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JOHN WALTON'S FARM.

'Haden't you better subscribe for it?' I tell you, no. I hain't got the money to spare. And if I had, I hain't got the time to waste over newspapers, said Eben Sawyer, with some emphasis.

'But you will gain much information from it, in the course of a year, sir,' pursued John Walton.

'I tell you, I don't want it!'

'Well, what say you, Mr. Grummet, shan't I have your name?'

'No, sir!' This was spoken so flatly and bluntly, that Walton said no more; but folded up the prospectus of a periodical which he had with him, and then turned away.

Eben Sawyer and Ben Grummet were two old farmers—that is, old at the business, though they had only reached the middle age of life, and after their young neighbor had gone they expressed their opinions concerning him.

'He'll never make a farmer,' said Sawyer, with a shake of the head. 'He spends too much time over them papers and books of his'n. He's a little mite above farmin', in my opinion.'

'Them's my sentiments,' responded Grummet. 'I tell you Eben, the man that thinks to make a livin' on a farm in this section, has got to work for it.'

At this juncture Sam Bancroft came along. He was another old native of the district.

'We was just talkin' about young Walton,' said Sawyer.

'I've jes' come from there,' replied Sam. 'He's been borin' me to sign for a paper, but he couldn't come it.'

'Ha, ha, so he bored us. He's gettin' a little too high sp' for a farmer.'

'He's rippin' his barn floor up,' said Bancroft.

'Rippin' the floor up!' repeated Grummet. 'Why, Mr. Amiden had the whole floor put down new only three years ago.'

'The tie-up floor, I mean,' pursued Bancroft. 'He's got a carpenter up from the village; and his two hired men are helpin'.'

'When I guess he'll make a farmer!'

And so they all guessed—with a reservation. In short there was something highly ridiculous in the thought of a man's thinking to be a farmer and a student at the same time; and all sorts of jests were discharged over it.

John Walton was a young man, some five and twenty, and though he had been born in the neighborhood, yet much of his life had been spent in other sections of the country. His parents both died when he was quite young, and his father's farm passed into the hands of Mr. Amiden. But now John had married, and he meant to be a farmer; and his thoughts naturally turned to the old homestead. He found Amiden willing to sell, and he bought, paying two thousand dollars down, and giving a note and mortgage for five hundred, which had been cashed by Mr. Piddon.

This farming district was upon a broad ridge of land, which had been cleared for a great many years; and though they were the handsomest and smoothest looking farms in town, yet they were by no means the best. The summit of the ridge was crowned by a ledge of granite, and the soil, over the whole broad swell, was more or less wet and cold. This was particularly the case with John Walton's farm, some portions of it being wholly unfit for cultivation. There was one field of over twenty acres, one of the smoothest and prettiest located fields in town, which was never fit for ploughing. The soil was so wet and heavy that it could not be worked to any advantage. It had been mowed year after year, yielding about three quarters of a ton to the acre of poor, wild, weedy hay. Yet there were other sections which were good, and Mr. Amiden had gained fair crops while he lived there.

Ben Grummet had a curiosity to see what was going on in Walton's barn, so he dropped in there. He found that the whole of the floor, where the cattle stood, had been torn up, and that they were digging a wide, deep trench, the whole length of the tie-up.

'What on airth is all this for?' asked Ben.

'Why,' returned Walton, who was busy in superintending the work, and also in working himself, 'I am having a place fixed here for making manure. I mean to fill this trench up with good muck, and then save the liquids which have heretofore been lost. I think, by proper management, I can get full double the quantity of manure which others have got in this place.'

'Do ye?' said Grummet sarcastically.

'Yes,' resumed the young man. 'It is a fact that the liquid manures, could they be saved, would fully equal the solids, both in bulk and value; and when combined with well rotted muck, and some other articles which shall take up and retain all the more volatile parts, I feel sure they will afford more fertilizing powers and properties than the solid manures can.'

'You don't say so! Where d'ye learn all that?'

'Partly from reading, and partly from observation,' answered John, smiling at his good neighbor's open sarcasm.

'I don't e'pose it costs anything to do all this?'

'O, yes, it will cost me considerable before I get through.'

'Yas, I should rather kalkilate 'twould!'

Ben Grummet spoke this very slowly, and with a good deal of meaning; and when he had looked on a few minutes longer, he went away.

'I swan!' he cried, as he met Sawyer shortly afterwards. 'John Walton's a regular bilfist. He's jes' about as nigh to bein' crazy as a man can be!'

'Oh, crazy, Ben?'

'O! I don't mean rarily upst, like them folks who has to be sent to the insane asylum; but he's got his head full of all sorts of nonsense. He's got his tie-up floor all torn away, and a trench dug there big enough to hold more'n twenty cart loads of dirt.'

'But what in nature's he goin' to do?'

'Why—he's goin' to save the liquids, as he calls 'em! An' he's goin' to put in somethin' to take up the vol—voluntary parts.'

'Voluntary parts?—what's them, Ben?'

'It was vol—voluntary. But I don't know. I wouldn't ask him. I e'pose he jest used the outlandish word, so's to get me to ask him what it meant, an' then he'd show off his learnin'. But I wadn't so green.'

'I wonder if he thinks he's a comin' here to learn us old farmers how to work?' said Sawyer, rather indignantly.

'I guess he thinks so,' returned Grummet.

'Then I guess he'll find out his mistake, an' then he'll go. Jes' you mark my words, Ben. He'll be flat on his back afore two years is out!'

And there were not the only ones who looked on for the same thing. The idea of a man's coming in there with any such new fangled notions was absurd. Their fathers, and their fathers' fathers, had worked on that same ridge, and they wanted nothing better than

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what their honored progenitors had had before them.

