

## CUTTING AN ICE CROP.

### HOW THE FROZEN BLOCKS ARE HARVESTED.

Storehouses Are Great Barn-like Structures—How the Ice Is Cut, Rafted from the "Field" and Hoisted into Its Cold Quarters.

#### A Winter Industry.

Common as ice is of one kind and another, not all the persons who use it in summer have seen it cut in winter. In a cold day the ice man gets rich, and nothing can be more to his liking than the chilly blasts of December, the zero efforts of January. All about the great cities and trade distributing centers are located favorable spots for cutting ice, and a sight of a great storehouse with a capacity of 90,000 tons, average blocks of 220 pounds, the machinery, the large number of men employed to cut this immense harvest, interests and startles the person taking it for the first time.

Usually some small lake is selected as the harvesting spot, and here, as soon as a cold snap gives a steady surface to the ice, the superintendent of the ice houses takes all the men he can find work for, and apportions them their tasks. The average with gangs about such fields as those contiguous to Chicago, is, say, 100 men, and they cut about 100,000 tons of ice in three weeks. First in the force are the scrapers. These men have an appliance about the size of an ordinary express wagon box. It proceeds sidewise, and tipped up in such manner as to carry the snow along with it. Its nether edge is provided with a steel plate, so that the ice is scraped perfectly clear of snow. The snow is banked up in great ridges, as nearly out of the way as possible. Then come the markers. A man with an eye for a line stretches a rope from one to two furlongs in length, and pushes a hand-marker along beside it, till there is a distinct line scratched across the surface of the ice. Then a man with a "plow" comes along, a boy leading his horse, and he follows the line scratched

separate blocks, a slight blow of the needle bar or "spud" being sufficient to separate them.

An icehouse is simply a great, barn-like structure with declining arms reaching down into the edge of the water. This is the same wherever you see them. These arms are the chutes up which the ice blocks are conveyed for storing in the houses. In smaller affairs the ice is hoisted by horse power. In the larger, great engines drive endless chains which pass down under the water and rise at the foot of the wooden incline. The ice blocks, now separated, are driven forward upon them, and the links of the chain, as they rise, catch the blocks and carry them up to the levels where they are wanted.

It takes a good deal of judgment to feed the chain properly. The blocks must come forward fast enough to keep the elevator in constant business. And it must not come so swiftly as to clog it. It must be two cakes wide all the time, and the cakes must be advanced singly at the last. When the links of the endless chain catch the cakes of ice and carry them up the incline, it drops them over a little ridge and they at once start down a slower slope to the doors of the icehouse. This latter incline, a very gentle declivity, is supplied with tracks on which the blocks can run smoothly. Half way down to the house there is a divide, and the two men at the place where the endless chain delivers the blocks, direct the course of the ice, as to the right or the left. Each is armed with a pike, with a beard to it like the beard of a boat-hook. And when a bad piece comes along—one broken or otherwise undesirable—the men snatch it from the track, if they have time, and shoot it over the ends of the scaffolding and down to the ground.

Along the extensive side of the house are built platforms at different elevations, with doors opening upon them from the houses. The tracks on which the ice blocks travel are laid on these platforms, and at each of the doors a man is stationed with a short boat hook or pike pole, which he uses in capturing a block here and there from the screaming stream that hurtles past

dust in the double walls of the building and the layers of hay that cover the whole.

The pay is all the way from \$1 to \$1.75 a day, depending on the class of work done. Most of the men in the houses and on the field, laborers, work for \$1 a day to \$1.25. In former years the wages were not so much of a temptation, but this winter there have been very few other means of income in the country, and then there are a good many men about the towns out of work and willing to get a bit of spending money from a little odd work. In the large ice fields the men live in a big boarding-house which stands a few hundred feet from the icehouse, a long, yellow, barnlike structure, maintained by the company, in which the 300 or 400 employees are housed and fed. For the long, toilsome hours in which they labor on the ice fields or about the chutes the men get 12 and 12½ cents an hour, all except the men working with the tongs in the cars, who get 15 cents an hour. Out of this money they are obliged to pay their board in the big roomy structure. In the evening the day shift lie about in the smoking-room an hour or so before turning in, but as their day begins again at 7 o'clock in the morning and they must be through breakfast and ready to work by that hour—they spend little time running around at night.

