

Harm Notes.

Soil Exhaustion and Small Farms.
The papers of the Sacramento valley are gravely quarrelling over the question whether or not the soil of California valleys is inexhaustible, several of them actually claiming that the deep alluvial deposits of the Sacramento valley bottom lands may be cropped indefinitely without a reduction of their productive power. The question is a simple one to those who look at it intelligently. The plants take from the soil certain ingredients which are used in their composition, and a continuous growing of crops using the same elements must of necessity lessen the percentage of those elements in the soil.

It is true, immense growths have been made of plants from which all soil was excluded, they being fed by ammonia and dust from the air and from food held in suspension or solution, though invisible, in the water. But nobody ever raised wheat at the rate of twenty or thirty sacks to the acre by this process. I am also true that a disintegration of substances is constantly going on which releases plant food that had not before been available, so that if all the vegetable growth were returned to the soil, there would be not only no diminution but an actual increase in the available plant food in the soil. But this evolution of food is not in such proportion as to maintain the fertility of a soil that is constantly cropped, and the time will come, even in the rich Sacramento bottoms, when the soil will need to be enriched artificially.

When that time comes the thousand-acre wheat fields will disappear, to be followed by diversified farming and multiplication of small homes. The thousand acres, which now adds to the wealth of one man, and gives employment for a few weeks in the year to a gang of men who must be tramped the rest of the year, will furnish from ten to fifty families with comfortable homes where the butter and cheese, poultry and eggs now imported from the east will be produced, and where each family will raise its own bread, meat and vegetables, carefully husbanding and enhancing the resources of the soil by manuring with ten acres will produce what thirty do now, and be measurably independent of all the world besides. When that time comes California will be more than ever before an earthly paradise.

Care of Poultry in Winter.

There is a larger profit from poultry, in proportion to the amount of capital invested, than from larger stock or crops, and the winter season is the best for securing the largest profits. At the present day the fowls are regarded as something more than "accidental adjuncts" on a farm, and receive greater attention than formerly, the treetsops and fences being no longer the only roosting places, and they are not compelled to seek their food in the cold winter. With the use of the pure breeds some have managed to make large profits from poultry on small locations, and as poultry and eggs are always in demand, the results are satisfactory wherever the hens have been made a specialty.

One of the causes of a lack of eggs in the winter season is that the fowls are fed too much grain, and do not have that exercise so necessary for their thrift and comfort. From this former extreme of allowing the birds to "shift for themselves" they are now too closely confined and do not receive the food necessary for the production of eggs. There is more injury done by feeding grain exclusively than from any other cause. The laying hen should not be allowed to get into a fat condition. In fact, hens intended for the market should be separated from the layers, as the food for one class should not be the same as for the other. The first essential is warm, dry quarters, and the next is a variety of food. The hen must have bulky food, like animals, and can not be kept in good condition on grain alone. An excellent mode of feeding is to chop clover hay into half-inch lengths, scald it, sprinkle the moss with bran, and feed it twice a day, with an ounce of meat three times a week to each hen. Such a mixture will be much better and cheaper than giving them nothing but grain. The hens should also be given a scratching place (out straw or dry earth) into which a handful of grain is thrown, so as to induce them to scratch and work.

As eggs are highest in winter, and the cost of production lower compared with the price, the management of a large flock of hens will give employment to some one who otherwise would be idle during the winter season, and the labor is, therefore, only applied from necessity, but a flock of 100 hens can be made to pay \$100 before the season for low prices arrives, while a larger sum may be secured with artificial modes of raising broilers for the market. The hens will afford an opportunity to many for winter work, if advantage be taken of opportunities and favorable location.

The time is not far distant when farmers and poultry breeders, and especially the latter, will wonder why the hens don't lay. If they have one brood, then that particular brood will be blamed and another one tried, only to find the same trouble under the same existing conditions of management. Now is the time to make such arrangements as will go far toward insuring a liberal supply of fresh eggs during winter, when eggs are scarce and high. The first step toward this is to see that the poultry-house is not only clean and free from dampness, but that it is made tight, wind and rain-proof, and that proper precautions are observed for ventilation.

