, in 1901, to 42,925,579 yen, having doubled in four years, and her imports from China were 27,256,986 yen.

Somewhat more than a year ago there was an exhibition in Berlin devoted exclusively to the display of material, processes and apparatus connected with the economic uses of alcohol. This year a similar exhibition, or one designed for the same purpose, became really a most astonishing revelation of the uses of the potato and the large place which it occupies among German products. No doubt members of the wide-awake geography class of to-day know that potatoes are one of the most valuable crops in the world; yet even they may be astonished to learn that in Germany one one hundred and sixty acres are planted with potatoes for each ten thousand inhabitants, whereas in the United States the area so planted is but a fraction over thirty-four acres, and in Great Britain and Ireland thirty-one acres. Not only are the German working people large eaters of potatoes, but they make varied and extensive use of them for other purposes. Indian corn is not grown extensively anywhere save in the United States. In Germany potatoes take its place as food for cattle. This has led to the invention of special evaporating machinery, for the large amount of water in potatoes makes them decay quickly, and they lose much of their food value when they sprout. The evaporator makes them available for forage the year round. Starch, dextrin, potato flour and starch syrup are also produced in large quantities, but alcohol is by far the largest product. Alcohol in Germany is made to play an important part in economic and industrial life. Heating and cooking stoves, street and household lamps, stationary engines and locomotive motors, all are fed by it. Both in the German and in the Russian navy alcohol engines up to three hundred horse-power have been used with great success.

To girdle the earth with a message in nine and a half minutes, as did President Mackay recently, is a marvelous achievement in telegraphy, made possible by the triumphs of science and engineering in a great country. The message which went around the world in this remarkably brief time was sent over the new American Pacific cable by President Mackay, of the Pacific Commercial Cable company, from New York to President Roosevelt at Oyster Bay, Long Island. It closely followed a message sent by President Roosevelt to President Mackay, which was flashed around the globe in twelve minutes. Over half the journey of these globe-girdling messages, representing a total mileage of 25,325, was made on American lines. The only part of its trip where the Mackay message was forced to traverse foreign cables was that between Hongkong and the Azores. From New York to Chicago, thence by Postal Telegraph company to San Francisco, thence along the new Pacific cable to Honolulu, Hawaii, on again to Midway Island, and then to Guam. From Guam it was flashed under the Pacific to Manila, thence through the China Sea to Hongkong, thence to Saigon, to Singapore, to Penang, to Madras, under the Indian ocean, thence by land across India to Bombay, then under the Arabian Sea to Aden, then up the Red Sea to Suez, through Egypt to Alexandria, under the Mediterranean to Malta, by land to Gibraltar, thence to Lisbon and to the Azores. Here it left the foreign cables and wires, was taken up by the Commercial Cable company and flashed to Canso, Nova Scotia, and then to New York and Oyster Bay. If this message could have been transmitted without a break it would have made a circuit of the globe in less than one-eighth of a second. The new cable gives a direct route to the Orient and saves 3,000 miles from New York to the Philippines. It places Washington in direct communication not only with the larger towns in Hawaii and the Philippines, but will ultimately enable the government to quickly reach the mining centers in Alaska. When Shakespeare made Puck say to Oberon, "I'll put a girdle around the earth in forty minutes," he was supposed to be writing under the privileges of "poetic license." The latest achievement, however, far transcends the poetic fancy of the imaginative bard of Avon. From forty minutes to nine and a half minutes represents the far astride of genius from the fancy of the poet to the fact of scientific accomplishment.

EVERY PERSON HAS A DOUBLE.

So Says an Old Proverb—A Beggar Resembles the King.

By argument of an ancient proverb there are always on this earth at the same time two human beings who resemble each other in all respects, and a European occultist points out that this is certainly true in the case of rulers.

An old beggar who lives in Whitechapel bears, according to him, a startling resemblance to King Edward of England—so startling, indeed, that if the beggar were dressed in royal raiment he could not be distinguished from the real king.

The British ruler, however, is not the only one who has a double, writes the Detroit Free Press. The czar and the Prince of Wales are wonderfully like each other. Indeed, more than one photographer in Europe invariably sells a photograph of the prince to anyone who asks for a photograph of the czar.

M. Bertolani, a photographer of Salerno, was the double of the late King Humbert of Italy, and so proud of his resemblance was he that he spent much of his spare time studying the attitudes and gestures of his sovereign. For this labor he was well rewarded, since the soldiers, mistaking him for the king, saluted him.