Sixteen inches of ice is considered a little too thick by the ice men. Twelve or fourteen is thick enough for them. The average buyer considers a cake to weigh, roughly, 200 pounds. And when he gets a cake he expects 200 pounds. But he makes no allowance for the excess where the thickness is greater than is required for that weight. Besides that, the larger blocks are much more difficult to handle.

Ice 14 inches thick will overrun 200 pounds a little. And every added inch of thickness, when the blocks are 22 inches square, means the addition of 15 pounds to the cake. Much of the ice cut this winter is 18 inches thick. That means, with this size of cake, 270 pounds. Which is more than the ice man likes to sell for 200.

There are some blocks of ice so clear that a person can "read through them,"

## CROKER WITHOUT FEAR.

The Tammany Leader Once Swam Out Among a School of Sharks.

It is said that Richard Croker, the Tammany boss, is a man absolutely devoid of physical fear and to prove it a story is told of his great nerve.

Some years ago a New York newspaper printed an article which stated that the talk of sharks eating human beings was all rubbish; that they were afraid of men and would swim away in consternation if a man were suddenly to appear before them. Among those who became interested in the matter was Mr. Croker and he declared the



RICHARD CROKER.

only way to settle the controversy which the article started was to put a live man in front of a shark and watch the result. He further remarked that some day he would find out for himself.

One winter or two later Croker decided to spend a few weeks in Florida and he was accompanied on the trip by Andrew Freedman, now president of the New York Base-Ball Club. Not far from St. Augustine there is a place where sharks may often be seen lying motionless in the space between the shore and the bar. The water is almost always as clear as glass, and the huge fish are plainly visible. The first time Croker saw the sharks at this point he told Freedman he was going to find out whether they would eat a man if they got a chance. Next day he and Freedman went out there again, taking with them two good-sized chunks of raw beef, one of which they put on a big hook, intending to use the meat as a bait and haul in the first unlucky fish that should venture on a nibble. But owing to the powerful though smooth and quiet ocean swell, it was impossible to throw the bait out far enough to attract the attention of the sharks. This was tried and tried again, but to no purpose; every time the baited hook was cast it was brought back by the irresistible force of the long swells. Finally Croker got tired, and seizing a piece of beef in his hands he ran out as far as he could, then gave a dive, and with half a dozen impetuous strokes swam out to the group of alleged man-eaters, and dropped his burden before them.

Freedman was dumfounded, and shouted to his friend to come back at once; but almost before he could get the words out of his mouth Croker was again standing on shore, dripping and breathless, having got away from the sharks with all possible speed.

"But the sharks hurried away as fast as my friend Dick did," Freedman always says in winding up the story, "from which I conclude that they were worse frightened than he; in fact, he didn't seem frightened at all."

Croker thinks the incident proves that sharks are afraid of man. There are probably few, however, who would believe this evidence conclusive.

## COWS TO WEAR BUTTONS.

Small Silver Badge Attached to the Ear as a Health Certificate.

Everybody else has had a chance at the button fad and now it is the cow's turn. Those of them that are in good health must be decorated with buttons, whether they will or no. Arrangements have been made by the health authori-



EVEN THE COWS WEAR BUTTONS.

ties of Alameda County, California, to submit the cows in all dairies of the county to the tuberculin test, and those that pass the test successfully will have a small silver button attached to the ear as a badge showing their healthy condition. Cattle that cannot pass the test will be killed.

## Love and Death Broke His Vow.

For more than twenty years William H. Jerolamen, of Morrissett, N. J., was silent in his home, says an exchange. He made a vow and kept it until death faced him. Then he broke the oath, spoke to his wife, kissed her and died.

