

## TIMELY TOPICS.

The ostrich farming enthusiasts have tried California and Florida, but now concluded to begin all over again in Mexico. The government has granted the promoters of the scheme 70,000 acres of land and \$300 apiece for the first 200 birds imported. On these conditions it looks as though the promoters would make money, even if the ostriches died as soon as imported.

"Telepathy" is the new name for the mysterious warnings which persons occasionally claim to receive of the death or dangerous illness of persons dear to them, but distant. So numerous and so well authenticated, apparently, have been such instances of late that a name for the mysterious influence seemed necessary, and the one chosen is a good one, meaning sympathy from a long distance.

The new postoffice building at St. Louis, just completed and occupied, is one of the finest in the country. It covers an entire block, and cost \$6,030,000. The top of the iron dome is 214 feet above the street, and commands a fine view of the city, the river and the opposite shore. The interior arrangements are excellent in convenience, and the Signal Service occupies the upper floor, the offices being the best equipped in the country.

In one jail in Egypt Mr. Clifford Lloyd found no fewer than seventy-five of the leading men of the district with their feet covered with blood and festering sores, weeks after bastinadoing to which they had been subjected by the order of the Mudir. Their hands still bore the deep cuts of the thongs by which they had been suspended in order to extort a confession, and the thumb-screw had been unsparringly applied. Two of the prisoners had died under the curbash, and the others were lingering in agony.

Apricot of a published statement that the English judges are all clean shaven, the *Philadelphia Record* remarks that before the war cleanly shaven faces were almost universal among the men in that locality, and in the case of judges there was not one exception. Now a man is seldom seen without beard or mustache, nearly all the judges falling in with the style. A few years ago, in many parts of the country, a man with a mustache was regarded with suspicion, and would find it difficult to gain admission into private families.

Information is slowly accumulating with regard to the great Javan eruption last year, which proves this phenomenon to have been unprecedented as a series of violent explosions. Reports from various stations show that the sounds of the explosion were heard in Ceylon, Burma, Manila, New Guinea, and on the western coast of Australia—in fact, almost everywhere within a radius of two thousand miles; while across the Indian ocean, with no land to intervene, they were distinctly audible at Rodriguez, nearly three thousand miles distant.

Mons. Pasteur, the Frenchman, whose discoveries in the generation of disease have attracted such wide attention and are confessedly an invaluable public benefit, shows that he is a patriot and philanthropist, as well as a patron and devotee of pathological science. When a French capitalist offered him \$200,000 for his discovery of the method of preventing disease in cattle, Mons. Pasteur refused the offer, saying that as he was already in receipt of a government annuity which was sufficient for him, he thought it right to give his discoveries as a gratuity to the public.

A company has been formed to establish a New England colony in the highlands of Florida at Belleview, in Marion county. It is desired to form a model town which shall combine natural, social and religious advantages, with freedom from intemperance and pauperism. The deeds to land will be given with the proviso that no intoxicating liquors shall be sold and that no dwelling shall be built at an expense of less than \$500. A school of twenty-five pupils is now in operation, a good hotel is being built, and a church edifice and an academy are to follow.

All interesting exhibition is to be held in Nuremberg next year, under the protection of the King of Bavaria. It is to consist of gold and silversmith's work and jewelry; works of art in copper, including those in enamel; works of art in bronze and brass, in tin and zinc, and of the latter especially the imitations of works in bronze, and galvanoplastic reproductions of works of art. Beside finished work themselves, the material used, tools, apparatus and machines employed in their construction are also admitted. An historical department will give a survey of the development of these fields of labor. Notice of entries must be given by December 20, 1884.

Charts of the geographical distribution of the lightning strokes for 1882 and 1883, prepared from our fire records, says the *Insurance Chronicle*, show that they are chiefly confined to that part of the country situated north of the Ohio river and east of the Missouri river. In both years eighty-five per cent. of all the strokes occurred within this area. In the Southern States lightning seems to be comparatively rare, and seldom occurs outside of three States—Texas, Louisiana and Georgia. There seems to be two principal centers of electrical disturbance, from the fire underwriters' standpoint, and these are in the New England and Northwestern States. Sixty-five per cent. of the strokes happen in the summer; the remaining thirty-five

per cent. are divided between spring and autumn in about equal proportions.