Herr Adolph Hirschfeld, the double of Emperor William of Germany, is by no means proud of his resemblance, and he feels very uncomfortable when anyone mistakes him for the kaiser, for he fears that the latter will frown on him sooner or later and will request him to leave Germany.

M. Bernede, a wealthy gentleman of Lyons, is the living image of King Oscar of Sweden.

No Language of Their Own.

Among the peoples of the world the Swiss are alone in having no language they can call their own. According to a recent visitor to the little country about three-fourths of the people of Switzerland speak German, while the remainder divide four other languages among them, mainly French and Italian, the languages varying as a rule according to the proximity of the people to each country whose tongue they speak. Public documents and notices are printed in both French and German.

In the Swiss congress or national parliament the members make their speeches either in French or German, for nearly all the members understand both languages. The orders of the president are translated by an official interpreter and furnished to the newspapers in both languages. Probably it would puzzle even Macaulay's learned schoolboy to name the president of the Swiss republic. He is M. Adolf Deucher, a name that will be strange to many even of those who are familiar with the names and titles of every European ruler.

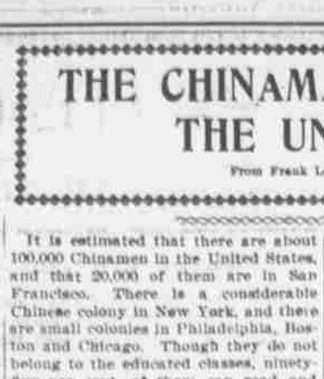
When the mails finally arrive, those people who are always expecting a letter, and who never get any, really ought to receive a letter or two.

THE CHINAMAN IN THE UNITED STATES

From Frank Leslie's Magazine.

It is estimated that there are about 100,000 Chinamen in the United States, and that 20,000 of them are in San Francisco. There is a considerable Chinese colony in New York, and there are small colonies in Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago. Though they do not belong to the educated classes, ninety-five per cent. of them can read and write. A daily paper in the Chinese language is published in San Francisco, and another in New York.

Nearly all the Chinamen in the United States come from the single province of Kwong Tung, the most populous of the eighteen provinces of the Chinese empire. Its capital is Canton. In 1889 an educated Chinaman from the province of Shan Tung said that beside himself there were only two Chinamen in the United States that came from any province in China other than Kwong Tung. The inhabitants of this province have for centuries been more adventurous and fonder of traveling than the rest of



THE COBBLER AND HIS SHOP.

their fellow-countrymen, and they are always ready to face danger if there is a good chance of profit. The emigrants are generally farmers or mechanics, who, finding business dull, borrow money and journey to a foreign land in the hope of bettering their lot.

Of the Chinamen in the United States perhaps one-twentieth are merchants, who deal chiefly in Chinese products, such as ducks' feet, stuffed with chicken liver, wrapped in entrails, dried oysters, shad preserved in oil, pork cured in sugar, dried cabbages, salted turnips, ancient eggs of ducks and many other things esteemed dainties by the Chinese palate. These articles, on account of the freight and heavy import duties, are very costly, but no Chinaman considers a menu complete without them. The Chinese merchants export from the United States woollen cloth, flannel, cotton goods, petroleum, ginseng, and many other articles. Shoes and cigars are extensively manufactured by the Chinese, the number of cigarmakers being estimated at several thousands.

Though many Chinamen are scattered about the suburbs of western towns as cooks, household servants or laundrymen, and many others live on ranches or orchards, most of them congregate together as much as possible. In many western cities there is a quarter called "Chinatown," the houses of which, crowded like rabbit-warrens with yellow humanity, wear a squalid, tumble-down, greasy, forlorn air, and are pervaded by a curious, indefinable

A CHINESE FORTUNE-TELLER.

smell, which is everywhere perceptible and often overpowering. The streets of a Chinese quarter swarm with men, women and children; the shops are adorned with gaudy gilt signs and lanterns of various shapes, sizes and colors. Here and there a blank wall is covered with notices on bright red paper, with black letters, which are read with much apparent interest by the Chinamen. On the sidewalks in the front of the stores are stalls, where fruit, vegetables and edibles of unfamiliar and unprepossessing appearance are exposed for sale. In the doorways and corners tailors and cobblers ply their trades. A fortune-teller sits at a little table, on the wall behind which a large notice sets forth his powers and pretensions.

The proprietor of a drug store is frequently a physician wearing large-rimmed spectacles and assuming a mysterious air. Among his curative agents are powdered beetles, cockroaches, skins of caterpillars, snakes' bones, lizards, deer-horns and the blood of toads. The drug ginseng is found in every store, and is believed to be a preservative of youth.