One day back in the '70s, after a trifling quarrel, he said to his wife: "I'll never speak to you again as long as I live." At that time he was 58 years old. He kept his vow and lived on, utterly ignoring the woman who had shared his joys and sorrows so long. They lived in a cottage at Mount Arlington, Morris County; but, as far as Jerolamen was concerned, it was as if his wife was not living. She bore the slight without a mur-

mur. He dined in silence and alone, and so did she. Often Mrs. Jerolamen had to speak to her husband in reference to household affairs, but he never answered.

He was a church member, being one of the organizers of the Mount Arlington Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1874 the town was divided on the question of prohibition. The old man tried to induce the members of the church to endorse the cold water ticket at the town election, but they refused. He swore that he would never go to church again. He kept his word in this as he had toward his wife.

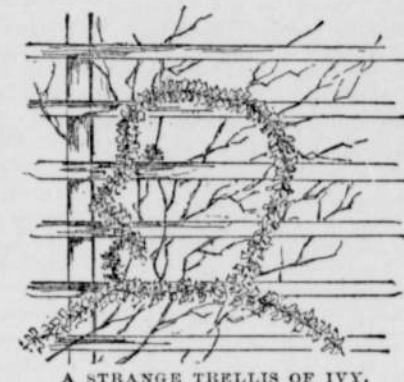
Thus his life went on in silence and gloom until a recent Monday. Then he could not arise in the morning, for pneumonia had laid its grip upon him. He was 80 years old and he felt that he could not recover. His wife bent over him with the love that all his harshness had never killed. He saw the light in her eyes, and feebly essaying to take her hand he sobbed: "Dear, I'm so sorry. Will you forgive me?"

Forgive him? Would she? Kneeling by the dying man's bedside, she wept softly, while he, with tongue freed at last, rambled on deliriously about old times. She did not leave him until the end came. He died with his hand in hers and a look of happiness that his face had not borne in twenty years.

## FORMS A HUMAN HEAD.

Queer Figure Outlined by the Tiny Leaves of an Ivy Vine.

Ivy is known to be a very accommodating creeper and often forms queer figures of its own free will, but the vine in the yard of James Hughes of Philadelphia is the queerest of the queer. The sketch shows the form outlined by the tiny green leaves. Many people visit Mr. Hughes' house to find out how the strings are arranged, but it would take an exceedingly fine memory to retain the plan so as to produce a similar effect. Some of the visitors



A STRANGE TRELLIS OF IVY.

have made a sketch of the entire vine, but as yet none has reported his success in copying the oddity.

## A Practical Test.

Dom Pedro, the last emperor of Brazil, was a man of a practical turn of mind, as the following story told of him well illustrates, says Harper's Round Table.

He once gave an audience to a young engineer who came to show him a new appliance for stopping railway engines. The emperor was pleased with the idea, but wished to put it to a practical test. "Day after to-morrow," said he, "have your engine ready. We will have it coupled to my saloon-carriage and start. When going at full speed I will give the signal to stop and then we will see how your invention works."

At the appointed time all was in readiness. The emperor entered his carriage, the young inventor mounted his engine and on they sped for several miles as fast as they could go. There came no signal, and the engineer began to fear that the emperor had fallen asleep. Suddenly the engineer came to a sharp curve around the edge of the cliff, when, to his horror, on the track directly ahead of them the engineer saw a huge bowlder.

He had just sufficient presence of mind to turn the crank of his brake and pull the engine up within a couple of yards of the fatal block.

Here the emperor put his head out of his car window and demanded to know the cause of the sudden stoppage. The engineer pointed to the rock, and, much to his surprise, Dom Pedro began to laugh.

"Push it to one side and go on," he said, calmly. The engineer obeyed and kicking the stone was still further astonished to see it crumble into dust before him.

It was nothing more nor less than a block of starch which the emperor had had placed on the rails the night before.

## Onions for Brides.

Among the Greeks the onion was formerly used at marriages, a jar of lentils, one of snow and one of onions being spoken of as gifts to the daughter of King Cotys upon the occasion of her marriage to Iphierates. In some places, even now, onions are thrown after brides, as is rice in our land.