Autumn came, and after John Walton had mowed over the twenty-acre field, getting hardly hay enough to pay for the labor, he set men at work digging deep trenches all over it. He had two dug lengthwise, running up and down the slope; and then he dug quite a number running across these. They were quite deep and broad, and into them he tumbled nearly all the stones that could be found in the fields.

'A pretty expensive way of gettin' rid o' rocks,' remarked Grummet.

'It's a better place for them than on the surface, isn't it?' returned Walton with a smile.

'Maybe. But what on earth are you doin' for?'

'Why, I am going to see if under-draining won't improve the land.'

'Under draining! What's that?'

'It is simply drawing off the water from the surface. This land is cold and wet; but if I can get the water to drain off among these rocks, the sun may warm the surface, and give me a good piece of soil here.'

But it looked very foolish to Ben Grummet. He believed that 'what was the nature of the soil couldn't be altered.' However the young man made his trenches, tumbled in the rocks, filled in on top with the loam he had originally removed; and then left it to work for itself a while. A month later he plowed up two acres of it, and he could see that the soil had already changed wonderfully. After this was done he cut his way to the muck-swap, and went to hauling out that article, which he deposited in various places, as he deemed proper.

'That's a curious contrivance,' said Sam Bancroft. He and Ben Grummet had been at work for Walton at hauling muck. He alluded to a large vat back of the house, into which ran a spout from the sink. This vat was capable of holding several cart-loads of stuff, and was already half full.

'That's a compost vat,' exclaimed Walton, who had overheard the remark. 'All the slops from the house, the soap-suds, and such stuff, which most people waste, I save by this means, and turn it to good account; and instead of throwing away refuse matter, I put it in here, and let it rot and ferment and make manure.'

'But what's the charcoal dust for?'

'It answers two purposes, though by only one office. It takes up the ammonia, and other volatile matter, thus holding them for fertilizing agents, and at the same time prevents the disagreeable effluvia which would otherwise arise from such a fermenting mass.'

'That all sounds very pretty,' remarked Ben, after Walton had left him; but let me jes' tell you it won't pay! He'd better let sich fandangels alone if he ever expects to make a livin' at farmin'.'

Before the ground froze up, Walton threw out most of the muck back of the tie-up, which had become well saturated, and filled the trench up anew.

The old settlers upon the ridge had set out a great many apple-trees, and made a great deal of cider; but the fruit was mostly wild, and of an inferior quality. When spring came, Walton went to some of his neighbors and asked them to go in with him, and send for some good scions to engraft upon their apple-trees. He explained to them just the plan he had formed for his own orchard. He had engaged a competent man to come and do the work of grafting, and while they were about it, it would be cheaper to get grafts enough for the whole neighborhood.

'How much will it cost you?' asked Sawyer.

'Why,' returned Walton, 'I'm going into mine pretty thoroughly. My orchard is a very large one, as is yours; and, like yours, the trees are mostly thrifty and vigorous, or could be made so, but with very poor fruit. I mean to make a thorough thing of it, and shall probably expend a hundred dollars this spring.'

'What! a hundred dollars!—in your orchard?'

'Jes'hitaker an' broomsticks! When I git money to play with I'll try it.'

It was of no use. The old orchards were just such as their fathers had, and they were good enough. So Walton went at it alone. He had his trees all pruned and dressed, and nearly all of them grafted to such fruit as he thought would thrive best and sell best.

A little while later Ben Grummet had occasion to open his eyes. He found that John Walton had contrived to have a hundred and forty full loads of manure, all of which had been made within the year. However, he finally shook his head and said, 'Wait. We'll see if it is good for anything.'

A little while later, and the grass began to spring up on the twenty-five acre lot as it had never sprung up before. The two acres which had been plowed, harrowed up light and fine, and bore the best crop of corn that was raised on the whole ridge; and all the manure put upon it was some which had been manufactured.

And so the time went on, and John Walton was continually studying how to improve his farm. At the expiration of a few years the new scions had grown large and strong in his orchard, and began to bear fruit. He had taken care of his trees, and they were about to return him interest for the labor.

'Good gracious!' ejaculated Eben Sawyer, as Ben Grummet and Sam Bancroft came into his house one cool autumn evening, the three filled their mugs with new cider, 'have you heard about John Walton's apples?'

'I know, there was a man up to look at 'em,' returned Ben; 'but I hain't heard no more.'

'Well, I was there, and heard the whole on't so I know, but I never would've thought it. An orchard turn out like that!'

'But how much was it?'

'Why, Walton was offered, cash right down five hundred an' thirty dollars, for the apples he's got on hand; and he tells me that he sent nearly two hundred dollars worth of early fruit off a month or more ago.'

'It was wonderful, more than wonderful. But they had to believe it.'

'And jes' look at that twenty-acre field,' said Bancroft. 'Ten years ago it wouldn't hardly pay for mowin'. It didn't bear much else but podgins. Now look at it. Think of the corn and wheat he's raised there; an' this year he cut more'n forty tons of good hay from it!'

'But that ain't half,' interposed Sawyer.

'Look at the stock he keeps; an' jes' see what prices he gets for his cows and oxen. We laughed at him when he paid so much for the new breeds of sheep and cattle he got some years ago; but jes' look at 'em now. Why he tells me he's cleared over a thousand dollars this year on his stock.'

At this moment Mr. Walton came in. He had grown older, and was somewhat stouter, than when he first settled upon the ridge and became a farmer; and his neighbors had ceased to question his capacity, and had come to honor and respect him.

'We was jes' talkin' about you Mr. Walton,' said Sawyer.

'Ah,' returned John, as he took a seat by the fire, 'I hope you found nothing bad to say of me.'

'Not a bit of it. We was talking about the wonderful improvements you made on the old place, and of the money you make.'

'And do you think it wonderful!'

'But ain't it?'