The restaurants occupy the upper floors of three-storied buildings, and are distinguished by gaily painted and gilded balconies, adorned with rows of great lanterns. The rooms are decorated with handsome Chinese furniture and elaborately carved screens. Here the rich Chinamen give big dinners with many courses and musical accompaniments. The eating-houses for poor Chinamen are chiefly in cellars, and are rudely furnished. The merchants have their own kitchens, and eat their meals at the back of their shops, helping themselves from a large dish placed in the center of the small table and using chopsticks.

It has been said, and with truth, that the Chinaman in the United States does not even change his tailor or his barber. Through the windows of the barber's shops you may see Chinamen having their heads and foreheads shaved, their scanty beards trimmed, their queues combed and braided with silk to increase the length, and other toilet operations performed, such as pounding the back, cleaning the eye-balls, and scraping the ears. The queue is universally worn in China, having been introduced by the Tartars as a badge of subjection when they conquered China, and having since become merely a national custom. Some Chinamen in the United States dispense with the queue, but let it grow again when they are about to visit their native land. When at work the queue is often coiled on the top of the head.

When a Chinaman dies his body is dressed in his best clothes and laid on the coffin; pigs roasted whole and other viands are spread out to feed the spirits of the dead, and in many cases mourners are hired to chant the praises of the deceased. When the ceremony is over the body is placed in the coffin, and the procession moves out to the cemetery. Children dressed in white often walk barefooted behind the coffin of their father or mother. Strips of brown paper pierced with holes are scattered along the road to keep off any bad spirits that may be hovering near.

The Chinaman, though hardworking and frugal in the highest degree, is rarely free from the vices of gambling and opium-smoking. In a city there is an exodus of Chinese house-servants every night from the suburbs to the Chinese quarter, and if one happens to be out late one will certainly see Chinamen stealing quietly to the employers' homes after a night of gambling and dissipation. But in the morning the incrutable oriental will be ready with breakfast just as usual.

The Chinese are idolators, and have temples containing the images of noble characters, whom they ask to present their petitions to the Great Being "Shing," who dwells somewhere in the sky. Roasted pigs, chickens, and sweetmeats are presented to the "Joss," in whose honor candles are lighted, incense and joss sticks burned. The worshipper kneels and touches the floor with his head as he utters his prayer.

In every Chinese quarter are underground opium dens, to which narrow flights of tottering stairs lead. They are deathly still, and the atmosphere reeks with the fumes of the drug. Every lodging-house, restaurant, and guild-hall supplies facilities for indulgence in the drug. The Chinaman's favorite drink is tea, though he has a spirit called "Samshoo," which is distilled from rice, and drunk from small cups hardly larger than thimbles.

GUARDS RUINS OF POMPEII.

Aged Sentry Keeps Sightseers Out of Area of Excavations.

Old Luigi has occupied week by week for twenty-two years his little sentry box on the topmost point of the highest heap of ashes and scorise that the excavators have cast up out of Pompeii to the northward, says a correspondent of the New York Evening Post. There he sits, and smokes in peace his diminutive pipe of execrable but not cheap tobacco. While the other guards are hurrying through the gaping ruins below him successive groups of drooping travelers, apparently just come from the building of Rabel, old Luigi's only duty is to keep a weather eye open for the unduly inquisitive stranger who may want to make his way into the forbidden area of the excavations still in progress, or for the more pertinacious native who advances a hundred plausible reasons for similar transgression from the beaten paths of the adjacent vineyards and orchards.

For the troublesome native Luigi has short words and but scant courtesy. Toward the ignorant foreigner he is more affably disposed and a pipeful of imported tobacco and a few friendly words open both his heart and his lips.

Luigi has a magnificent view from his high perch. Behind him is the lord of the landscape, Vesuvius. He has been wrapped for an hour in a private mantle of cloud and that has just lifted to show his great gray shoulders white with unaccustomed snow. Luigi says it will be a hard afternoon for the travelers at the summit. Immediately in front are the roofless, ashen walls of the ruins of the ancient city, sloping down to the very edge of that prehistoric lava stream that marks the earlier and greater rage of the monarch who visited sudden destruction upon the people that ventured to build upon the skirts of his trailing robe. Beyond stretches the almost level plain of the Sarno, laid out in rectangular garden patches all the way across toward the rugged, towering heights of Monte Sant Angelo, now capped with the late snows of departing winter.