One of the very best things to make the house storm-tight is tarred felt, which is also obnoxious to lice and mites, though a more substantial outside covering can be made by first painting the building outside thoroughly, and then, before the paint dries, putting coarse, close-woven bagging or canvas over the whole, tacking it well in place. This bagging can then be treated to two or three coats of good rubber paint, and the thing is done. A warm, comfortable house goes far towards insuring winter eggs, and when to this is added, in the start, good, early hatched and vigorous birds there need be no reason for asking why the hens don't lay.—*Petaluma Courier.*

Reuben James.

Three ships of war had Preble when he left the Naples shore,
And the knightly king of Naples lent him seven galleys more;
And never since the Argo floated in the mid-sea
Such noble men and valiant have sailed in company.
As the men who went with Preble to the siege of Tripoli,
Stewart, Hainbridge, Hull, Decatur, how their names ring out like gold!

Lawrence, Porter, Trippe, Macdonough, and a score as true and bold;
Every star that lights their banner tells the glory that they won;
But the common sailor's glory is the splendor of the sun.

Reuben James was first to follow when Decatur laid aboard
Of the Turkish galley and in battle broke his sword.
Then the pirate captain smote him, till his blood was running fast,
And they grappled, and they struggled, and they fell beside the mast.
Close behind him Reuben battled with a dozen, undismayed,
Till a bullet broke his sword-arm, and he dropped the useless blade.
Then a swinging Turkish scimitar clove his left arm and brought him low,
Like a gallant bark, dismasted, at the mercy of the foe.

Little mercy knows the corsair, high his blade was raised to slay,
When a richer prize allured him where Decatur struggled lay.
"Help!" the Turkish leader shouted, and his trusty comrades sprung,
And his scimitar like lightning o'er the Yankee captain swung.

Reuben James, disabled, armless, saw the sailor flash on high;
Saw Decatur strike before it, heard the pirate's taunting cry:
Saw, in half the time I tell it, how a sailor leaved and true
Still might show a bloody pirate what a dying man can do.
Quick he struggled, stumbling, sliding in the blood around his feet,
As the Turk a moment waited to make vengeance doubly sweet.
Swift the scimitar fell, but swifter bent the sailor's head below,
And upon his fearless forehead Reuben James received the blow!

So was saved our brave Decatur; so the common sailor died;
So the love that moves the lowly lifts the great to fame and pride,
Yet we grieve him not his honors, for whom love like this had birth,
For God never ranks his sailors by the register of earth.

—Boston Pilot.

THE KISS OF DEATH.

"There is nothing so impossible that a novelist can't lead a story up to it," said Prof. Boyesen of Columbia college as he sat in a group of friends at the Author's club.

"That's so," said Edgar Saltus, "but I've found that the best schemes for old fiction are prostrated by the necessary death of the principals without disclosing the material for a climax."

"I know what you mean," said Editor Gilder of the *Century Magazine*, "and I wonder why some of you gentlemen don't extend a romance beyond death—say by means of a spiritualistic communication from the actors. Now you, Prof. Smith, you're a scientist, why don't you do it?"

The gentleman thus addressed, says a New York letter to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, was Prof. Brainard Garner Smith of Cornell university.