'Well,' replied Walton, 'I don't know about that; but I'll tell you what I do know. I know there is no class in the world who may study the arts and sciences to better advantage than farmers; and yet, I am sorry to say, there is no class occupying the same social position who read and study less. Farming is a science, one of the most deep and intricate, and he must be a man of more than ordinary capacity who can master it all. I have but just begun to learn what may be learned in farming. In short there is no branch of industry in the world which may not be followed to better advantage with than without a good education. But farmers must not be afraid of books. They won't, if they are wise, follow every advice which experimentalists give, but they may study and reason and experiment for themselves. So, I have done, and so I mean to do.'

'He's right,' remarked Ben Grummet, after Walton had gone. 'What fools we was that we didn't go into that graffin' operation.'

'And that under-drainin',' added Bancroft.

'And that muck and compost arrangement,' suggested Sawyer.

'Well,' said Ben, with a serious face; 'it isn't too late now. They say, it's never too late to learn; and I'm sure it hadn't ought to be too late to commence to improve after a body has learned.'

'That's so,' replied Eben Sawyer.

'True as a book,' added Bancroft.

'And I'm goin' into it.'

'So am I.'

'And I.'

A HARMLESS RECREATION.—The following colloquy took place between an enthusiastic admirer and player of a game of ball, and a gent whose regard for his personal comfort led him to eschew such 'unruly sports,' as he termed them.

'What is the matter with your fingers?'

'Struck by a ball and drove up,' was the reply; 'but it is a noble game.'

'Precisely—and your thumb; it is useless is it not?'

'Yes; struck by a ball, and broken.'

'That finger joint?'

'A ball struck it; no better game to improve a man's physical condition; strengthens one's sinews.'

'You walk lame, that foot, isn't it?'

'No; it's the—the—well, a bat flew out of a player's hand, and hit my knee pan. He had the innings.'

'One of your front teeth is gone?'

'Knocked out by a ball; an accident, though.'

'Your right hand and your nose have been peeled, how's that?'

'Slipped down—at second base—a mere scratch.'

'And you like all this kind of fun?'

'Glory in it, sir. It is a healthy game, sir.'

A PARAGRAPH MATRIMONIAL.—Choosing a wife is a perilous piece of business. Do you suppose there is nothing of it but evening visits, bouquets, and popping the question? My dear, simple, young man, you ought not to be trusted out by yourself alone! Take care that you don't get the gift China article, that looks exceedingly pretty until the gift and ornament are rubbed off, and then is fit only for the dust-pile! A wife should be selected on the same principles as a calico gown. Bright colors and gay patterns are not always the best economy. Get something that will wash and wear. Nothing like the suns and showers of matrimony to bleach out these deceptive externals! Don't choose the treasure by gaslight, or in a prior sitting. Broad day light is the best time; a kitchen the most sensible place. Bear in mind, sir, that the article once bargained for, you can't exchange it if it don't suit. If you buy a watch and it don't run as you expected, you can send it to a jeweler to be repaired; in the case of a wife, once paired, you can't re-pair. She may run in the wrong direction—very well, sir; all that is left for you is to run after her, and an interesting chase you will probably find it. If you get a good wife, you will be the happiest fellow alive; if you get a bad one, you may as well sell yourself for two and sixpence, at once! Just as well to consider all these things beforehand, young man!—[Life Illustrated.]

SEVERE BUT TRUE.—The Boston Transcript draws the following not very complimentary picture of our national legislative body:

At present it is notorious that the American Congress is a mob, devoting months to individual or sectional squabbles, and a day or two toward the close of the session, to the practical business of the country. Appropriation bills are voted in those rare intervals, in which indifference succeeds the exhaustion of personal enmities, and the people are plundered more in the last five days of the session than in the first months. They can afford to pay the high price their representatives charge for their pranks during nineteen twentieths of the session; they are entirely overcome by the stupidity, leaviness, or recklessness, which characterizes the transactions of the remaining fraction of time.

A QUERY FOR DAIRYMEN.—Do cows yield milk in proportion to their weight? was asked by Mr. Copeland of Ohio, to the Cultivator, a few months since. Abel Kram, a dairyman of Cherry Valley, O., in the Ohio Farmer, says:—'I have no hesitation in answering that cows do yield milk in proportion to their live weight. On the contrary, I think that very great size or weight has been obtained

at the expense of the milking properties. This question, I believe, is well settled in the minds of practical dairymen; and I have never known a successful dairyman who preferred cows of great size. The dairyman expects to milk a good cow as long as she does well, say six, or eight, or more years. It is of no consideration to him that a cow will make two or three hundred more pounds of beef when fattened for the butcher; for if she subject him to two or three dollars additional expense per year for her keeping, and at the same time make forty or fifty pounds less cheese than the medium sized cow, it is easy to see that he keeps her at a loss. No doubt breeding may have much to do in producing a race of good milking cows, but so far as my experience and observation go, I am satisfied that the medium sized cow has a great advantage, upon the short pastures of our dairy farms, over a large sized animal.'

Coloring of Nature and Art.

Now, in the pleasant Spring time, when nature awakes from her winter's repose, and puts on her floral robes, the denizens of our cities and villages seek to enjoy the beauties of rural life in the arrangement of their gardens and the cultivation of flowers. This is a delightful and elevating recreation, for there is implanted in our constitution the same capacity for deriving pleasure from viewing colors by the sense of sight as from drinking in the strains of music—they impart most pleasure when arranged most harmoniously with regard to their several hues. This harmony is governed by laws with which too many are unacquainted; a few words therefore, on this topic will not be inapplicable at present.