In a sheltered nook, half-way up the steep, nestle behind the frowning outposts of a ruined castle the pink and yellow and white houses of the little village, of Lottere, whence, just 1,350 years ago, the last king of the Goths marched down to meet defeat at the hands of Narses in the plain below. Farther to the left one can just make out the castle of Nocera, where Helena, Manfred's widow, wept her life away in captivity after the lamentable slaughter at Beneventum. At the right beyond the clustered buildings of Castellamare, the blue Mediterranean glitters out to the twin heights of Capri and the massive dome of Ischia.

Making Sure of Her Place.

"Do you ever have any difficulty in making your cook keep her place?"

"No, indeed; she began to run the house from the minute she came into it, and she's never stopped.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

The man who gets there acts as his own crutch; he doesn't lean on others.

(Edward Charles, in the Wide World.)

With most cities life begins at the ground floor (cellars, sewers and electric tubes always excepted) and ends at the top story, but in Paris, while business is being profitably conducted in the bright sunshine of the loftiest story, it is also being as profitably pursued in the darkness of the depths below, far beneath even the sewers and the famous Metropolitan Railway of which the Parisians are so proud. For Paris is honey-combed with subterranean vaults and passages. It is literally built upon columns and walls, and if one fine morning the world awoke to learn that the bottom had fallen out of the Gay Capital and it had crumpled up like a house of cards it would be no surprising thing to those familiar with the underground world of Paris. It would seem as though the former inhabitants had devoted their efforts to hewing out a place wherein they might seek refuge in case of dire necessity, for, though few are aware of the fact, the entire

"CHAMPIGNONNISTES" AT WORK.

population of Paris could hide itself beneath the city.

To build the city we know so well to-day past generations delved and dug beneath it for the coveted stone. What then were quarries have now become caves, portions of which have been converted into catacombs and contain the bones of the dead, while others are used for the very mundane purpose of growing mushrooms. The mushroom is a comestible particularly favored by the French. Wagon loads from near and far find their way into the central markets of the city every day in the year, and the annual consumption by the Parisians of this vegetable represent a value of over $1,250,000. Both beneath the city itself and outside it, these strange mushroom caves extend for miles in all directions; and in them hundreds of men, who often never see daylight from morn till eve, pass their lives in cultivating the mushroom.

"I was told that I should find these "under-boulevards" of the great city well worthy of a visit, and I accepted the offer of an influential friend to obtain permission for myself and a photographer to descend into the bowels of the earth and learn something of the art of underground mushroom growing. We departed one fine morning, the photographer and I, for Malakoff, on the outskirts of Paris. We found the mushroom farmer on his farm awaiting us—a well-built, bluff, hearty specimen of French "fermier," M. Burvingt by name. I looked around for signs of caves, but failed to find them, nor did I see any hills in the neighborhood under which they might be. In answer to a question I was informed that they were just 15 metres under our feet.

"This shaft leads right into them," said the farmer, indicating a covered circular hole in the ground I had not hitherto noticed. He pulled the boards away, and I looked down, shuddering, for I looked only into fathomless darkness. How we were to get down puzzled me; how the photographic apparatus was going to fare worried the photographer, and we were both immensely relieved to learn that this shaft was not the entrance, but only the place where they pitched the manure down. I still had hopes of gaining entrance other than by descending a shaft—a gentle slope or something of that sort was what I wanted—and I felt convinced that this would be the case when our guide said we had rather a long walk before us. It proved a go d three-quarters of an hour's journey, over fields and down country lanes, ere he stopped suddenly before a small square fence and told us we had reached our destination. And we had been following the line of one of the underground passages all the time.

Opening a gate, the farmer revealed a shaft; my hopes were scattered to the winds. I had never done any ladder-climbing, and I really did not fancy the feat of "monkeying" down a pole, the rungs of which were just short iron bars inserted, none too near one another, on either side, and which swayed to and fro like a bough in the wind.

"I can't see the bottom," said the photographer, somewhat ruefully.

For my part that did not matter so much, I was only anxious not to feel it too suddenly, for there was nothing to break a drop of 45 feet, unless hitting against the sides as one fell might be regarded as breaking it. The first difficulty was to get the photographic apparatus below. Camera-stand, and flash lamps were packed into a basket, which was hooked on to a rope, and away it sped, but quick as the rope went through the hands of the "champignonniste" the camera-stand was quicker in its descent. The farmer uttered a cry of dismay, and the photographer gave me a look of pain which clearly indicated his fear that there would be no photographs taken that day. After our guide had disappeared over the ledge and reached the bottom, the photographer followed him, anxious, no doubt, to discover what was broken. When the primitive ladder oscillated no longer beneath his weight I went slowly and silently down, landing safely in about three inches of mud. I found my colleague busily engaged in cleaning the broken camera-stand.