"And I have the start of it in mind now," Prof. Smith replied. "Once, when I was in journalism, I had occasion to go over a pile of old Liverpool newspapers, and thus came upon a remarkable paragraph in the ship news. Translated out of the language of commerce it was to the effect that the good ship *Empress*, just arrived from Australia, reported that while rounding the Cape of Good Hope she had been driven southward far out of her course by a storm, and away down in the southern Atlantic had sighted a vessel drifting aimlessly about. The first mate boarded her, and, returning, reported that the dordlet was the ship *Albatross*. That she had been abandoned was plain, for all the boats were gone, and so were the log and the ship's instruments. On the deck close by the companion hatch lay two bodies, or rather skeletons, clad in weather-rotted garments that showed they had been man and woman. These bodies were headless, but the heads were nowhere to be found on the deserted deck. The mate found on the cabin table an open book, with writing on its pages. A pen lay on the table and a small inkstand, in which the ink had evidently long since dried. The book was evidently a journal or diary, so the mate reported, and he put it in his pocket, meaning to carry it aboard the *Empress*, but when he was getting down into his boat the book slipped from his pocket, dropped into the water, and sank. The *Albatross* was badly waterlogged and he thought could not have floated much longer. To this report the editor of the paper added a note saying that the readers would all doubtless remember that the *Albatross* had sailed from Liverpool several years before, bound for Australia, and it was thought to have gone down with all on board, as no news of her had since been received. That was the substance of the remarkable paragraph. What was almost as remarkable to me, a newspaper man, was that the Liverpool paper had evidently made no effort to learn the owner's name of the *Albatross*, the name of her captain and crew, or whether or not she carried any passengers. I carefully searched the files to see if there was any further reference to the case. There was none. After the manner of his kind, the editor of the paper had, so it seemed, taken it for granted that his intelligent readers would remember all the particulars they wanted to know.

"A few weeks after that I went into northern Vermont to report the Benton murder trial, which was attracting much more than local attention. I was pleased to find that the prosecuting attorney was an old classmate of mine, but not pleased to find that he had become a spiritualist. I mentioned the headless bodies to him, and, as a joke, asked him to conjure up the two spirits in a sentence, so as to solve the mystery. Well, we tried to—

"And he failed, of course," interposed Edgar Fawcett.

A quizzical expression came into Prof. Smith's face and he said: "Oh, no; we got the whole story through a medium. The bodies were those of Arthur Hartley and Helen Rankins," and he looked defiantly around the circle for a contradiction. "It was Hartley whose communication we got through the Vermont medium, and this is what he said:—

"I and I were passengers on board the *Albatross*. My Uncle John promised me a fortune. He was confident that an explosive of his invention would work such wonders in Australian mines that within ten years we could go back to England rich beyond the dreams of avarice. One day Uncle John got into a hot discussion with Capt. Raymond about the efficacy of the wonderful explosive compound. The captain seemed doubtful. Uncle John was for the instant angry.

"I'll show you, then," he said, and he rushed into the cabin where his boxes were stored and came out shortly with two tin cans, each holding something less than a pint. He unscrewed the top of one, disclosing a brownish powder. "Take care!" said the captain, who seemed needlessly cautious and almost fearful.

"Why, I thought you said it was useless," said Uncle John, with a laugh; "and yet you are afraid of it. Look here." He lighted a match and held it close to the powder. A dark smoke arose that instantly extinguished the little flame and floated off, leaving a queer smell behind. That was all.

"Perfectly harmless, captain," continued Uncle John, who had now recovered his usual good nature. "Perfectly harmless—unless you wet it. Then look out!"

"The cook made a sort of dumpling for dinner and a great lot of it remained. Uncle John took a mass of this dough, for it was little else, squeezed it until it was quite dry, and moulded it into a ball. 'Come with me,' he said, 'and, Arthur, bring a plate of that dough with you.' He took the cans and we followed him to the deck. There he carefully covered the ball of dough with the powder and going to the rail threw it as far as he could out over the placid sea. As the ball struck the water there was a loud explosion and the spray was thrown high into the air. The crew, who had been hanging over the port rail forward, turned and rushed over to see what was up. Uncle John made another ball and threw it with like result.

"Oh, ho! ho! torpedos," growled one of the men, and they turned back to their places. Uncle John now evidently anxious to give us thorough proof of the value of his compound was for throwing more balls, when the boat-swain, rolling aft, touched his hat, and said to the captain:

"Please, sur, there's a big shark as has showed his fin off the port bow, and if so be that the doctor 'll wait a bit with his torpedos we'll show 'im some fun a catchin' of it."