That which we call color, in flowers, is simply their powers of reflecting and transmitting the rays of light which fall upon them. There are three primary colors in nature—red, blue and yellow; and these must always be associated to produce harmony. On this subject Chevreul, the distinguished French chemist says: 'The principal rule to be observed in the arrangement of flowers is to place those which are blue next to those of orange; the violet next to the yellow, while red and pink are never seen to greater advantage than when surrounded by verdure, or by white flowers. The latter may also be advantageously dispersed among groups of blue and orange; also of violet and yellow flowers.'

These associations of color as stated by the French author do not offend the taste by the mingling of discordant hues. This is a study which affords wide scope for observation. Complementary colors always harmonize; and colors are said to be complementary, which form a white beam in combination. Thus red and green are complementary, because the latter is composed of blue and yellow, which, with the red, embrace all the primary colors in a ray of light. Crimson and orange are also complementary; and so with other combinations. Green foliage and flowers are complementary, and nature has provided these hues with an admirably hand. Roses and geraniums, with their green leaves are great favorites, and even in mid-winter ripe red berries are frequently seen peeping out from among evergreen boughs, in order to replace with their modest beauty, the sleeping roses of departed summer. Some persons may suppose, from what has been stated, that the green leaves of flowers may sometimes destroy the proper effect arising from the contrast of color; but Chevreul asserts that green leaves are a proper ground for all flowers, and never produce discord in the vision.

This subject has lately engaged the attention of some great minds. Sir Gardner Wilkinson, in his recent work 'On Color and the Necessity for a General Diffusion of Taste among all Classes,' devotes a large space to the arrangement of flowers in gardens, as it regards their color and forms. The principal colors which he recommends are blue, red, pink, purple, lilac, yellow, orange, white and scarlet; and he gives a table covering nine pages, containing the names of many plants with their different colors and periods of blooming. When arranged in beds, he recommends that each plot should have flowers of the same size, and that they should all bloom at the same period. In this view he is correct; yet this is a feature in gardening, which is continually overlooked. Large and tall, small and short flowers are frequently planted helterskelter, in beds apparently upon the principle that profusion is the very essence of beauty. In contracted spaces the flowers selected should be small, while in larger gardens they may be more stately. The reason of this is obvious. A few large flowers, by occupying a large space, must convey an idea of dwarfedness to a small garden, but it is far otherwise when modest little flowers are chosen for their blushing beauty as suitable to such a situation.

The beautiful in nature is a gift, which may be and should be enjoyed by the humblest, as well as the highest. The mechanic's cottage with its little flower garden may be enriched with all the harmonies of color, and the latter may exhibit in tasteful miniature the best arranged garden of the wealthy. It affords us pleasure to state that most of our gardeners and many of our ladies and mechanics are well acquainted with the cultivation of flowers, and they exhibit great taste in their arrangement, but very few of them have studied the law of simultaneous contrast of color, and hence they frequently place together flowers of colors that produce discord; whereas, by a just arrangement in the same bed, they would produce a more pleasing effect. In regard to the effects of color, we conclude by quoting the following eloquent passage by Sir David Brewster:—

'He who exhibited such matchless skill in the organization of material bodies, and such exquisite taste in their formation, has super-added that ethereal beauty which enhances their permanent qualities, and presents them to us in the ever-varying character of the spectrum. Without this the foliage of vegetable life might have filled the eye and fostered the fruit which it veils, but the youthful green of its Spring would have been blent with the dying yellow of its autumn. If the objects of the material world had been illuminated with white light, all the particles of which possess the same degree of refrangibility, and were equally acted upon by the bodies on which they fall, all nature would shine with a leaden hue, and all the combinations of external objects, all the features of the human countenance, would have exhibited no other variety than that which they possess in a pencil sketch or a Chinese ink drawing. The rainbow itself would have dwindled into a narrow arch of white

light, the stars would have shone through a grey sky, and the mantle of a wintry twilight would have replaced the golden vesture of the rising and setting sun.'

[Scientific American.]

SENATOR WADE AND NORTHERN BACKBONE.—That lively little sheet, the Mac-a-Cheek Press, speaking of the absurd practice of stiffening Northern back-bone, says:

Senator Wade inaugurated this absurd practice of setting up Northern backbone. A short time after taking his place in the Senate he was grossly attacked by a Senator from the Slave State. Wade retorted in his peculiar style. The next day a gentleman called on the Senator from Ohio and asked the usual question touching his acknowledgment of the code.

'I am here,' he responded, 'in a double capacity. I represent the State of Ohio, and I represent Ben Wade. As a Senator, I am opposed to dueling. As Ben Wade, I recognize the code.'

'My friend feels aggrieved,' said the gentleman, 'at what you said in the Senate yesterday, and will ask for an apology or satisfaction.'

'I was somewhat embarrassed,' continued Senator Wade, 'by my position yesterday, as I have some respect for the Chamber. I now take this opportunity to say what I then thought, and you will, if you please, repeat it. Your friend is a fool-mouthed old black-guard.'

'Certainly, Senator Wade, you do not wish me to convey such a message as that?'

'Most undoubtedly I do; and will tell you for your own benefit, this friend of yours will never notice it. I will not be asked for either retraction, explanation, or a fight.'

This proved to be true. No further notice was taken of the affair. But since then Senator Wade has been treated with distinguished consideration.

BRANDY AND HEALTH.—A glass of brandy can't hurt anybody. Why I know a person, yonder he is now, on high exchange, a specimen of manly beauty, a portly six-footer. He has the bearing of a prince, for he is one of our merchant princes. His face wears the hue of health; and, at the age of forty, he has the quick, elastic step of our young man of twenty-five, and I know that he never dines without brandy and water, and he never goes to bed without a terrapin or oyster supper, with plenty of champagne; and more than that he was never known to be drunk. So here is a living example and disproof of the temperance twaddle about the dangerous tendency of an occasional glass, and the effect of a temperate use of good liquors.

