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Physical Degeneracy of Americans.

The Anglo-American nation of the U. States is in danger of becoming physically contemptible. Not from any natural causes—the foolish myth of *Bacon*, importing that a degradation, divinely ordained, in kind and in degree, in strength and in size, was branded upon all the animate and inanimate nature of the Western Hemisphere, was long ago exploded. Not only do our gigantic rivers and mountains surpass the dimensions of the geographical features of Europe, our giant pines her trees, our grizzly and Polar bears their Scandinavian ursine cousins, but the highest beauty of women is conceded unequalled by that of European dames; and, although the fact is not so widely known, there are whole races of men within the territories of the United States whose athletic size and manly beauty would render them the objects of public wonder and admiration in the countries of Europe. For instance, the hardy mountaineers of the eastern sections of Tennessee and Kentucky. It is known to many that, when the late Dr. Caldwell, (we think of Louisville, Kentucky,) and two or three companions, were studying medicine in England and France, they were counted of such towering size and symmetrical strength of form—altogether not remarkably large men at home—as to be called “The American Giants”; and even to be annoyed in public by the admiration of an attending crowd. Nor is there any truth in an assumption commonly made, on both sides of the Atlantic, that our climate is so dry and stimulating as to preclude the possibility of the development of firm and voluminous muscle, of well-rounded forms, of athletic and healthy frames, among the natives of the United States. Nor does the theory of a gradual acclimation of the Anglo-Saxon race to the new physical conditions of this continent militate against this proposition; for, even if it were necessary to allow that this were proven, it would, at most, imply a difference in *kind* between the Anglo-American and his European kinsman, but no *degradation* of the former. Hygienic conditions being equal, we need fear no comparison in beauty or strength, either with the paunchy puffiness of John Bull, the lymphatic beery bloom of the Teuton, or the wine-bibbing Frenchman.

We may sum the hygienic wickedness charged upon the Anglo-Americans of the United States, thus: We work too hard; we work, and live, and sleep in bad postures and in vitiated air; we exercise too little; we eat and drink too much, too fast, at wrong times, of food unwholesome in substance, and ill-cooked; we indulge in condiments, stimulants, noxious luxuries, and that at just the times when they harm us most; our women dress in garments skillfully adjusted to distort and disarrange both the outside and inside of the body, and to expose it to all possible risks from atmospheric changes; and we are dirty.

But this stomach and health question is also concerned with the destinies of our race and nation. High physical development makes conquering races; physical degradation accompanies their decline. The athletic training of the Greeks prepared them to endure such tremendous physical exertions as the marches of Alexander; the battles with the invincible Persian hosts; the great retreat of the ten thousand—a desperate struggle, which only the hardiest of men could have survived. The sturdy frame of the Roman Legionary was the postulate, which being granted, the Roman empire became possible. When the strong barbarians of the North destroyed that empire, they vanquished not such troops as Caesar's Tenth Legion, the Legion of the Lark, but a nation of deteriorated and almost emaciated men, weakened in muscle and constitution by hereditary physical decline—the decline of a nation unstrung and degraded by luxury, wealth and vice.

The English man, in like manner, is the necessary condition of the British empire. He is a large, strong, healthy man, and has been improving, as his cattle have, for a longer time. Bakewell, and his contemporaries, within a century began to improve the oxen, and horses, and sheep of England. The average of the men of England, from causes quite intelligible, but which we cannot stop to develop, has been improving for many centuries. The armor that fitted the stalwart warriors of the Crusades, or the knights of the Middle Ages, will not hold the Englishman of the nineteenth century. And so long as the English nation retains this physical vigor, it will retain its national strength and position.