The street cars of the City of Mexico are managed on a novel system. A letter in the *San Francisco Bulletin* says: "The entire system of street cars throughout the republic of Mexico is owned by one man, and he seems to run them to suit his own fancy rather than the convenience of the traveling public. Instead of one car at a time leaving the terminus and allowing an interval between the next one, three or four of the same route start off at once, and there will be no more for half an hour. This allows time for the track to be utilized between the switches, and it is used for moving furniture, hauling dirt, transporting merchandise and conveying the dead to the cemeteries. The latter is certainly a great convenience, and does away entirely with the necessity for hearses and their accompanying hacks. The funeral car is appropriately fitted up to receive the coffin, and the mourners follow in passenger cars draped in black.

The growth of modern ideas in Japan has been significantly indicated of late in the erection by a Japanese landowner of an imposing monument to C.D. Richardson, an Englishman, who died in 1863 during the fierce struggle against the outside nations. Mr. Richardson was hacked to death by the guards of a Japanese nobleman, and his companions were cruelly maltreated. The affair was one of the causes of the bombardment of Kagoshima by a British squadron, in which 1,500 Japanese were killed and wounded and \$5,000,000 worth of property was destroyed. Then indirectly also the murder led to the suppression of feudalism in Japan through the agitation which followed, and the monument now set up is apparently a recognition of that reform as much as of the man whom it honors. It is placed on a mound on the spot where he fell, and is inscribed with verses recording his virtues, and praying "that the thoughts of the blessings he brought us may gladden his heart in the land of the shades."—*Chicago Tribune*.

Correspondence with Queen Victoria by letter is one of the prime minister's regular and almost daily duties. When there has been an important division or debate in parliament, and members are hastening home tired, to bed, the premier alone can take no rest until he has written to the queen his official report of the proceedings. These letters are couched in the third person: "Mr. Gladstone presents his duty to Your Majesty," etc., and Her Majesty replies, usually dictated to a secretary, also run in the third person. Though never discursive, they are not mere formal acknowledgements, but often enter succinctly into the question at issue. The queen devotes several hours every morning to the study of state business, and her time is no longer wasted now as it was during the first twenty-five years of her reign by having to sign all commissions for the army and navy. In 1862 an act relieved her of this tedious task. She was in that year still engaged in signing the commissions of the year 1858.

Rheem, who has charge of the reptile specimens in the Smithsonian institute, contradicts much of the popular belief as to snakes. Some of the most dreaded have no existence. The hoop snake, which takes the end of its tail in its mouth and rolls over and over like a hoop, killing everything it touches with its venom, and the blow snake, the breath of which is deadly, are fictions. As serpents move about they are constantly feeling ahead with the tongue, and the forward thrust and peculiar forked appearance of the organ has given rise to the false idea that with it the stinging is done. It is generally thought that there are a great number of poisonous snakes. In North America there are but three species—the rattlesnake, the copperhead or moccasin, and the coral. There are about thirty varieties of these species altogether. The copperhead is probably the most dangerous, as it is vicious, and never gives warning of any kind before striking. The rattlesnake, though more poisonous than either of the others, will rattle at the approach of anything, and try to get away unless brought to bay. The coral is much smaller, and is a native of the Southern States. The bite is not necessarily fatal if the proper remedies are used in time, as, on account of its size, the quantity of poison is small. When a reptile strikes he throws his whole body forward, and the fangs penetrate the object against which they come. He does not jump; the hinder part of the body remains in position, and none of our snakes are in the habit of reaching more than half its length.

### A Model Man-of-War.

The new Brazilian vessel, the Riachuelo, is pronounced by the *London Times* to be the most perfect fighting ship afloat, possessing in speed, coal capacity and arrangement and range of fire of her guns special advantages not obtained in combination in any other ship. Briefly described, she is a twin-screw turreted ship of 6,000 tons and 6,000-horse power, built of steel, 305 feet long, fifty-two feet wide and thirty feet deep. She can make fifteen knots an hour and run at that speed 4,500 miles without re-coaling. She is protected by armor eleven inches and ten inches respectively, and her armament consists of four nine-inch twenty-ton breech-loading rifle guns in two revolving turrets and six six-inch breech-loaders, beside fifteen Nordenfolt machine guns. She also carries Whitehead torpedoes.

Six thousand steamboats pass annually through the canal at Louisville.