In the south of England this patriarchal plant was used by girls to divine their future husbands. When the onions were purchased for this purpose it was necessary for the purchaser to enter the shop by one door and go out by another; it was, therefore, important to select a greengrocer's shop which had two doors. Onions bought in this careful way, if placed under the pillow on St. Thomas' eve, were warranted to bring visions of the future husband.

Country girls were also wont to take an onion and name it after St. Thomas. It was then peeled and wrapped in a clean handkerchief, after which, placing it carefully on their heads, the maids would say:

Good St. Thomas do me right  
And let my true love come to-night,  
That I may look him in the face  
And him in my fond arms embrace.  
—Chauteaugan.



Mr. Gilbert has been preparing a re-issue of the famous "Bab ballads," with the addition of many of the songs which have appeared in the different Savoy operas.

All that Shakspeare has to say about love and lovers has been carefully sought out and arranged by Chloe Blakeman Jones and is soon to be published in book form under the title of "The Lovers' Shakspeare."

Dr. H. H. Furness keeps steadily at work on his variorum edition of Shakspeare's plays. It is reported that he has completed another volume, "A Winter's Tale," which the Lippincotts will publish within a few months.

Richard Harding Davis has finished his dramatization of "The Soldier of Fortune" and read the manuscript to Mr. Charles Frohman, at whose suggestion the novel was made into a play. He awaits Mr. Frohman's verdict.

"Select Documents Illustrative of the History of the United States, 1776-1861," edited, with notes, by William MacDonald, Professor of History and Political Science at Bowdoin College, is the title of a book announced by the Macmillan Company.

Frederick Warne & Co., publish "The Life of Victoria, Our Queen and Empress. Simply Told for Children." The book is fully illustrated and the text tells in an interesting manner a few of the great facts about the British Empire and its progress during the years since Victoria has reigned.

Certainly S. R. Crockett's forthcoming juvenile book does not lack for enough of a title. It is called "The Surprising Adventures of Sir Toady Lion with Those of General Napoleon Smith: An Improving History for Old Boys, Young Boys, Good Boys, Bad Boys, Big Boys, Little Boys, Cow Boys, and Tom Boys."

The following anecdote from Rome may be read with interest by weary editors. When Cardinal Gallaberti, then only a priest, directed the *Moniteur de Rome*, he called the editor-in-chief one morning and seriously proposed to him to suspend publication of the paper for the three summer months. The editor had great trouble in persuading him to abandon this project and in convincing him that a paper whose publication depended on the thermometer was no longer a paper.

## The Old Woman's Reckoning.

A railway train was running at the rate of forty miles an hour, says the Chicago News, and was approaching Big Creek, when the air-brakes were applied, and the train came to a stop so suddenly that all hands were startled. Many of the passengers jumped off, and with the conductor ran ahead of the engine to see what was the matter. An old man with a lantern was coming up the track.

"Hello! Did you signal the train?" asked the conductor.

"Yes, it was me," replied the old man.

"Well, what's the row?"

"Reckon the bridge over the creek has gone down."

"Dunno 'zactly."

"When did you find it gone?"

"I didn't done find it gone at all, sah, but I reckon it ain't thar no mo'."

"You see, sah, I was sittin' in the cabin with the ole woman 'bout an hour ago, and it was rainin' and blowin', when we heard a crash, and she calls out:

"O Lord, Jim, but what was that?"

"Reckon it was that big seycamore tree," says I.

"'Couldn't be. Must be the railroad bridge."

"Reckon it wasn't."

"Reckon it was."

"But what about the bridge?" asked the impatient conductor.

"Reckon it's gone, sah?"

"But why do you reckon?"

"Why, at first I didn't reckon. Then the ole woman she reckoned, and I had to reckon with her or hev a row. When I reckoned as she reckoned, she reckoned I'd better come out and swing a lantern and stop the train, and that's what I did."

"You haven't been down to the creek?"

"No, sah."

"And you don't know that the bridge is gone?"

"No, sah. Yo' see, the ole woman she reckoned 'twas, and I had to reckon—"

"Get out of the way, you old idiot!" interrupted the conductor, as he gave the signal to go ahead.