We need no further instances from history. Are there facts of the like complexion extant and patent among ourselves? We shall suggest a very few. The average weight of Gen. Washington and his staff, men not selected for physical strength, and therefore more likely to furnish a fair average, was nearly two hundred pounds. They were heavier and stronger men than are usually seen to-day. Returned missionaries, after an absence of twenty-five or thirty years, after the substitution of only one generation for another, tell us they perceive a lower tone of general health, a more nervous, and leaner, and sallow type of physical frame, a more feverish, and exaggerated, and symptomatic activity, than marked the race which they remember to have left. Physicians observe, from laetum to laetum, a gradual increase and exacerbation of diseases which spring from unwholesome and disproportionate stress upon the brain and nervous system, and corresponding neglect of the health of the other framework of the body—the muscular, or respiratory, or digestive systems. Apoplexy, they say, and paralysis, and the fatal darkness of insanity, are yearly more frequent; and most frequent among the most active and laborious classes of our population. Our blood, even, which is the life, as the Scriptures, with nearly scientific truth, states its office—which nourishes all the rest of us—is absolutely corrupt; inasmuch that actual autopsy enables surgeons to declare that in more than half our population there is either a stromous taint—scrofula, in other words—or sure indications that it has existed, and has by care or good fortune been removed.

Reasons are not lacking to account for these phenomena. Trace for a moment the life of an American man. The chances are almost even, physicians say, almost fifty in the hundred—that he is born with an unhealthy constitution; that is, with an inadequate original supply of fund of life power—vitality—ability to live and act. This may very possibly cause him to die before he has lived ten years. But he survives his lives. Upon this original fund he forthwith begins to overdraw and anticipate in every possible way. A portion of it, he expends in digesting the cakes and candy, and lunches of his childhood. Another portion is used in fighting against the unhealthy atmosphere and crooked positions of the school-room, and the over-stimulated mental action, usually necessary to get his lessons. Then he leaves school and goes into business; learns to smoke and chew, and draws on the fund of life, against the exhaustions of the tobacco-stimulus; squirts a further portion of it through his front teeth, in the form of poisoned spittle; very probably adds other drafts to compensate the exhausting reaction of spirituous liquors, that stir the areas of the system into a sudden blaze, to let them fall into the inevitable furnace that follows. More drafts must meanwhile all the

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time maintain the life-long struggle of his stomach against hot food, and greasy food, and stimulating food, and indigestible food, and unseasonable food, and other phases of food in which the diabolical cunning of the devil, the proverbial instigator of cooks, could be supposed to present it, let his spite be as bitter and acute as it may be. More drafts, yet, however, upon the life-fund, to maintain the desperate battle of his brain; that tremendous struggle, which the wild whirl of our feverish commercial activity necessitates, even for the gaining of a moderate living. Is it any wonder, that, by middle age, the run upon the under-renewed deposits has exhausted them, the drafts dishonored—the reckless drawer utterly bankrupt in health the short remainder of his life—as, indeed, much of the former part has been—sickly, inefficient and unhappy; his children feeble, and crooked and crooked than he, a legacy of harm and sorrow to themselves, his country, and his race—living monuments of one wasteful life, and certificates of more? Our women do no better. Their experience in childhood, at school, in eating, is similar, except that it tells more heavily upon the delicate and impressible female constitution. And if they are less vicious in the two items of liquor and tobacco, they fully compensate for that irregularity by their immeasurable superiority in the art of suicide by dress. They jam their ribs in, and their abdomen out; they squeeze their interiors into such disarrangement that their hearts hang dangling and knocking painfully about without their natural support above the diaphragm, and their stomachs below it. They tie up their lungs tight; that diminishes the amount of their breathing; that keeps the blood impure, and sends it, dirty, and stagnant, to drag along through flabby muscle and inert brain, and indirectly to vitiate and degrade every manifestation of every bodily or mental faculty. Fit partners are such women for such men; and a sadly deteriorated race is the progeny of such parents! [N. Y. Times.

Incident at Mt. Vernon.

The following incident was narrated in a social circle, by a friend of ours, and as it may interest others as well as those to whom it was related, we shall endeavor to give it in his own words.

We had passed a pleasant hour in surveying the curiosities of the mansion, which was the resting place of the Father of his Country, and had just taken a lingering look at the cemetery, where sleeps the hallowed remains of the chieftain and patriot, and were approaching the inner gate to make our egress, when we were struck by the sight of an aged and decrepit negro woman, seated on the grass, apparently talking to herself. As we passed, she raised her voice and addressed us with: “Are you rich, young massa? Our conscience smote me. We had just parted with our last levy to ‘uncle Phil,’ the talkative and important eicrone of the place, and had not the wherewith to make her the customary present. ‘No,’ we answered, ‘we are poorer than you are, nunt; we have not a cent left to give you, and feel very sorry.’”