"Good thing it wasn't the camera," he remarked and I agreed.

It had been 120 degrees in the sun up above, for the day was particularly fine. Down here it was cold, damp, dark and uninviting; so cold that I shivered in my shirt-sleeves, for I had left my coat above; so damp that I developed a violent cold next day; and so black that out of the circle of light that came down the shaft one could not have seen one's hand before one's eyes had it been held there. Our guide shouted, and his voice, being in keeping with his stature, filled the blackness, rumbling away down the many arteries leading from where we were standing and coming back again from a dozen different directions. In answer to his call there presently danced in the dark void ahead of us a couple of lights.

They heralded the approach of a couple of "champignonnistes," who, emerging from their habitual gloom, disclosed themselves as short, dark individuals, of none too prepossessing appearance, attired, with but scant regard for the temperature, in blue cotton trousers, blouses, and "sabots." Their coats they had discarded. Looking at the condition of the ground I envied them their substantial foot-coverings, and the more so when, later, I found myself wading through a veritable morass of slimy sand.

Provided with lights—small round colza-oil lamps fixed on the ends of sticks— and encumbered with the photographic materials, we moved forward and then the real torture of the experience began.

"Minds your heads," said the guide. "Bend your backs! Prenez garde la!" in alarm, as the bewildered photographer was about to dispute the solidity of the ceiling above. We bent our backs, bent ourselves nearly double in fact, and yet felt our heads scraping the roof of the passage; and bent and cramped like this we were for two mortal hours. I said that the place was cold, damp, black, and uninviting; let me now add that it was very uncomfortable, for the ceiling above us,—of solid stone—was not more than 3 feet from the floor. If ever there was a time when I have not been proud of my height it was during those two awful hours. We formed a weird and ghostly procession as we moved forward through the inky blackness, the silence broken only by our footsteps as we splashed along through the puddles, the solemn drip, drip of water from the walls and roof, an exclamation now and then from myself as I nearly tripped over one of the mushroom beds,

MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL.

and strange mutterings from the man who was to work the camera.

The famous mushroom-beds were at our feet. We were, in fact, walking in the narrow space between them— a path perhaps a foot in width. They ran along the caves in rows, two against the sides, and a pair down the centre. They seemed to be banks of sand some 2 feet in height, and inclining up from a 2 feet base to a rounded top. The soil was clammy and crumbling to the touch, and inlaid with round white discs, varying in circumference from the dimensions of a quarter to a small-sized saucer—the precious mushrooms.

"Is there much of this?" I asked of the farmer leading us, who seemed prepared to walk on for ever.

"Seven or eight kilometres," he answered unconcernedly.

We had arrived at a bend. How long I had been creeping onwards, bumping now my head and now an arm, stumbling, sprawling and saying things, I know not; but my back ached frightfully, and I appreciated more than ever before the comforts of being a short man.

It seemed we had walked for ages.

"We will take a photograph here," I said, which brought the party to a halt. While the photographer made ready his camera I explained to our friends the mystery of the flash-lamp, and when he was quite ready gave them the signal to put out their lamps. They did so. The blackness could almost have been cut with a knife, and the stillness was so intense that we could hear each other's regular breathing. Terrible thoughts scurried through my brain. What must it be, I thought to be lost in such a place without a light, without food, or to be in there with an enemy who was familiar with its ramifications? It was a place to lose one's self in, to go mad in, to be murdered in without the world being a jot the wiser. And what was that? Something crawling over my face, here and there and everywhere; something creeping up my arms; something gliding round my neck. Would that lamp never flash? It seemed an age, but was in reality not a second. A blue, blinding glare went up, illumining the space around with such a light as it had never seen before, and showing up plainly the trio of "champignonnistes" crouched down as they worked, and scaring a million flies and spiders and goodness alone knows what other insects and vermin. The light died down and went out, and again the lamps sprang into life and shed their flickering, welcome gleams around.