## The American's Endurance of Cold.

Lieut. Greely is of the opinion that his men, if well provisioned, could not have continued to live at Fort Conger more than five years. The constitution of the average American is not capable of prolonged continuous adjustment to more than zero cold, and such acclimatization could only come about after a series of generations where the law of survival of the fittest should operate, and in correspondence with a radical change in organization, in which nutritive and muscular development should predominate over cerebral development; in other words, nature has shown us in the mentally dwarfed but physically hardy Esquimaux the type of organization best fitted for living in those septentrional latitudes. It is, however, no less a matter of fact that the inhabitants of meridianal climes admirably adapt themselves temporarily to the most extreme cold. In the retreat from Moscow, in 1812, the Italian regiments stood the cold better than the Germans, and notably better than the Russians, who were accustomed to the climate. The Turks presented the same relative immunity at the siege of Sebastopol. Longlet, from whom these facts are taken, remarks that the aptitude to resist inclement temperature is acquired and lost in turn: that people nurtured in temperate or cold climates, who go to the torrid zone to live, are much less sensitive to the cold for a time after their return to their native country, though this lessened susceptibility disappears after a year or two.—*Medical Record*.

## Tattooing Among Alaska Indians.

A man who has passed much time trapping and hunting in Alaska says: Although the Yukon Indians have abandoned many of their old customs, under the teaching of occasional missionaries, all of them still keep to the queer habit of tattooing. The way they do this is different from any I ever saw or heard of. Instead of pricking the stuff in with sharpened bones or needles, they make a paste out of charcoal and grease, soak a thread in it, punch a needle through the flesh so that it comes out at a different hole from the one where it entered, and then draw the thread through under the skin. The operation is painful, for the flesh swells up and looks very much inflamed. Men tattoo only their hands and wrists, with pictures of the nobler animals, or fish, but the women tattoo their faces also. These latter begin the process when they are quite young, making birds, turtles, or some other insignificant things on their hands and wrists, while they draw lines of different kinds on their chins and the lower part of the cheeks. As a rule this tattooing is done entirely in blue, but now and then there is an Indian who has dotted red spots through the blue.

## The Worship of Gold.

The worship of gold can be shown to have descended to us from sun worship, which, in some form or other, has been almost universal. In plain words, men took to collecting gold and making gold trinkets, charms, and amulets, because gold was of the same color, and possibly of the same divine material, as the sun. The sacredness of gold seems indicated by Pindar, who, invoking Theia, the mythical mother of the sun god, exclaims, "Through thee it is that mortals esteem mighty gold above all things else!" Originating thus in the most absurd superstition, the supposed likeness of the yellow metal to the color of the sun god's face, the value of gold has prevailed over the world for so many ages that it has become a hereditary passion; and because of the value thus set on it, and for no other reason, gold has long been the highest metallic medium of exchange.—*Contemporary Review*.

## Eating Fruit.

One of the best evidences that the American people of this generation live better than their fathers did is found in the steady and rapid growth of the trade in tropical fruits. It is not many years since the great majority of people scarcely knew what a banana was, and considered oranges and lemons as luxuries to be afforded only in sickness or on great occasions. Now, not only these but other tropical fruits are bought and eaten almost as generally and freely as apples, and the consumption of melons, peaches, pears, plums and berries is on the same universal and extensive scale. This is a change which tends not only to gratify the taste but to promote health, which is the foundation of human happiness and is of advantage to everybody. There is little danger that any community will spend too much money for ripe and sound fruit.—*Manchester (N. H.) Mercury*.

## "Thirty Days Hath September."

The following familiar lines, which aid nearly every man, woman and child in remembering the number of days in each month, occur, with but slight change, in an old play, called "The Return from Parnassus," printed in London in 1606:

Thirty days hath September,  
April, June and November;  
All the rest have thirty-one,  
Save February, which alone  
Hath twenty-eight, and one day more  
We add to it each year in four.

## The Barber's Soliloquy.

A St. Louis barber has perpetrated the following:  
I see before me the gladiator lie;  
He leans upon the chair and shuts his eye,  
His brow is lathered and his noble cheek  
Has not been barbered for at least a week.  
Ah! I could fetch him now—one little stroke  
Across his wind-pipe and the wretch would  
croak;  
And will I! No! I will not take his breath,  
'Tis sweeter far to talk the man to death.