“Oh! young massa! I don’t mean are you rich in this world’s good, in gold and silver and precious stones; but are you rich in saving grace? Is your soul full with the unspeakable treasures of Jesus Christ?”

This was a *posse*! We were religious as the world goes; went to church regularly; said our prayers occasionally; and put our mite into the purse on Sunday; but beyond that, *ne plus ultra*. We considered ourselves a very exemplary individual, and this question to us was *mal a propos*. We were seriously at fault, and not knowing what to reply, stammered:—

“Well, really! I don’t know; believe not much better in that respect than others.”

“Do you pray, massa?”

“Yes, sometimes.”

“Pray without ceasing! Young gentlemen don’t think when they ride about, taking great pleasure, that the time will come when they be old and nobody care for dem.”

“Have you any children, aunty?” we asked, wishing to change the subject somehow or other, feeling a little disagreeable at this unexpected sermon.

“All dead! children, fader, molder, broder—all gone. But the Lor’ be praised! He has been good to his servant. Missus berry kind to her poor old nigger, and I lub her much; but den I lub de Lor’ more; dey is no such friend as he. Dis poor ole bin’ nigger has no such kin massa. Bless de Lor’! I’m happy! I de bless Savior make me happy! I so glad!”

She clasped her hands, and turned her sightless eyes to heaven. We turned to bid her good bye, and as we left she gave us a parting blessing.

“Gor A’mighty bless you, young massa!” Our friend remarked, he had heard sermons of every species of eloquence, but had never heard one which made a stronger or more lasting impression than the single exhortation recorded above, by the poor blind negro, “Are you rich, young massa?”

Corns are nature’s barricades; the skin hardens itself in order to afford protection to the inner and more delicate parts against an ill-fitting shoe, for whether too tight or too loose, the result is similar.

Corns are the deserved punishments of all pretenders and make-believes. You endeavor when younger, to persuade people to think that your understandings were less extensive than they really were, *ille hinc lacryma*; hence those outbursts of passion which invaded your daily give rise to; how instinctively is fended off, the tread of youth and beauty even, by the beau of forty-five. What unpleasant reminiscences of our infirmities, are these self same corns in dull weather, the very time when we need some extra exhilaration.

Never let anything harder than your finger nail ever touch a corn; paring it as certainly makes it take deeper root, as cutting a weed off at the surface. The worst kind of corns are controllable, as follows:

Soak the feet in quite warm water for half an hour before going to bed, then rub on the corn with your finger for several minutes some common sweet oil. Do this every night; and every morning, repeat this rubbing in of oil with the finger, bind on the toe during the day, two or three thicknesses of buckskin, with a hole in the center to receive the corn; in less than a week, in ordinary cases, if the corn does not fall out, you can pinch it out with the finger nail; and weeks, and sometimes months will pass away, before you will be reminded that you had a corn, when you can repeat the process. Corns, like consumption, are never cured, but may be indefinitely postponed. The oil

and soaking softens and loosens the corn, while the buckskin protects it from pressure, which makes it perhaps to be pushed out, by the under growth of the parts. [Hall’s N. Y. Journal of Health.

How to put off the Old Man.

Pass your hand over Deacon M.’s head, and about an inch and a half above, and a little forward of the ears, you find a protuberance which phrenologists call the bump of *acquisitiveness*.

By nature the Deacon loved mammon; by grace he loved God. Between them there was continual war. Both *loved*—one like *Michael*, the other like *the Devil*. As there was long war between the house of David and the house of Saul, so there was long war in the earthly house of the Deacon.

As with Gad, so with the Deacon; a troop overcame him, but he overcame at the last, as appears by the following circumstance.

In the same church with Deacon M. was a poor brother. This poor man had the misfortune to lose his cow. She died. To get him another, the good Deacon headed a subscription with five dollars, and paid it. This act disgusted mammon. Mammon, with true *Jealous* zeal, began to rant and rave: “Why this waste? charity begins at home; the more you give, the more you may; let people learn to take care of themselves.”