"All right, be'sum," said the captain, and we all went over to the port rail. "There he is," said the captain, pointing to a sharp, black thing that, rising just above the water, was cutting quietly through it. "That is his fin, and there's a big shark under it or I'm much mistaken."

"The men fell back and looked eagerly. The cook handed up a big chunk of meat. 'Wipe it as dry as you can,' said Uncle John, 'and tie it firmly to the rope.' When this was done he sprinkled the powder from the can carefully over the meat, then he carried it cautiously to the rail. The shark was cruising back and forth. Uncle John lowered the meat slowly into the water right in front of the monster. He saw the bait and darted at it, and then there was a tremendous report and the spray flew into our faces as we leaned over the rail. The next moment we saw the big fish floating motionless on the water.

"Blessed if 'e 'asn't blowed 'is end clear off," said the boatswain.

"It was so. That terrible compound of Uncle John's had needed only the impact of the shark's teeth to explode it with deadly effect."

"Oh, it's only a fish story," Edward Fawcett interrupted when Prof. Smith, who is an expert elocutionist, had spoken thus far in the assumed character of the dead man.

"It is a lovely story," Prof. Smith went on, with no lapse from his impersonation of the solemnly speaking spirit of Hartley. "Our vessel was plundered and abandoned by a mutinous crew. Only Helen, whom I madly loved but who had never yet confessed she loved me, was left alone on board with me. Days of famishing and fever ensued. One afternoon Helen was lying motionless in the shadow of the companion hatch. I threw myself down by her side. She put out her hand and grasped mine and a flush crossed her face. I was too weak to speak, and thus hand in hand we lay for I don't know how long. Gradually I lost consciousness, perhaps in sleep. At all events my spirit was not free. The frail body still had strength enough to retain it. I was aroused by something dropping on my face. As consciousness came back I saw that the sky had become overcast; that a cool breeze was blowing and that a gentle rain was falling. Helen was sitting erect, and with parted lips drinking in the grateful rain-laden air. I tried to rise, but could not. She was much stronger than I and in my direction went below and brought blankets and clothes, which she spread on the deck that they might catch the falling drops. She seemed quite vigorous, and already I felt my own strength coming back. Soon she was able to squeeze water from a blanket into a little can which stood by the mast. We were in too great agony of thirst to think of small matters of neatness. She offered the can to me.

"Drink yourself, Helen," I said.

"No," she answered, with a smile. "No, you need it most." And kneeling by my side she slipped her arm under my head and with her other hand held the water to my lips.

"I drank eagerly. The draft was life to me. Never had water such strength-giving power. I hardly noticed that it had left such a queer taste upon my lips. I sat erect. Helen, with her arms still around my neck, drank what remained in the can. Then she looked me full in the face. There was a new expression in her lovely eyes. A deep flush was on her brow as she spoke. 'Arthur,' she said, and there was a tremor in the rich, deep voice, 'Arthur, I love you! Oh, I love you! My darling, my noble, faithful darling! Oh, Arthur, Arthur!'

"She threw herself upon my breast with burbling face and streaming eyes.

The blood leaped through my veins. She raised her sweet face and our lips met for the first time. There was an awful crash and our freed spirits took their happy flight together. We had drunk from the can that had contained Uncle John's explosive. A little of the powder had clung to the can, floated on the water, and adhered to our lips when we drank. The impact of that first elastic kiss had exploded the compound and our heads were blown from our shoulders. That's all."

And Prof. Smith smiled, as one does when one is thoroughly satisfied.

Things We Throw Away.

I have been told by many ladies that they never throw away anything; I have been defied by others to mention anything except dirt which they did not cling to like a rich aunt.

Now, to begin, does any housewife ever throw away crusts, and odd pieces of bread, or does she only slip them into the catch-all, when no one is looking? All ye that are liable to be tempted in this way know that crusts carefully saved can be made into griddle cakes, puddings, meat dressings, fish cakes; and when dried in the oven and ground up with the rolling-pin they can be used for thickening soups and gravies, or for any purpose for which rolled crackers are used. The pan of crusts carefully kept will save the measure of meal or crackers and leave another little coin in the purse to be generous with, or to wear away the barriers of narrow means.