## FARM AND HOUSEHOLD.

### Soil Analysis.

There are plenty of methods for analyzing soil to be found in the chemistries, but none of them sufficiently simple and convenient for the average farmer, even if he had the necessary appliances. In fact, there is no cheap and easy way of analyzing the soil. To have it done costs from five to twenty-five dollars for each operation, and requires a skilled chemist to do it. Unfortunately, too, soil analysis, when performed, is practically useless, for it shows not what there is of plant food available, but what there is altogether, and this is only in the identical particle analyzed. And if the food be not available it might as well be elsewhere.

The real and practical method of telling what a soil needs is to give different sorts of fertilizers to different strips. On one strip put bone dust or superphosphate, at the rate of 400 pounds to the acre. If an unusually vigorous growth results, the land wanted phosphoric acid. On another strip put wood ashes, at the rate of twenty bushels of unleached ashes to the acre. If good results followed, the land wanted potash. On another spot put nitrate of soda, 300 pounds to the acre, or a good dressing of barnyard manure. If the result is satisfactory, the land wanted nitrogen.

These three—nitrogen, phosphoric acid, potash—are all the chemical ingredients of the soil that the farmer need care about, and in this simple and profitable way he may obtain what is, in effect, the best analysis of his soil that can be procured. Of course the needs of the different plants for different quantities of nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash should be taken into account. The experiment should be carried on in three divisions after this manner: With a plant requiring potash, such as the potato, a strip of land under all three kinds of fertilizers; with a phosphatic plant, such as wheat, three strips; and with a nitrogen plant, such as clover and peas, three strips. This being done, you have secured an accurate knowledge of the need of the field experimented upon.—*Texas State Farmer*.

### How to Make a Stack.

Farmers who are acquainted with the habits of the English in respect of stacking hay and grain are often surprised that we fall so often here in this work, notwithstanding our supposed drier weather. There is a mistake about this. We fall in making weather-proof stacks because we ought to build them even better than English farmers do, (which, however, is very rarely done, indeed,) for the reason that while we have more dry weather here, yet when it rains it pours, and in England it drizzles. Our rainfall is nearly double that of England, and we have it large and heavy, but not frequent, installments, and this is one reason why we have trouble with our stacks and get them sodden inside from top to bottom. The English are very particular in stacking, and thatch the top with great care, binding on the straw with bands or ropes and pins. They also build their stacks on reasonable principles, so that if water should enter it will quickly find its way to the sides and escape by the eaves.

In building a stack the centre should be kept much higher than the sides, and each forkful put on after the bottom has been laid should overlap the previous one, as one shingle does another on a roof. It is quite as easy to do this as it is for a man to stand in the centre, in a hollow, and pile the hay or fodder all around him on the sides, keeping the centre a few feet lower than the rest of the stack. In stacking corn fodder, which is better kept in this way than in barns, it is necessary to begin in the centre of the stack, and it is a good plan for a novice to set a long pole in the ground and build the stack around it. At first the bundles are set upright around this pole or in the centre, and others are leaned against these, gradually lowering the slope of the bundles until the outer row is nearly level. When two or three layers have been stacked the bundles are first laid on the outside, and are made to project a few inches over the side so as to spread the stack. This protects the sides from the drip of the eaves. One bundle overlaps the other, the but of one coming a little below the band of the lower one. The former inclination is preserved until the stack is eight or ten feet from the ground, when the stack should be at least a foot and a half wider on each side than the base of it. It is then drawn in gradually, the centre being still kept increasing in height above the sides until the last few bundles are set nearly upright around the pole and are bound firmly to it. If the stack top is well beaten down it will then shed any rain, however heavy, that may fall upon it.—*New York Times*.

### Feeding Hay.

Concerning the indefinite quantity of the hay ration in the most reputed feeding experiments referred to in a recent issue of the *Gazette*, it may be observed that feeding hay is a matter that requires considerable judgment. Animals, like men, when the opportunity for exercising preferences is presented, are apt to consider that the best only is good enough for them; and if more hay is given than they require will pick out the tenderest and sweetest portions and leave the remainder, which not only wastes valuable feed, but encourages the habit of daintiness in the animals which is conducive to anything but thrift. Animals that pick over their food, smelling and poking every blade and stem in apparent hesitation as to whether to eat or not, do not compare in thriftiness with the good, square eaters, whose appetites give them a good relish for a reasonable quantity of any proper food.