The Deacon was a Baptist; but he found that the baptismal water did neither drown, wash away, or wash clean the old man. The tempesty backed mammon, and putting a glass to the Deacon’s eye, showed him not the kingdoms and glories of this world, but the poorhouse, wretchedness, poverty and rags, and said: “All these things will your master give you in your old age as a reward of your charity.”

To still these clamors, Dea. M. went to the destitute man, and told him he must give back the five dollars. The poor man returned it. This last act roused the *NEW MAN*, and now nature and grace stood face to face.

To give, or not to give, that was the question.

There stood the Deacon, poised, balancing, and halting between two opinions. The Dea. spoke:—My brother, some men are troubled with their old women; I am troubled with my old man. I must put off my old man, as the Jews put off their new man—*crucify him, crucify him*. Then unstrapping his pocket-book, he took out a ten dollar bill and gave the poor man, saying, “There,” said the Deacon, “my old man, say another word and I’ll give him twenty dollars.” [Christian Secretary.

CARROTS FOR HORSES.—For two winters past I have fed my two horses upon carrots and hay; commencing with November, and ending about the first of April. During this length of time, I gave very little other grain, for carrots I consider grain, and fully equal to oats. My horses are in constant service on the road; and under this treatment, they usually come out at the end of the ‘pile’ looking better than when they commenced. My dose, is two quarts, morning, noon, and at night; four to each horse; they have as much good, sweet English hay as they will eat, and cut, whether fed to them dry or otherwise. This latter, I have always practiced, ever since I have had the management of horses; and I am satisfied that it is the cheapest and best way in which it can be given to the horse. There is no waste, and horses eat it better, and have more time to rest, which is quite an important consideration, where the horse is liable to be taken from the stable at any moment. I am satisfied there is no better way of feeding horses, nor is there any cheaper one—that I have ever tried, than the one here mentioned. If there is, will not some person who *knows* please report? I al ways cut them quite fine, before using. Carrots are most excellent for horses whose wind is affected—such as the heaves, &c. Those who have tried them for this purpose, will, I think, agree with me in this; if not, just try the experiment and be satisfied. They are usually cheap, compared with other articles of feed of equal nutritiousness. Last year I paid nine dollars per ton, this year eleven, and at the latter price I prefer them to oats—measured for measure.

Patent Office report: “A bushel of carrots, well cut up by a proper root-cutter, is as good as a bushel of oats for a working horse. I have tried the experiment (so have I, Mr. Editor) fully and satisfactorily. I have fed twelve quarts of sliced carrots instead of twelve quarts of oats, to a horse, the whole winter, and found no difference in the results. I gave hay with the carrots as we do with the oats.”

It is calculated that 276 pounds of carrots, are equal to 100 pounds of good hay, and that 52 pounds of meal or corn is equal to 100 pounds of hay. From these estimates—and I will venture to say they will be found pretty nearly correct—any person, so disposed, can easily satisfy himself, whether my method of feeding horses during the winter months is as cheap as any. Where horses are worked and kept in good condition at the same time, if not the best—that is generally the best which does its work the best and cheapest.

[N. E. Farmer.

KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT—All you that will keep late hours these cold winter nights in crowded heated rooms, until animal vigor and mental brightness are exhausted, and yet must breast the bleak winds of January to get home. I see nothing amiss in the festivities of friends and neighbors and kindred these long winter evenings; better that, than moping at home; nothing amiss in the glad reunions of the young and cheery-hearted, even though they may be extended once in a while to the wee short hours ayant the twal. I love to see gladness in all, at any hour of the twenty-four; but to do these things safely and long, make it a practice to observe two or three simple and easy precautions.