After securing some other pictures and a very fine accumulation of small flies on our lamps—indeed, the oil-wells were black with them—we gladly sought the upper world again. I had no ambition to explore the caves in their entirety, but only to get my cramped spine once more into its normal position, to sit down and rest in a neighboring inn and gather mushroom knowledge from the lips of the grower himself. Fifty years before, he told me, the caves had been open to the broad light of day. They were the scene of great activity, resounding continually with the explosions of gunpowder, for there men were quarrying the stone that helped to build Paris. Later on they had been abandoned and covered in, to be finally taken over by the cultivators of mushrooms. This is the history of most of the caves which are now used for this purpose, not only in the neighborhood of the capital, but throughout France.

But all are not of the kind I have just described, otherwise I should not have gone myself and prevailed upon the photographer to accompany me to the famous caves of Isayles-Moilneaux, owned by champignonniste Sauvageot. I found them, as I had been told I should, to be in decided contrast to those previously visited; as large as the other were small 030 feet in height at least. And there was no ladder to descend one walked straight into the tunnel from the daylight, for it pierced a hill, a chalk hill whence had been quarried thousands of tons of chalk of the quality that makes acquaintance with the tips of billiard cues. The main tunnel, cutting clean into the hill for a distance of not less than 250 yards would have easily admitted a carriage and pair, carrying another vehicle on top. As mushroom caves go it was certainly a handsome one, but just as cold and damp as any other, with a switch-back sort of road leading from the entrance to the bottom of the caves. Here there was space for six lines of mushroom beds to wend their irregular ways side by side, as will be seen in our photograph.

There were six of these large galleries, from which numerous others ran off, twisting and winding about to the length of some seven kilometres. Cut in the sides of the passages were numerous little "chapels," some on a level with the ground, others high up in the side of the wall. In all these caves contained some sixty kilometres of fine mushroom-beds; spiders and flies we found there in their millions, the only occupants beyond rats and the cats that are kept there to catch them.

In no case of such dimensions are all the mushroom beds in the same stage of advancement at once. While some thousands of metres are in full bloom, others are not so far advanced, and in some passages the beds are only just being laid down, while in others the work of clearing out old and useless beds is being carried on. Why this is so will be apparent when it is stated that it would take fifty men employed in the caves at Moulineaux eight months to fill them with the 68,000 metres they are capable of accommodating.

Scrupulous cleanliness is an absolute sine qua non ere a new bed can be laid down. The cave must be cleared of the old bed entirely; not a particle of it must be left, for with all the mushroom's aptitude for lightning growing, it is something of a dandy in the vegetable world. There are certain things it does not like; that it prefers death to, in fact, and amongst them may be mentioned dead rats, old iron, and a parasitical insect with a special weakness for the nutritious mushroom. When this insect gets in its deadly work, the farmer has good reason to sigh. Dead rats are frequently found in the caves with dead mushrooms all around them, for the mushroom apparently cannot tolerate dead rats any more than it can rusty horse-shoes or any other rusty pieces of iron. Such things spell loss to the "champignonniste."

Now beds are laid down every five or six months, and as they do not bear until three months have passed, the harvest need be a rich one, for the average cost of a bed ere it shows signs of produce is 2½ francs per metre. First the manure has to be secured, and then, ere it can be used, it has to be prepared, the work taking from three to six weeks. When ready it is carried into the cave or shovelled down a shaft, as occasion requires.

The building of the beds is a peculiar and laborious process. Sitting astride the portion of the bed he has first made the worker gathers armfuls of manure and presses the materials down to an even height in front of him. Thus he is always provided with a seat. Ere the spawn is sown the temperature of the beds must have reached about 12 degrees to 14 degrees Fahr. (No wonder we had been cold in our shirt sleeves! The spawn sown, the manure is covered with sand, and then every two or three days the beds must be liberally watered. At the end of three months the "buttons" poke their heads through, then gradually the beds become covered with white hoods, which, on attaining the required size, are collected for market. Unless, however, a metre yields four kilos of mushrooms at the least, the proprietor of the cave has little occasion to be cheerful, for its creation and care account for an outlay of three francs, while the harvest only fetches a franc per kilo.

Winter is the best season for the "champignonniste." Then M. Sauvageot told me, he sends to market no few than one hundred baskets a day, which means 1,100 kilos, while during the other seasons of the year forty baskets or 440 kilos is the daily output. In the production of this perennial harvest thousands of workmen find employment round Paris alone—men who pass their days in damp and darkness with only spiders and flies to keep them company, and yet seem to experience no evil effects as the result of their strange surroundings.

Canada's Trade in Cattle.

The increase in Canadian cattle sent to Great Britain is enormous—from 10,163 in the first four months of 1902 to 27,300 in the first four months this year.

When a boy isn't in mischief, it is because he is being compelled to take time to repent.