The general practice is to "feed enough," which is correct enough when just enough is given, and very incorrect when great quantities are given to be trampled under foot or otherwise wasted. But, with hay in bulk, it is not easy to gauge the quantity given, and even if this were possible, it would vary materially with the quality of the product, although where good grain rations are given, variations in the quality of hay are not so important. We remember once weighing some hay that had been passed through a cutting machine, and that a great big pile of it uncut, measured only a few bushel basketsful after the machine had done with it, weighing seven and a half pounds to the basket, or just half the weight of coarse wheat bran weighed at the same time. It is not possible in the practical operation of the farm, to be strictly accurate in such matters, but whatever departures there may be, should be, so far as possible, controlled by calculation, and not left altogether to accident. The farmer cannot have a chemical analysis made of his hay to ascertain its exact intrinsic value, and he cannot weigh out to each bullock so many pounds and so many ounces; but he can, considering the quantity of grain he is feeding, and the average quality of the hay, make up his mind about how many pounds he should feed. If he does this, and finds part of it wasted, he can decrease the quantity, and if the quantity should be insufficient, his own practical observation will soon disclose that fact to him. Having made up his mind about how many pounds to feed, he will have to guess and weigh a few times until he can approximate somewhat the desired quantity, and will have a basis or starting point from which to increase or decrease the ration. Beside he is pursuing a method, and there is nothing that contributes so much toward sharpening one's powers of observation and ripening his experience as the habit of doing everything according to some fixed method or plan.—*Breeders' Gazette*.

### Recipes.

**MOLASSES COOKIES.**—One cup molasses, one cup brown sugar, one cup sour milk, one cup butter, two teaspoons soda, one scant teaspoon ginger, flour to roll.

**BRETT.**—Wash; cut off the tops; boil more than an hour; scrape; cut into round slices, and put into a root-dish; pour over them a tablespoonful of butter, heated, with as much vinegar, and season with pepper and salt.

**SHEEP'S BRAINS.**—Lay them in salted water to draw off the blood. Boil them and add a little chopped parsley; a few spoonfuls of melted butter, pepper and salt; mix well and serve directly on a slice of hot buttered toast. A pretty little dish is made by boiling the tongue of the sheep gently in a little good brown gravy and then serving it in the centre of the brains, prepared as above, round it; no toast would then be required. The makes a good entree for ordinary dinner; it must be served very hot.

**ROLY-POLY JAM PUDDINGS.**—Take equal quantities of fine flour and suet, remove all skin from the suet, slice it very thin and then chop it quite fine; mix together and moisten with cold water; add a very little salt, knead it well and roll it out quite thin (about one-sixth of an inch); spread the paste equally over with any kind of jam to within half an inch of the edge, moisten the edges with water, roll up the pudding, pinch the edges together; put it into a cloth, which must be tied at both ends; put the pudding into boiling water and boil about two hours.

### A Sad Disappointment.

At Sacramento the other day a man was on his last legs with pneumonia. His life was insured for several thousand dollars, and it appeared to him a little tough that he was to get no fun out of all this money. Determined to do the best he could under the circumstances, he made a will that he thought would cover a portion of the ground. His will provided that at his funeral every hack in town should be employed, and all his friends and acquaintances invited to attend and take a ride afterward. All who attended were also invited to participate in a grand banquet in the evening at the hotel, at which a brass band, which should lead the funeral procession, was to enliven the occasion with music. After making his will he was so tickled with the idea of the whole affair, as he could see it in his mind's eye, and with the thought of what a large slice of the insurance he was thus having the fun of spending, that he at once began to mend, and in spite of himself got well. Now he is as far as ever from the insurance money, and mourns the loss of the grand banquet, the brass band, and the other big things that were to make his funeral a notable event.—*Territorial Enterprise*.

### Tallow Candle Fish.

In the waters of British North America, as we are informed, there is a fish, an odd fish, as surprising in its ways as the sea-serpent, and infinitely more useful. It is a species of smelt, and may be poetically described as an aquatic glow-worm. We are told that it may be literally used in the same way as a candle, by simply setting a light to the tail, when it will burn with a flame as steady as that of the "dips" which our grandfathers used to have to put up with before gas was invented. It is a small silvery fish, averaging about fourteen inches long, is exceedingly fat, and affords an excellent and valuable oil, and is so inflammable that the dried carcass will serve as a torch. Among the natives the fish is known as the oolahan, and by them, as by others who have tasted it, is considered one of the most delicious products of the sea, being far more delicate in flavor than the herring. The fish are caught in wicker baskets, and are smoked as much as their oily nature will allow.—*The Sea World*.