Before you leave, bundle up well—gloves, cloak, comforter—shut your mouth before you open the street door, and keep it resolutely closed until you have walked briskly for some ten minutes; then, if you keep on walking, or have reached your home, you may talk as much as you please. Not so doing, many a heart once happy and young now lies in the churchyard, that might have been young and happy still. But how? If you keep your mouth closed and walk rapidly, the air can only reach the lungs by the circuit of the nose and head, and becomes warmed before reaching the lungs, thus causing no derangement; but if you converse, large drafts of cold air dash directly upon the lungs, chilling the whole frame almost instantly. The brisk walking throws the blood

to the surface of the body, thus keeping up a vigorous circulation, making a cold impossible if you don’t get into a cold bed too quick after you get home. Neglect of these brings sickness and premature death to multitudes every year. See: Bronchitis and Kindred Diseases. [Hall’s N. Y. Journal of Health.

Hints on Draining.

Were I to build stone drains I would pursue the following course: If the stone were mostly flat, I would place two on their edges against the banks and lean their tops together in the shape of an inverted A, using no more than enough to stop the largest holes, and then fill with earth. If they are round cobbles, place two rows of stone one against each bank, making the water-course at all times large enough to discharge the water. Then round stone are better than flat ones for covering, as they hold the side stone more firmly to the banks, chink with small stone. Every stone that is used should lay one side of it to the water course, the other side the earth rests against. As to using straw in the drain, it is worth more to make your crops grow.

If drain tile and pipe are to be used for drains, two-inch pipe is large enough for a drain 30 or 40 rods in length, where no surface water comes from above the upper end of the drain; then three-inch tile should be used, which is sufficient to discharge the surface water from 4 or 5 acres. Four-inch tile will answer for 10 or 12 acres, and two of four-inch, laying one course the hollow side up, the other course on them, the top tile resting on two of the bottom tile, will answer for 25 or 30 acres; then use three courses of four-inch tile or stone; if tile, lay two courses of the one inch apart, then another course on them, and you have an outlet of nearly four courses, which is sufficient for 50 acres. If the subsoil is firm clay or stony land, lay the tile or pipe on the ground, if soft muck or quick sand, use boards to lay them on. If springs come out of the banks, in fine sand lay the tile in the drain, and if you have a bed of fine gravel with coarse sand among it enough to fill the crevices between the small pebbles, cover the tile a few inches with it for a strainer to stop the fine sand or good soil, or suds will answer. Shovel the subsoil on to the tile and keep the straw to help the crops grow.

In all cases lay the side drains that extend from the main drain parallel to each other directly up the rising grounds; these seldom have much water to discharge, and if the fine dirt in them gets into the main drain, that will carry it to the outlet. For thorough draining, I have them from 2 to 3 rods apart, according to the nature of the subsoil.

Frequently farmers say to me that they would use a good many tile, but they cannot hire the help to do it, or they are disappointed in help. Now nearly all the draining with tile should be done between fall and spring work. A man will open as much drain in the winter as he can in the month of June, if the ground is not frozen. Have the tile in the field ready, commence at the lower end, and open as much drain as can be finished that day, lay the tile in and cover by night, place a stone at the up end at night, and thus you can extend the work all winter when the ground is not frozen, and many a laboring man find employment that could not be hired in the summer. A. W. [Rural New-Yorker.

NO PLAGIARISM.—An article in Putnam’s Magazine for December in defence of the charge brought against Mr. Longfellow of plagiarism, defines in what this offence consists, and says:

“Not such are the poems of Mr. Longfellow. Take the Psalm of Life—than which a more remarkable accumulation of reminiscences is not to be found among his writings. The poem begins with Goethe: ‘Tell me not in mournful numbers,’ is nothing more than a translation of ‘Singer nicht in Trauertönen,’ the title of one of Calderon’s finest plays; ‘La Vida es Sueno’ furnishes the very next line; Schiller comes next, to tell us, ‘Ernst ist das Leben,’ and so on, with now a contribution from a Roman poet, and now from an English theologian, now from a Latin, and now from a Teuton, till we end with an old family motto.—Some of these reminiscences are simple versions, ‘conquered from the foreigners,’ as Voltaire conquered from Parnell his episode of the Hermit. Some, and particularly that famous adaptation of the fine passage in which some Jennings compares the throbbing of our hearts to the beating of drums on a funeral march, are perfectly legitimate embodiments in verse, of thoughts which had before been only clothed in prose; but the essential fact is that there is not one striking image, and hardly one striking phrase, in Mr. Longfellow’s Psalm of Life, which originated absolutely with himself.—More than this, the philosophy, the morals of the poem belong rather to Mr. Emerson than to Mr. Longfellow. And yet if you should read the Psalm of Life to a person of tolerable perceptions, who had never seen it, but was familiar with Mr. Longfellow’s minor poems, we would wager largely upon his rapid recognition of the author. The rhythm of the poem, and the way in which the thoughts are linked together, are both so thoroughly characteristic, that the man who would mistake their origin would deserve a place in history with the soldier to whom the Emperor Gallienus gave a medal for showing more talent in missing a mark than anybody he had ever seen.”