"But the ole woman reckoned—"

"And she's another!"

"Both of us idiots, eh?" shouted the old man, as the train began to move.

"Wal, I reckon so, too; but if she reckons we ain't, then I'm goin' to reckon long with her, and keep out of a fuss."

We found the bridge all right, and "reckoned" it must have been the seycamore tree that went down with a crash.

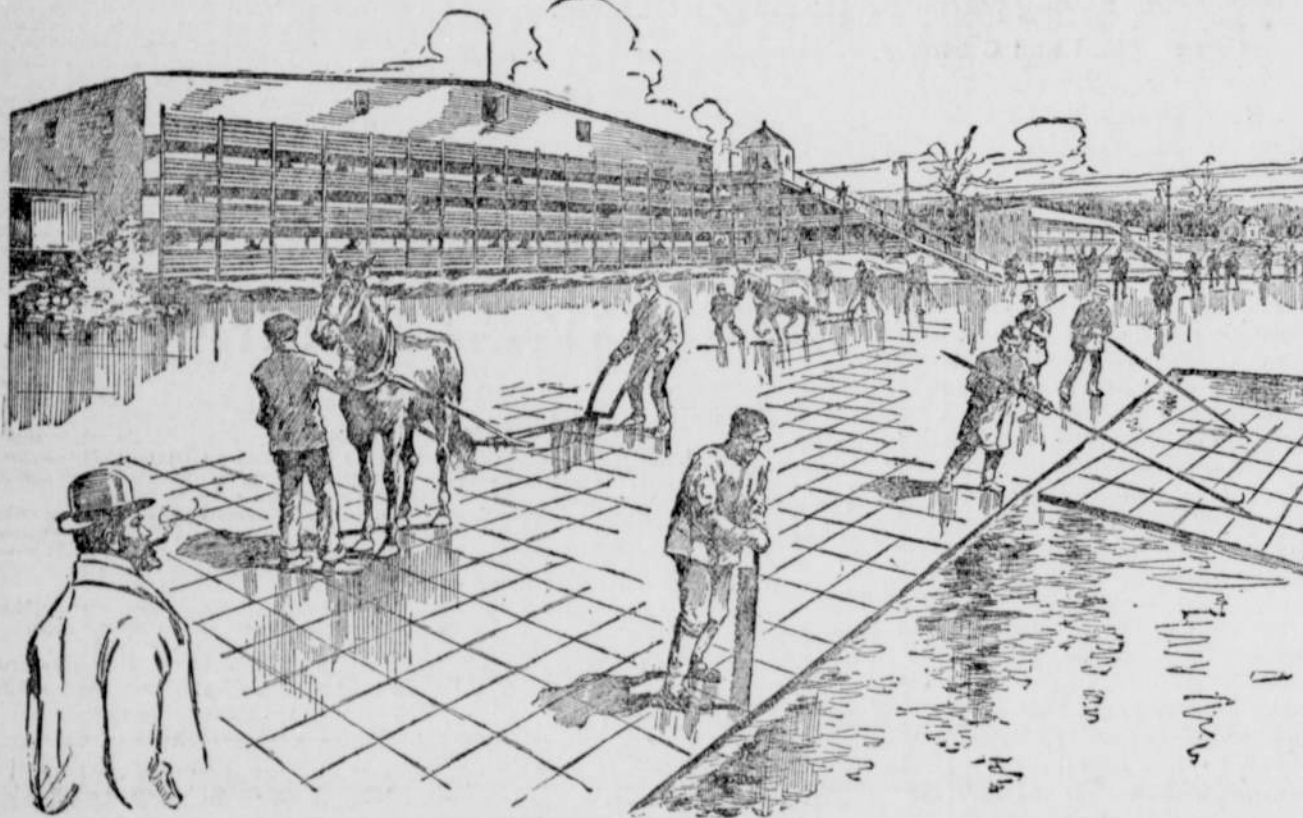
## Did It All the Same.

"I suppose you had to do the driving," suggested her best friend, pointedly, when the beautiful creature came back from her ride with the handsome young man.