Now it so happened that this specimen of safe brandy-drinking was a relation of ours. He died in a year or two after that of a chronic diarrhoea, a common end of those who are never out of liquor. He left six children, and he had ships on every sea, and credit at every counter, which he never had occasion to use.

Four months before he died (he was a year dying) he could eat or drink nothing without distress; and the whole alimentary canal was a mass of disease; in the midst of his millions, he died of inanition. This is not the half, reader. He had been a steady drinker, a daily drinker, for the last twenty-eight years. He left a legacy to his children which we will not mention. Scrofula has eaten up one daughter of fifteen; another is in the mad house, the third and fourth were of uncertain beauty, but they blighted and paled, and faded into heaven, we trust, in their sweetest teens; another is tottering on the verge of the grave, and only one of them is left with all his senses, and each one of them is as weak as water. Why, we came from the dissecting room and made a note of it, it was so horrible.

[Hall's Journal of Health.]

CAUSES OF NEURALGIA.—Dr. Parsons of Rhode Island, in an essay on neuralgia, states, that of the local causes of neuralgia, the most frequent undoubtedly, is exposure to cold and wet, and that these attacks are most common in the earlier months of Spring. A residence in cold, damp situations and climates is a predisposing cause. Bellinger analyzed the history of forty cases, and found thirty-four of them attributable, as he believed, to exposure to this kind. A cold, dry, and piercing wind, or sitting in a current of air, and sitting long in wet clothing, are the exciting causes most often and distinctly recognized; indeed, any agent which deranges the circulation of the surface for a long time, so that a proper reaction is not established, is capable of inducing attacks. The forms of neuralgia most often produced in this way are thought to be facial and sciatic. The branches of the fifth nerve are distributed over a large extent, many of them are quite near the surface, and the part they supply, the face, is habitually most exposed to changes of temperature. The sciatic nerve is deeply covered, but its fibrous envelope is of denser structure than the neurilemma of other nerves, more allied to the textures usually invaded by rheumatism; it is found, accordingly, that it is very liable to an affection completely analogous to rheumatism in its nature and course.

Exposure to heat has sometimes produced neuralgic attacks, as in the case of a cook who had to stand over a hot fire a great deal. Direct mechanical injuries are not among the most common causes. Bellinger analyzed a forty cases, and found but two of them from injury. In several cases proceeding from this cause, the disease has continued for months or even years after the accident; and the origin of the symptoms has been shown by their immediate subsidence upon making an incision over the part.

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS.—What we are aiming at, is to show the little reliance to be placed upon that system of manuring which teaches to supply to the roots of the plant as fertilizers, those mineral elements which the chemist has chanced to find in the ashes of the plant. We do not yet know what mineral elements (how many or in what proportion) are to be considered essential to the growth and perfection of any one plant.

Agricultural chemists have all along claimed that silica is absolutely necessary to give strength and stiffness to the straw of wheat, oats, rye, etc. Prof. S. W. Johnson, in a lecture at the recent Agricultural Convention at New Haven, unsettled this theory, which has been considered one of the most firmly settled points of agricultural chemistry.

Thus, he asked: 'If an abundance of silica

gives the firm texture to the oat stalk, how is it that the leaves and chaff are so soft and pliable, when chemical analyses show that these contain three times as much silica as the firm straw? The answer would seem to be, that the silica has nothing to do with the strength of the straw, but that it is simply due to a close texture, and that the excess of silica found in the leaves and chaff is left there by the larger amount of sap evaporated from those parts.—Silica (sand) is abundant in all soils, and is carried up by the sap freely.

A plant may be soaked and washed

ificable indicating that such a thing was imbedded therein, until it was struck upon with an axe. Upon examination, it was ascertained that the hatchet was stuck there when the tree had about thirty years growth, and that it had remained there more than two centuries, as more than two hundred years growth of the tree was counted outside of where the hatchet lay.

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EPH. MAXHAM, J. DANIEL WING, EDITORS.

WATERVILLE, MAY 10, 1860.

AGENTS FOR THE MAIL.

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S. R. NILES, (successor to V. B. Palmer), Newspaper Advertiser, No. 100 Broadway, New York, is authorized to receive advertisements at the same rates as required by us.

Advertisements abroad are referred to the agents named above.

ALL LETTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS, relating either to the business or editorial departments of this paper, should be directed to "MAXHAM & WING, or 'THE EASTERN MAIL OFFICE'."

The Best Farm Stock.

We made a brief call, a few days ago, at the farm of Warren Percival, Esq., in Vassalboro', and were so struck with the superiority of his farm stock, as a whole, that we resolved to make a note of it. We doubt whether another farm in Kennebec, of equal size, can exhibit as many superior and as few inferior animals.

Mr. Percival's stock consists of five horses, twenty-six neat cattle, some eighty to ninety sheep, and a choice variety of breeding swine. His whole flock of sheep consists of 240, about 150 being kept elsewhere.

His horses belong not to the fancy department, but are raised with reference to the interests of the farm. They consist of a breeding mare 11 years old, of good blood and an excellent worker; a well trained 4-year-old gelding, two 2-year-olds, and a yearling. The practical farmer can readily see how well this department is adapted to the other branches—embracing extensive tillage and considerable road service—to which the farm is subject.

But his superior Durham and grade Durham stock is the attractive feature of Mr. Percival's establishment. Five full blood and four grade Durham cows, though by no means the choicest part of this, we believe would compare favorably with any nine cows to be found on one farm in Maine. Five of these have calves from one week to three months old, and four are yet to "come in" by the celebrated "Earl of Warwick." A couple of 2-year-old and one yearling heifers, full blood, and three grade Durhams, with calf, are also among the best stock of the farm. Five calves, all of choice blood, promise well for the future of one of the best, if not the best, Durham herds to be found in this section of Maine. We have not seen its equal.