UPLAND CRANBERRIES.—In our last number, we copied a somewhat lengthy article from the Journal of Commerce, giving the details of cranberry culture on swampy land, in which some good hints will be found. Experiments are every year demonstrating that cranberries can be made a profitable crop on moist uplands. At the fair of the State Society in Gardiner, some very fine specimens of cranberries were exhibited by Mr. Robert Withee, of Gardiner, which he raised on moist upland. His statement relating his mode of cultivation will be published in the transactions of the Society. We last week received some samples of very large cranberries from our neighbor Mr. Benjamin King, of Winthrop, that grew on upland, without any cultivation, more than what they received from nature.

He related to us the following history of them: While moving in his lot he discovered a small patch of cranberry vines. This was in an upland field of grass, there being no water or boggy land near them. He moved around them. A year ago this fall he picked from the vines a quart of cranberries. The vines continued to spread among the grass, and this last season he picked four quarts. He

of course, did not mow them down either season, neither has he done anything to them in the way of cultivation.

If they should continue to increase every year in a quadruple proportion as they have during the past year, Mr. K. will soon have a large supply.

He supposes the seeds were deposited there by birds, as there are no cranberries growing very near to them.

No doubt if he were to thin out the grass from among them they would produce a larger crop, but they seem to be increasing pretty fast and the berries are certainly of good size.—We hope the crop will continue to increase, for when they produce well they are more valuable than the hay he would cut there. [Maine Farmer.

LEAP YEAR—THE LADIES.—Leap year has come again, when, by long established customs, ladies are privileged to ‘pop the question.’ Crusty old bachelors go about in terror, giving a wide berth to every pretty girl they meet, and blessing heaven for the invention of hoops, which prevents the fair creatures seizing them *ri et armis*. Sweet little creatures, for whom coy swains have long sighed in vain, pluck up courage, and by a few gentle hints, which are no longer unlady-like, bring the modest youths to the point. Manoeuvring mamma’s, thanking their stars that leap-year comes every four years, but secretly wishing also that it came every year, look for a fine harvest out of bashful lovers, and hurry their daughters ‘into society’ that they may take advantage of the blessed time. Even papas, rubbing their hands in glee, rejoice over the privileges of leap-year, as they calculate the annual cost of their daughters, and the per cent they could make out of that money if saved. Lucky leap year! Propitious leap year! The inventor of the happy custom ought to have a statue raised to him by the ladies. Or, if the inventor was a woman—for we doubt our sex having sagacity enough for such a splendid *coup de main*—they should honor her by a leap year festival, as the ancients honored Ceres.—[Phil. Ledger.

THE PROCLIVITIES of the age are towards every man becoming his own shoe black.—Newspaperdom is getting very, very. Every editor who can boast of a circulation of fifteen, dead heads and exchanges not included, sets himself up as Sir Oracle on every subject under the sun—some even going higher, not a few daring to interpret the meaning of scripture for the guidance of their readers, and meeting with no resistance, they have made bold to invade the time-honored domain of our Doctors. Now, having some considerable affinity for *Friends’* principles, we content ourselves with a decided protest, not however wishing it to be understood to guarantee a literal adherence, or that we might not ‘bolt’ if provocations are intensified.

We have no doubt that the world would be the better for it, if every newspaper in the land were to rigidly exclude from its columns everything which had a bearing on health, except such as referred to the daily habits of life, and even these to admit with caution, knowing, as we do, that many things which, at the first glance appear rational and useful, will not bear the light of investigation.