"Indeed, I did not," replied the beautiful creature.

"No?"

"Well, I should say not. There was no compulsion about it at all, but under the circumstances I preferred to."



PLOWING AND CUTTING ICE.

In the ice, sending the steel of his plowshares as deeply into the ice as he can.

Turning about at the farther end, he comes back, cutting deeper, and a third time deeper still, till he has cut perhaps half way through the ice. While he is deepening his first incision another man follows with a marker, setting its guide in the initial groove, and marking a second groove twenty-two inches from the first.

The first ice is cut nearest the icehouses. After that the men cut farther and farther away. But the distance is never so great that one man cannot

him and turns in the door, where it shoots down another incline to the workmen who are placing the ice in position.

The speed of the ice blocks as they approach the door is amazing. The force of one would be something like the blow of a cable car. The man at the door does not try to handle the cakes with anything like an arbitrary force. He wields his pike beard into the block near a corner, and, yielding slightly, manages to turn it till the force of its own momentum swings it round, and it leaves the platform track, plunges through the door and de-

but ice six inches thick would offer a pretty effectual barrier to the gleaner of news if he read through from top to bottom. Average ice is clear enough to offer little obstacle if one reads through from side to side. It is 22 inches square. And the eye can easily distinguish fairly fine print through those twenty-two inches. But, though it is only sixteen inches thick no one would pretend the second time that he could read through it from the upper to the nether side.

A little computation shows that ice sometimes pays better than wheat. A strip of ground 10 by 16 rods will embrace an acre. Off that surface, covered with water, frozen to a depth of fourteen or more inches, 12,000 cakes of ice, each twenty-two inches square, could be harvested. That means 645 tons. Even at the price received at the icehouse the selling price of the ice would be more than many a man's whole farm is worth.

Certainly it is more than the average value of any acre in any farm in Illinois.

## Bridges.

A primitive notion existed among the Romans and other races that a bridge was an offence and injury to the river god, as it saved people from being drowned while fording or swimming across, and robbed the deity of a certain number of victims which were his due. For many centuries in Rome propitiatory offerings of human victims were made every year to the Fliber; men and women were drowned by being bound and flung from the wooden Sublucan bridge, which, till nearly the end of the Republic period, was the one and only bridge across the Tiber in Rome.

## New Railroad Policy.

There was a collision on the Danish state railroad near Copenhagen some time ago in which forty persons were killed and seventy wounded. The railroad at once admitted that it was to blame, and instead of fighting claims for damages, has appointed a committee to settle with the claimants what will be fair compensation, so as to avoid having the claims brought into the courts.

## Sweden Makes Butter.

During last year over 23,500 tons of butter were exported from Sweden, nearly all of which went to Britain.



STORING THE ICE.

drive 200 cakes of ice from the field to the houses. He can, with little waste of time, take the greater raft—20 by 60 cakes, and containing 1,200 blocks—down the canal to the houses. If the ice plow has been driven too deep the raft will break into smaller bodies by striking on the edges of the channel now and then. That adds to the labor of the men slightly. But the saw has done very little. Its only use has been to cut the field up into rafts of the required size, either 10 by 30 cakes or 20 by 60 cakes.

Arrived in the neighborhood of the houses, the men go aboard the raft with bars and by striking here and there in the lines cut by the plows separate the raft into smaller sections, each two blocks wide. These rafts are sent forward again and as they come to the foot of the incline up which the blocks must travel to the house another man goes along and cuts the float into

seems like an avalanche to the levels below.

Down in the icehouse there are other men, sitting at the side of the runway down which the blocks are hurled. They take such of the blocks as they can reach in time and drag them from the track and shoot them to this side or that of the great room. There men are awaiting the ice with poles and each block is placed in regular order till the great floor of the house is filled. Then another layer is placed on the first and a third on the second and so on, till the house is filled.

There is no sawdust between the layers, as there used to be, when ice was put up in the country. If the men stopped to make that provision they wouldn't get the crop in the warehouses till after the first of May. And every one knows that is no time to cut ice. All the provision made against melting is the stuffings of shavings and saw-