Mr. Percival's flock of sheep consists of 240; of which only some 80 of the best ewes are now on the farm and dropping their lambs. These average very large; and though not of a degree of fineness of fleece to meet our idea, the design of the owner is to improve them in this respect by crossing with finer bucks. A few years under his judicious management will make his flock a lesson for Kennebec farmers to study. He has some very good bucks, especially in size and shape, which, with the degree of fineness we believe to be attainable, would be nearly perfect animals. For their owner's object, and to carry out his views and plan of breeding, we know of no flock that can match this. If he would try the experiment on a limited scale, of crossing with a very fine Spanish or French buck, we believe he would be pleased with the result.

He changes his bucks every other year, and has no lambs from sheep under two years old. This year he proposes to keep all his male lambs for the breeding market; which will enable him to offer some very desirable animals to those who would improve their flocks. He has some very fine breeding swine, of grade Suffolk and Newbury white, which he thinks a desirable cross. In this class of farm stock he has bred largely and carefully for years, and with the advantages he has for keeping them employed in enriching his fields, he finds it highly profitable.

Even in poultry he keeps only the kinds that give him a reason for his preference; preferring the Bolton Grays "because they prefer laying to hatching," and black turkeys to white ones "because they are raised with less difficulty." With him improvement is a principle, as it should be with every farmer; and of course improvement is everywhere presented. After all we have seen and known of his experience as a practical farmer, we fully believe with him, that with a few extra dollars, a desire for improvement, and proper care in selections, any man may as well have good farm stock as poor, and secure to himself more profit and decidedly greater pleasure.

Of Mr. Percival's management of his farm, including a choice orchard, which we believe he manages with unusual propriety and success, we shall speak more in detail at another time, only adding now the expression of an opinion to which we claim no right, that if his townsmen thought less of his services in a public way, he would have a happier if not a longer life. To be a pattern farmer he only needs to be let alone.

STATE MAP.—Chace & Co., of Portland, give notice in our advertising columns, that they are forwarding their great work, which when completed will be a credit to the State. The people of the State should see that they are properly rewarded for their liberal enterprise.

POSITIVE.—We happen to know, what nobody else doubts, that Chipman, the popular down-town grocer, furnishes the choicest shad, and other fresh fish, to his numerous customers. Prices always low.

OUR TABLE.

"OUR MUSICAL FRIENDS."—The following pieces will be found in No. 75 of this cheap musical publication.

La Caille Valse, By J. Schach.
I'll Woo thee in the Summer time, By Chas. H. Hargitt.
The Song of the Nightingale, By Camille Schubert.
Ah! I was to me, By Weber.

"Our Musical Friend" is published weekly by O. B. Seymour and Co., 107 Nassau Street, New York, at \$5 a year, or 15 cents a single number.

New Music.—The following new pieces have been received from Oliver Ditson & Co., the well known Boston publishers:—

The Lost Child. Comic Ballad. Words by Hood. Music by Snip.

The Snow is falling fast, love. Ballad. Music by W. J. Westbrook.

Forget Thee. Ballad. Music by John Blockley.

Spring's Invitation. Song. Composed by F. Himmel.

The Come Polka. By J. C. Callcott.

"Come into the Garden, Maud." By Balfe. One of Brinley Richards's Transcriptions for the Piano.

All of the above are for sale by C. K. Mathews, Waterville.

THE SOLO MELODIST.—No. 12 has the following table of contents:—La Violette Polka, Melodius. "Le preux Cleric." Vallance Polka Militaire, Finale from "Lucresia Borgia." Danco Suedoise, Melodie Croate, One Horse Hornpipe, Hungarian Melody, Masque de Chorus from "Stradella." Russian Melody, Tempo di Minuetto, Dir Wirthin Toechterlein Slavon. Air, Martha's Cottillon, Annon Polka, Bavarian Air, Crambambouli, Correlli, Song, Chanson d'Auvergne.

The Solo Melodist is published semi-monthly, by C. B. Seymour & Co., New York, at \$2.50 a year, or 10 cents a number.

SENIOR EXHIBITION.—The Senior Class of Waterville College have improved the features of their annual exhibition by transferring it to the church and connecting with it such attractions as render this festival one of much interest to our citizens. In return they have secured large audiences and most flattering commendation. If the change continue, as we presume it will, this anniversary will be hailed as one of the most pleasant of our literary entertainments.

The following was their programme.—interspersed with most excellent music by the Portland Band:—

"The Power of Habit,"—Stillman Hersey Record, Auburn.

"The Herosim of Genius,"—Henry Abial Kennedy, Wadoboro.

Alexander Von Humboldt,"—Levi Merriam Pierce, West Boylston, Mass.

"Fancy and Imagination,"—Jacob Bartlett Shaw, Albion.

"Progress,"—Almore Kennedy, Wadoboro.

"The Invisible in Nature,"—William Wallace West, Waterville.

"Napoleon Bonaparte,"—Ransom Norton, North Livermore.

"Art and Nature,"—Henry Wilson Harmon, North Livermore.

"Nature and Man,"—George Brainard Buzelle, Waterville.

"Poetry and History,"—Josiah Manchester Haynes, Waterville.

"Compensations,"—John Henry Jackson, Litchfield.

"Power of Subjective Life,"—Joseph Freeman Elder, Portland.