The N. Y. Observer for Nov. 27th, informs its readers that *teeth are rendered insensible to pain* by inserting a pill into the hollow of the tooth made of Canada Balsam and shucked lime, and that immediate relief is afforded in all toothaches but those arising from chronic inflammation—closing with the usual twaddle about its being safe, simple, and can be easily tried by any person. Suppose this were so, how many people know what Canada Balsam is, or where to get it? Certainly it would require less time to consult an intelligent dentist or physician, with the advantage of being on the safe side, for if it did arise from chronic inflammation, from a sac at the root, the pill, by hardening and closing the natural vent, would aggravate the pain to an extent unendurable, or force a fistulous ulcer in some part of the jaw. Our advice is, if anything is the matter with your teeth, go to a good dentist at once, and even if nothing is the matter, consult him twice a year, and compel each one of your children to do the same, from the age of five years up to the time of marriage, and these children will have reason to thank you for it to the close of life.—[Hall’s N. Y. Journal of Health.

OX YOKES IN WASHINGTON.—A correspondent of the Belfast Age says:

I have seen but one yoke of oxen here, as yet. They must have been in their teens—would grow, perhaps five feet and two inches, and a lumberman would say they looked as if they had been kept on sawdust and edgings, and the yoke they had on,—there, Barnum ought to have it—for it was the queerest thing; looking as if it had been scared through a crooked knot hole. A puritan mother would have whipped an only son, if he had brought her in such an ungainly, rough hewed thing for a fore stick. But, then, there is no such thing as a ‘universal genius,’ and as it takes all the ingenuity of the south to engineer the Union, they can’t of course exhibit much ingenuity in making ox yokes. That were too small business for great minds!

TO MAKE GOOD RUSK.—Take a piece of bread dough large enough to fill a quart bowl, one teaspoon of melted butter, one egg, one teaspoonful of saleratus; knead quite hard, roll out thin, lap it together, roll to the thickness of thin biscuit, cut out with a biscuit mould, and set it to rise in a warm place. From twenty to thirty minutes will generally be sufficient. Bake them, and dry thoroughly through and you will have an excellent rusk to eat with your coffee. You can make them with hop yeast and sweeten them too, if you choose; I use milk yeast.

Just and honest criticism is rare now-a-days, because it costs study, labor and knowledge. Under the dead head and black mail operation there is no medium; if the bookmaker and publisher do not come down properly, the considerate and honest critic gives a specimen of his skill in the slashing style commensurate with his wit or acquaintance with the commonplaces of vituperation and abuse. If every thing is made satisfactory, the critic deluges the author and publisher with soft soap phrases couched in pleasant superlatives. The consequence is that publishers are induced to put forth books that do not pay, and the public buys, and sometimes curses the newspaper puffery who has cheated it into a waste of time and money.—[N. Y. News.

‘Observations and Study on the Farm.’ No. 2.

Much has been written and said upon this subject, and much yet remains to be written; and although I may not present any new ideas I can at least give my own thoughts. My attention has been more particularly directed to it from reading Mr. Davis’s communication in the Mail of Dec. 27th. And I am glad that this subject is now receiving more notice than what it has had, and farmers generally seem to think more about it than they did a few years ago. And why should not a farmer keep a journal? There are no reasons why he should not, but many reasons why he should. What form shall be adopted, and what rules shall be followed in keeping a journal of the farm?—If a man has any degree of neatness, he will want his record to be as neat as he can make it, and for this purpose a blank-book that will cost about fifty or seventy-five cents, will be such a one as he will want. The leaves may be headed in a manner something like this.—

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Corresponding with the year, on the opposite page, may be written the month; the number at the right hand signifying the page. The above would be a simple, neat and convenient plan.

I am acquainted with a young agriculturist who kept a journal for many years, and was only discontinued because it was not of sufficient interest to him to write it. This is a specimen of his journal, being his record for one week:

“Jan. 3. Snowed very hard all day. Done nothing.
“ 4. Snowed in the A. M., cleared off early.
“ 5. Hauled wood. Nothing important.
“ 6. Cut wood in A. M.; hauled wood in P. M.
“ 7. Hauled a load of wood to the village.
“ 8. A very cold day. Went to mill.
“ 9. Attended church. Cold.”