You have heard of the lady whose cake disappointed her in the very face of company coming to tea. Did you also hear that she was mad and threw it away? She did nothing of the kind. Instead, she cut it up in slices, made a delicate little custard, brought out her preserves, and triumphantly placed on the table a very palatable charlotte russe. Another lady, in relating her marital experiences, said her husband objected to having rhubarb sauce brought to the table more than three times in succession! Of course she threw it away, and of course he twitted her with being wasteful. Oh, if one had but dared to suggest to the unhappy woman that she might have taken her rhubarb sauce, or any other sauce that chanced to offend by its too great familiarity, and have made of it a nice large tart, with fancy twisted bars across the top, and thus she would have mollified the tyrant, man.

I wonder if every living housekeeper knows that apple-jelly and vinegar can be made from apple parings? Save the parings in the ice chest till a sufficient quantity accumulates, wash, cover with water, and boil quickly for an hour. Strain through a jelly-bag, add half the quantity of white sugar, and boil gently two hours. Flavor with vanilla, and pour into heated glasses. For the vinegar, the parings are put into a jug, a little water is added, and they are allowed to ferment in a warm place behind the stove.

Do we throw away old clothes before all use is got out of them, and they are ragged? Some don't, more do. With the scientific housekeeper the shining robe of state descends in regular gradations till its lowly lot is cast in a comfortable mat beneath the feet. With the less industrious, and the immature, who are constantly taking their places in the world, clothes are often thrown into the rag-bag before they are half worn out. A child's dress gets short in the sleeves, and in it goes! A skirt shrinks and demands piecing out. The demands, like the demands of an oppressed people, are consigned to oblivion—the oblivion of the rag-bag. Changing fashions condemn many garments to that pit of darkness before their time, and the point at which discretion judges best to take a stand against outside pressures must ever remain an individual matter to decide. While some may overstep the boundary on one side or the other, the woman of reflection will generally do what is best.—*Good Housekeeping.*

The Flight to the Cities.

But, of a truth, are the New England young folks—with all this for inheritance, and the granges "to boot"—getting inoculated with rural enthusiasm? Doubtful; more than doubtful. Young fellows of the suburban districts, and young girls (with a reader's zeal, 'tis to be feared) grow up all along the pretty intervals, and amid the giant Bents and the waving tobacco-fields, with a sneaking fondness for those "loeks and onions" of the city—whose flavors drift by them, out from the Sunday papers. There the money rattles more; the scenes shift more; and for trees and sunsets—they can get them both of a Sunday, with a sweetheart, on a hill-top.

Shall this current of the young folks be stayed? It is worth discipline to stay them? Will the next State board give us a paper on this question? Do steady-going parents try to stay them? I throw not. E—was a good fellow whom I knew—excellent agriculturist—all enthusiasm—"believed in things"—country was worth living for; a clean patch of garden "hass" was always a moving psalm to him; neatness a gospel; home-grown fruits the food of the gods. Tom, his boy, a shrewd lad growing up amid the ductilities of such environment, and making muscle like a steer, when I saw him there, bare-legged, hoeing, pondering, stretching ranch symphonies out of "Cofe—Cofe!"—I ask after ten years later. Is he still putting his youthful energies to the weeds?

"Waal—no; got a job in town"—in a gun-shop, a broker's, where not? And there is a half-proud parental acquiescence; for the boy is "a good boy; pay's good; and there are the readin' rooms, and the lectur's don't you know?" Why not?

And the girl—whose skirts brushed the dew among the fine rows of "Cresscents" and of "McAvoys," and whose cheek was as round and as red as the berries she tended and gathered: How and where is she eight years after? Still given to the pretty love of those dove-eyed Jerseys; still fondling them, or weaning them for some neighbor owner of like age and heart?—*Edgar Fawcett.*

White hats with black bands for men are becoming fashionable in London.