Of these performances we speak only in general terms. They ranged from good to more than excellent,—one piece at least, taking high rank among literary efforts of its kind. Perhaps others would secure equal praise, but for a tinge of transcendentalism, or something closely related to it, which put them a little outside of our sphere of criticism. We like good Anglo Saxon ideas as well as words, and can better excuse a want of the latter than of the former. But it is said that the birds which aspire to soar with the lark at daylight go to roost early; and as this first public effort of the student precedes Commencement by several months, its tone may be profitably modified before that auspicious day. This fault, if it be one, has by no means marked this class above its antecedents; and even this may be praised in our progressive age. We do not hold them responsible for all the "ears of the groundlings" that have been split by those who struck earlier and harder blows, and we allow them to take long strides in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessors; but in behalf of a humble audience it seems but fair to hint, that the high sounding phrases which, like an ambitious horse, "catch the bit" of thought and leap headlong into mystification, might sometimes be profitably exchanged for the simpler words and better ideas that always mark the mature scholar. Horace and Cicero are tangibilities, and can be located by many of the unlearned, to whom new ideas have to be spelled out; and it is but poor relief to have them spelled in Greek characters.

Still we say, this Senior Exhibition was one of marked merit, and in an eminent degree creditable to a class that promises to take high rank.

THE LADIES of the Universalist Society at the West village gave a love at Liberty Hall on the evening of the first inst.

These ladies have been several times accused of doing this sort of thing in imitable style, but on this occasion they carried it so far, that accusation settled into conviction.—Liberty Hall.—Wheeler's Temple of the Drama, Poetry, Music and Dancing.—was packed to its utmost capacity by a company decidedly predisposed to a good time, and a good time they had. The W. W. D. Club entertained the company for an hour or two, eliciting the most hearty applause and "tumultuous peals of side-splitting, uproarious laughter."

We have not space to note all the good things that were said, done, seen or eaten, but we venture to predict that no one went home dissatisfied with the evening's entertainment.

We hope these ladies will "do so some more" for we believe our hard working population need more amusements than they have.

PLEASANT.—Waterville Fire Co. held their annual election of officers on Monday evening, when foreman J. H. Drummond, who has held his office from the organization of the company six years ago, declined a re-election. The consequence was a very pleasant surprise by a complimentary presentation. When the election was over, and ex-foreman Drummond had conducted foreman Wm. A. Caffrey to his chair, himself retiring to private life in a less conspicuous seat, E. L. Getchell, Esq.,

in behalf of the company, proceeded in a very appropriate speech to present the retiring foreman with an elegant silver pitcher. Mr. G. briefly alluded to the organization and success of the company, and especially to the unanimous election of its foreman for six successive years; closing with a very happy and just expression of thanks for his services and good wishes for his happiness. Mr. Drummond said in response that the surprise was complete, not a whisper having reached him to this moment; and proceeded in a very handsome way to say the pleasant things that an eloquent and genial hearted man would say in such circumstances. After remarks from several guests, and a general expression of admiration for the beauty of the pitcher, the company retired fully satisfied they had had a good time.

The following is a list of the officers chosen:—

W. A. Caffrey, Foreman.
S. Keith, First Assistant.
J. P. Caffrey, Second "
E. R. Drummond, Clerk.
J. P. Hill, Foreman of Hose.
W. G. Penny, First Assistant.
M. C. Hatch, Second "
L. E. Crommett, W. L. Maxwell, and James P. Blunt, Standing Committee.

TIGNON VILLAGE CORPORATION.—The attendance at the annual meeting of the Corporation, on Monday last, was unusually large—nearly forty persons being present a portion of the time. When we reflect that there are more than three hundred voters within the limits, representing a valuation of about a million, and that we now have a debt of between six and seven thousand dollars—the confidence in the honesty and sagacity of the few self-sacrificing individuals who annually assemble to transact the business of the Corporation, shows that one party must be possessed of rare virtue, or that the other is guilty of gross carelessness. Let those who are most interested decide which is true.

E. L. Getchell having been chosen Moderator, the following officers for the present year were elected:—

H. B. White, Clerk.
Jos. Percival, Supervisor.
E. L. Getchell, Treasurer.
S. Heath, Auditor of Accounts.
E. L. Getchell, Chief Engineer.
S. Keith, 1st. Assistant do.
L. E. Crommett, 2d do. do.

Joseph Percival, H. W. Getchell, J. B. Bradbury, Wm. Getchell, Geo. Wentworth, I. T. Stevens, J. P. Blunt, Joseph Hasty, H. B. White, B. P. Manley, C. R. McFadden, Saml. McCausland, Firewardens.

After a warm discussion, in which Messrs. Doolittle, Stackpole, Drummond and Nye participated, it was voted to pay Engine Co. No. 8, \$150, for their services the ensuing year. The attempt to couple with it an amendment forbidding the company from taking their machine out of town, except to a fire, was defeated.

Considerable lively talk then ensued upon the propriety of buying hats and caps for the Hosemen of the said Company, but the Chief Engineer was finally instructed to procure a suitable number at the expense of the Corporation.

The sum of one hundred dollars was then called for, to pay for ringing one of the bells of the village, and painting the face of the Town Clock. The Corporation were apparently ready to do both, but upon consulting the charter, no warrant could be found for painting the face of the clock, and without coming to a final decision on the first proposition, which called for fifty dollars, the meeting was adjourned to the evening of the 21st inst, at 7 o'clock.

FORWARD.—The long spell of dry warm weather we have had has developed vegetable life in some forms rather prematurely. The wild flowers of June are blossoming early in May; the pie plant, grown in the open air is large enough for cooking, and asparagus beds are offering their substitute for green peas.—We made the first cuttings of asparagus from our garden this year, on the 3d of May, and others in our village, we dare say, were ahead of us.

FIRE IN THE WOODS.—From all directions we hear of extensive fires in the woods. On the line of Bangor a large amount of cord wood has been burned, and in some cases the trains have been delayed by the flames. A quantity of shingles on one of the freight trains showed marks of having made a narrow escape. In the vicinity of Tugus Springs, and around the pond, a large extent of woodland has been on fire, the damage in some places being very serious. In this case the fire started from the careless burning of brush. Nobody should think of setting fires at a time of such drought.

