

Inventions and Appliances

PORTIERES MADE OF CORN KERNELS.

DESIRING to have a portiere a little different from the usual kind, I experimented with kernels of corn and found them to be far superior to the beads or paper tubes used in making the Japanese kind. Ordinary field corn was selected and shelled and the kernels were placed in a pan and enough boiling water was poured in to cover them. This softened the corn and prevented worms from eating into the kernels. The corn was allowed to soak for 24 hours. Too much at a time should not be prepared, as it will become sour.

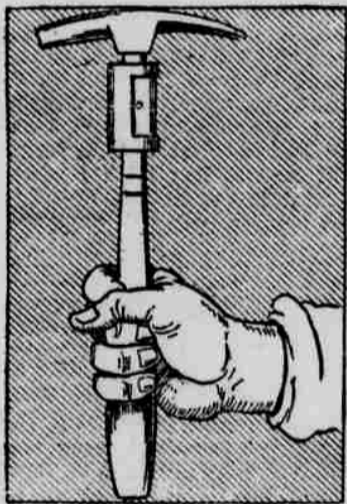
The kernels are strung on No. 8 cotton thread, as it comes double from the needle, and about 1 foot longer than the opening where the portiere is to be used. The extra 1 foot will take care of the shrinkage. Use only sound kernels and thread them on in one way; that is, each kernel in the same position as the previous one, using care not to push them on too hard to cause them to split.

The corn will shrink some in drying, and each string should, therefore, be looked over and the kernels pushed together. Make a loop at one end of each string to fit the pole, and be sure that all strings are of the same length. They are then ready for varnishing, which is done by dipping a few at a time in varnish warmed a little. They are then hung on a stick or old pole to drain and dry. Allow them to dry thoroughly, but not rapidly. When dry, they are hung in place on the pole. The ends of the threads can be trimmed even with shears, as the kernels will not slip off.

The kernels may be dyed any color desired and designs worked in with different colors of corn, although this is not so pretty as the plain color. The length of the strings may be varied to suit the taste. One very nice method is to make the strings quite short at the center of the curtain and gradually increasing in length toward the sides.—Earl Zander, in Popular Mechanics.

TACKS IN THE HANDLE.

A HAMMER and tacks are always useful about a house if both can be found at the same time, but quite often if the hammer is in place the tacks are missing, and when the tacks are to be found the hammer has been misplaced. A tack hammer has re-



cently been invented which is always to be found with the tacks. Just under the head of the tool there is secured to the handle a circular magazine arrangement for holding tacks. This has a sliding door by which the contents may be exposed, and when it is desired to close it there is an automatic catch which holds it in place.

SNAPPING TURTLES MAKE NOVEL TEAM.

WHILE NOVEL means of transportation often are seen employed in different parts of the world, probably nothing more uncommon is to be found than harnessed marine reptiles. A Wisconsin boy has the distinction of being the possessor of a team of eight snapping turtles which he hitches to a small wagon and drives around at his pleasure. Although these are more unusual, if not spectacular, than actually useful as beasts of burden, they nevertheless are capable of performing the unnatural function demanded of them. They experience no difficulty in pulling the boy and his wagon and probably

could manage a heavier load if it were imposed. Domestication does not change the gait of the turtles, however. They move at their own accustomed rate, which is not exceedingly fast.

IT STILL MAKES FLOUR.

AN OLD DUTCH mill which was made with only an ax and a knife in 1870 still stands on the outskirts of Minnesota Lake, Minn., and grinds flour and feed for farmers in the southern part of the state.

The mill was constructed by Gottlieb Shostag, who moved from Holland to Minnesota in the "sixties." Of course it is like the old mills of Holland in that it depends on the wind instead of the water for power. With the excep-



tion of the millstones the whole structure, including the machinery, is of wood. All the cog wheels are cut from native hard maple.

The tower is forty-five feet high. At the ground it has a diameter of forty feet and at the top of twenty-five feet.

ARMY WIRELESS OUTFIT CARRIED BY MULES.

A COMPLETE wireless outfit that can be packed on the backs of two mules and set up quickly in any position required in military movements has been developed by the Signal Corps of the United States Army and subjected to practical tests. The transmitting and receiving instruments are carried in a case the size and shape of an ordinary suitcase, while the poles for carrying the antennae are made in short sections that fit together like the sections of a fishing rod. The electric current is supplied by a small generator which is set up in the field and run by hand. With this generator supplying a current of 500 watts, the outfit is capable of transmitting messages in good weather for a distance of about 40 miles, while it can receive messages sent from a much greater distance than this.

NOVEL MOTORCYCLE SEATS SIDE BY SIDE.

IN ORDER that two persons may ride upon a motorcycle, both facing the same direction and side by side upon the frame, a novel contrivance has been manufactured by a New York concern, in which a seat is built arch-shaped, with spring cushions about 5 inches thick. The seat has three points of support on the frame of the motorcycle, one at the seat post and two opposite rearward bearings, one on either side of the frame. The cushions do not project above the plane of the seat-post fastening.

For restaurant purposes a coffee heater has been invented which injects a jet of steam into a cup of cold coffee just before it is served, to save impairing its aroma by keeping it at a high temperature for hours.