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Declined With Thanks.

Speaking of editors, the case of the editor who wants to contribute an article to some other periodical than his own—a magazine, for instance—is a curious one, says the *Boston Transcript*. For the time being he puts himself in the place of a contributor and feels the pangs of a timid author. The listener once knew a newspaper editor who was inspired to write an article of a light and entertaining character, suitable for a magazine. He wrote it in his odd moments, and then set to speculating as to whether it had any particular value. It seemed to him that it had, but the reflection that he might be prejudiced in its favor troubled him. He had had precisely the same feeling when somebody had brought him an article that he wanted to judge favorably. How was he to get his own impartial judgment on his own article? He thought about it some time, and finally decided that the only way to get the necessary conditions was to send himself the article through the mail, to receive it with other contributions, and to treat it all the way through as if it were somebody else's.

The plan worked to a charm. The editor wrote a little note to himself to accompany the article, inclosed stamps for a reply or a return of the manuscript and mailed the whole at the post-office. Toward the close of the day, when the editor was near the end of a lot of wearisome communications, and had got himself into the declining mood that comes with fatigue, his article arrived. After he had allowed it to lie around a while he broke the seal and read it. Then he took a little slip, wrote on it reflectively, inclosed it with the manuscript in a big envelope and put it into the compartment marked "postoffice" in the tin box that hung by the side of his desk. Next morning he received the parcel back and read with breathless interest this note which accompanied the manuscript:

"Unavailable. Too discursive and trivial in its tone. Should have been elaborated with more care. Many passages not needed in the presentation of the idea. Contains promise, however, author is advised to try again."

Lionel Burnett Not a Fauntleroy

Mrs. Hodgson Burnette's elder son, Lionel, spent some time at Atlantic City last summer. Vivian was with his mother doing Europe, and Dr. Burnett was not expected home for several months. Lionel was staying with friends in one of the cottages and appeared to enjoy the absence of the paternal eye.

The heir to the Burnett estates is 15 years old. He is short, but thickly set, with a large head. He can outdo in coarseness any five boys in the neighborhood.

A reporter had a long talk with the brother of the original Lord Fauntleroy, who, as everybody knows, is Vivian, and appended are some of the remarks he made on himself, on his mother, on Vivian, the little lord, and on his mother's books.

"Viv," he said, "was as much of a boy and a nuisance as I am until ma had Fauntleroy published. We both had to appear to appear in our velvet suits and to behave like little lords. Viv is 13, and immediately simmered down and posed accordingly to orders. I rebelled, would not wear my curls or velvet suit, and decamped, leaving the whole field to Viv. I am an American, a Republican, and I'll bet you a box of cigars the world's fair will be held in Washington.

"I never took much stock in books, except dime novels. There's Lone Jack, the Brigand of the Rocky Mountains." It's a dandy. No stuff and nonsense about that. Lots of blood and thunder and a fine detective in it.

"O, you should see Viv writing a letter. Doesn't look much like the little lord. He sits down at the table stretches himself and his legs, and then scribbles. Viv is a pretty fellow. He doesn't like anybody to say so, and he once attempted to lick a fellow for saying so. Ma's books have ruined Viv. Before they were published he was a first-rate fellow and liked a good big spree as much as I do now."

A Jack-Rabbit-Farm.

The only jack-rabbit farm in the country, so far as known, is situated on a flat alkali section near a town in central Kansas. It and its jack-rabbits are the property of a cursing association, which will not sell a rabbit to anyone else, and which depends on its farm for the supply of hares taken to other cities in park coursing events. A year ago had only about thirty jack-rabbits, which had for the most part been purchased when young from farmer boys who had found them. To-day, owing to accretions from similar sources and to the very rapid multiplication of the species, there are between 200 and 300 full-grown jacks on the farm, and the question of supply may be fairly said to be settled.

"Wool is crawling up again," as the farmer said when he pulled down his flannel shirt and tucked it in.—*Danville News.*

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