Can such a record be interesting or in the least profitable? Only think of page after page being filled up with such daily entries as the above; and all that can be said in praise of a journal kept in the above manner, is that it might encourage method, but aside from that it could be of but very little use. The following selected from a journal of a farmer’s son, are specimens of what a little *imaginative writing*, together with the real incidents, will accomplish. A little experience in writing and some imagination would make a Farm Record more interesting, and where can one better practice this, than in his journal? But the extracts:

“Saturday, 17th. My stars! it has snowed! Then this is the first snow storm, of which poets tell us so much. We did have a little flurry a few weeks ago, but it went off again as soon as the sun came out. But this is the first snow that has covered the fences and the ground with its whiteness; which has loaded the trees with their winter foliage of white and green, and covered the roofs of the houses with ice and snow.—All hail! first snow storm of the season. I hope that now you have made us a call, and given us a little break in what we shall have to endure by-and-by, you will go north and stay for a few weeks before you come to our regular visitor.”

“Wednesday, 25. Have been hauling wood to-day. We have now a team of our own, and are not obliged to hire oxen. Our teams are small yet to be sure,—only two years old—but they are large, and give as good a service as our oxen. They are small, but they are ours, and I think we use our oxen carefully and easy, they will after we get them a little used to work, haul quite a load; but when they are small they must be worked according to their strength. There are people who do not seem to think but that a steer two years old has his full strength; at any rate the loads that some put on them would seem to say as much, but a merciful man is merciful to his beasts.”

If a person wishes too, a great many items and occurrences connected with his labor, and the amount of produce raised on his farm might be recorded with interest and practical value. The above thoughts and extracts are not intended as *models*, but only as *forms*.

Many people seem to think that the occupation of a farmer is one devoid of interest, and is supposed to furnish nothing of any importance, or not of sufficient importance to record. This, however, is a great error. Besides keeping an account of the daily incidents and scenes as they occur, the thoughts which such occurrences would naturally suggest might be valuable, or at least interesting to the writer. And then besides noting the incidents of the week; much might be copied, and thus preserved for future reference. The newspapers of the day contain many important, valuable facts; but they are liable to get lost or mislaid. Now such facts might be copied into a journal with very little time and trouble. You see in a paper a useful receipt, or an account of a big yoke of oxen, or a large hog, or some item that interests you; copy it the next spare moment you have, and whenever you wish to recall it to mind you will not be obliged to hunt over a large pile of papers in pursuit of it and then not find it.

But one might say: ‘I have no taste for such a thing, and should not know what to record.’ I answer, cultivate a taste, and record in your journal anything connected with your daily life on the farm that interests you. Some days you might write more, and at other times less; when tired or in a hurry, a few lines would be sufficient, and again when your thoughts run clear, and your leisure would allow, a page instead of a few sentences might be written. A practical farmer of my acquaintance, a precise and very methodical man, has the different bands in his barn numbered, and he inserts in his journal, the time when he commenced using the hay from such a band and how long it lasts.

But one might say ‘I have no time!’ There, that is the last excuse, and a very poor one, too. I answer, take time. Only make it a rule of your daily life to write each night, and nothing would be more easy than to do it.—Now is the time to commence such a journal, for those who do not now do it. At the commencement of this new year, farmers and farmers’ sons, begin to keep a daily record: a journal of your farms, being your own judges of what to write and how to write it.

There are many important questions in Mr. Davis’s communication which I should like to see answered, and I am sorry that I cannot reply to them all, or even to a single question. But I appeal to farmers who have had more experience than I have had, to do it; and I take the liberty to append another to the list.

‘What are the properties of muck as a manure; and is it best when put on soil and plowed under or is it better when worked over one year, in a barn yard and then used? Will some one furnish the readers of the Mail, an answer to this inquiry, and also answer the questions proposed by Mr. Davis?’

LANE BOARDMAN.

Norridgewock, Jan. 1, ‘56.