To protect the bulb of an automobile horn an inventor has patented a metal cover, the bulb being operated by a plunger, which can be removed when a car has been left standing on a street.

The point of a soldering iron invented by an Iowa can be turned to any angle or folded inside the handle for convenience in carrying, and is hollow to serve as a solder melting pot.

Health and Sanitation

SHOULD EAT MORE FRUIT.

NUMEROUS studies made of nutritive values by the office of experiment stations have shown that dried fruits may be termed an economical article of diet. Fruit products in general contain little protein, but as sources of energy, derived almost entirely from their sugar, dried fruits are decidedly cheaper than meats and compare favorably with dairy products. They are, however, more expensive than cereals and starchy vegetables, such as dried beans and potatoes.

Fruit Not a Luxury—Under no circumstances should fresh and dried fruits be thought a luxury, since they supply the needed nutritive material as an integral part of the diet, besides adding to the attractiveness of the daily fare. If they are to be eaten raw, brands made and marketed in a cleanly way should be obtained.

The amount of dried fruit produced in the United States increased 575 per cent between 1899 and 1909. California produces more than four-fifths of the yearly output. According to a very rough estimate, each person in this country consumes on an average five or six pounds of dried fruit a year.

Increased Product—The value of the product rose from between four and five millions to over 21,000,000 in ten years. The average wholesale price, however, has not advanced with the increased demand; on the contrary, it has dropped from about 5½ cents to about 4½ cents per pound.

Dried fruits are especially useful when the supply of fresh fruits is limited or where storage space for fresh fruits is lacking. Besides being used alone, they may be mixed into cakes, puddings, confectionery and other dishes. They afford nutritious and economical way of securing a variety of diet, which is often overlooked by the housewife.

FILTH IN DUST.

DUST as it shifts about the streets in its millions of particles does not have a very harmful appearance. Yet when you go to looking into the nature of it this same dust takes on a far different aspect.

What makes up dust? A little of everything is one answer, and one that comes pretty near to the truth, especially that dust found about the streets of a city. In its particles will be found finely powdered horse manure, considerable dried sputum and in lesser quantities the dried and powdered offal of dogs and other domestic animals.

Dust in rooms is often quite as forbidding, containing specks of abraded skin, mold spores, particles of clothing and furniture and foods. Often all the evils of street dust are added to this mixture. If there is sickness, especially of a contagious or infectious nature, the micro-organisms of the disease will appear in the air unless due care is taken.

In an investigation of street dust one investigator recently put out culture plates in various parts of New York City. These plates, each 3¼ inches in diameter, were exposed for a period of five minutes. In Central Park, near the street, 499 bacteria were collected, Union Square 214, in a large dry goods store only 199 were found, while on a street which was being swept the total reached 5,810.

While these bacteria in the air are not necessarily harmful, yet heavy accumulations of them on fruits or foods are liable to prove a serious menace to health, and it is here that the danger is to be found. Thus the necessity of guarding foods from dust and street filth.

THE ART OF WALKING.

THE ONE exercise that is the most beneficial and the easiest to take is walking; but the trouble is there are not a great many people who know how to walk.

According to a French scientist, we ought to imitate the gait of the average farmer. He takes a long stride, leans forward, keeps the knees bent and slides, rather than strikes his foot on the ground, so that he leans his weight upon the whole sole of his foot rather than on the heel only.

The city man and woman, on the contrary, usually take short steps, while the heel smartly taps the pavement before the rest of the foot. The farmer's

method is closer to that which nature intended. It exercises not only the muscles of the legs and feet, but also those of the trunk and abdomen, thereby preventing corpulence.

Deep breathing is an important aid to walking. When you breathe deeply you throw the whole body into an erect and natural attitude which controls the muscles of the limbs and makes you walk as nature intended.

Unfortunately for women, present-day fashions interfere not only with proper walking, but with any kind of beneficial walking. Fashion has done much to injure women, and the greatest of these offences is that swathing of body and cramping of feet which keep women from enjoying a health-giving walk.

Remember, it is well to walk and better to walk right.

BOOKS AND BUGS.

ONE EVIDENCE of the absurdity of the germ superstition may be found in the reading of public library books and second-hand volumes. The pages of these books are pawed over for generations by all sorts and conditions of men and women, clean and unclean. In the case of old books, some of these tomes date from before the time of the Great Plague of London. Many library books have assuredly been read by persons suffering from recalled infectious diseases. Hands have come into intimate contact with them and hands have often been carried to the face.

Surely, if disease germs are only one-thousandth part as deadly as the bacteriologists would have us believe, the reading of public library books should immediately be forbidden, as a menace to the public health. Or, after each reading, the book should be thoroughly fumigated and disinfected—not merely the cover, but each separate page. This would give employment to a large number of needy political doctors.

The fact that more than one-third of each individual's life time is spent in the bedroom is sufficient reason for building these rooms in the most pleasant, airy and lightest parts of the dwelling house.

Many poisons and impurities come disguised, especially ptomaine poisoning, from tainted meat and fish.

The back yard is probably more important from the disease point of view than the front yard.

Poor health is a fetter which holds a person to the trouble nearest at hand.

Look at the bottom of the bottle for dirt instead of at the top for cream.

The individual in good health is the comptroller of his own fate.

Good food is the basis of life and health.



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