THE VIRGINIA REPUBLICANS.—The Convention which met at Wheeling, a few days ago, was attended by over 300 delegates.—The address which was issued by them having recited that the slave power attempted to control the industry of the country to its disadvantage, it proceeds to speak of the enormous inequalities of taxation in Virginia and to show

"That an organization corrective of all this we believe to be in the now great and national Republican party, conservative in its principles, submissive to the laws, and attached to the Constitution of our country. In common with that party, we hold that slavery is local, and not national, that each State of the confederacy is sovereign, and can, as a State, either establish or abolish slavery within its own limits; that all the Territories are, and should be free, as long as they remain Territories; that it is the duty of Congress to admit a Territory as a State whenever she has the requisite population, be her institutions free or slave, provided only that her form of government be republican."

In our own State, we acknowledge the right of the owner to hold his slave as property under the local law of the State; nevertheless, we believe that an immoral effect is the result of its existence, and that it is driving Virginia behind her sister States which are free. Yet,

we shall always feel bound to uphold and vindicate every law and constitutional enactment, so long as it remains upon the statute book.—Yet, we contend that under our laws all white men are equal; that they are entitled to the right of free opinion and free discussion; and that all discriminations in favor of privileged property, by which it is exempted from its just share of taxation are unjust and degrading, and as such we make war against them."

The resolutions approve the call for the Chicago Convention, favor a tariff, equality of rights, and the Homestead bill.

FIRE IN WATERVILLE.—We are called upon to chronicle two fires in our village the present week. The first one occurred on Monday night, about 12 o'clock, at which time a small house on the river side of the street, at the head of the Plain, was totally consumed. It was the property of Mr. William Moor; was unoccupied at the time, having been vacated a short time previous, and there is no doubt that the fire was purposely set. There was very little alarm made; the bells were not rung nor the engines called out, as the fire was well under way before it was discovered, and no other property in danger.

On Tuesday night, or Wednesday morning rather, our citizens were called out to a larger and more destructive conflagration. At about 3 1/4 o'clock, the old building known as the "hay barn," (built, we think, by Gilman & Phillips, and originally occupied for storing and pressing hay) used for some years as a sash and blind factory, but latterly standing unoccupied—a portion of the Blanchard property—was discovered to be on fire. The alarm was at once given, and the firemen and citizens rushed promptly to the rescue.

All three of the engines were upon the ground; but the flames had made such progress before they could be got into position, that not only was the building destroyed in which the fire originated, but several others in the rear were also burned, including two more of the Blanchard premises, (one of which was occupied by Mr. J. S. Symonds, with some machinery, &c.) and the Redington Mill, which had just been put into running order at an expense of about five hundred dollars.—South of the hay barn was the dry-house of Furbish & Drummond, which was also burned—the valuable lumber which it contained being badly charred. On the north the progress of the flames was arrested by the brick building of Messrs. Furbish & Drummond, but a pile of boards between the buildings, belonging to them, was destroyed. On the west, the property was protected by Waterville 8, which did good service, as usual. The new sash and blind factory of Furbish & Drummond was in some danger, but the old Ticonic—still a good engine—gallantly held the flames at bay. The little Bloomer, too, justified its ancient renown, and did much to extinguish the fire at the dry-house.

The losses, as near as we can come at them, are as follows:—Furbish & Drummond about \$900; Blanchard property about \$2000; J. S. Symonds between three and four hundred dollars; Silas Redington, about \$1000. Mr. R. had lately purchased the interest of his brother in the mill, and had nearly completed a bargain for the disposal of the whole property to another party.

No accident occurred during the fire, but two individuals who went into the Redington mill, with a view of saving a portion of the property, were cut off from a return by the rapid spread of the flames, and had to retreat down the slip in the rear and then wade ashore.

How did the fire originate? That is a question every one asks, and all would be glad to have correctly answered. It is painful to think that we have individuals in our community bad enough to wickedly and maliciously destroy the property of their neighbors; but if such black hearted persons exist in our midst, it is all important that they be ferreted out. We complain of the apathy of capitalists and owners of water power, that they do no more for the improvement of our natural advantages and the prosperity of our town, by investments in manufactures and mills; but with the fearful warnings they have had within a few years, they may well shrink from a speculation fraught with so much risk.

It may be that all the fires that have occurred in that vicinity have had their origin in the carelessness of the many idle persons—Frenchmen and others—who for years have lounged round there every day in the week, and prowled about at all hours of the night, with pipes, cigars and liquor flasks—and it would give us all a feeling of relief if it could be shown; but the risk run by the man who puts his property there is just the same in either case, and few will do it.

Of the many mills we have had at that point, the sash, blind and door factory of Messrs. Furbish & Drummond, in the building of Mr. D. Moor, is all we have left. Once these gentlemen were burnt out almost entirely, and now they suffer quite a loss; and this time they have no insurance, being unable to procure it. We know that while the other individuals damaged by this fire will receive the sympathy of this community, this firm will be especially remembered; for while by their enterprise they are doing much for the material prosperity of the place, they are earning an honorable reputation for themselves wherever they are known, which is a matter of pride to the community in which they dwell.

ANOTHER FIRE COMPANY.—Now is the time to form a company for the care and management of the old Ticonic—an engine, which in good hands may be of great value to us in some emergency. An engine without a company, as everybody knows, is of little worth comparatively; and we have suffered quite enough by our neglect of this important precautionary measure. Let an organization be at once effected, and let us avail ourselves of all the means within reach for maintaining an

effective fire department. "A stitch in time," you know, is what the old proverb recommends.

WATERVILLE ACADEMY.—This Institution probably never stood higher in public estimation than it has under the administration of Mr. I. S. Hamblen, the present popular principal. The attendance during the Spring term which has just closed, was unusually large, and the closing examination gave good evidence of faithfulness on the part of the teachers. The summer term, it will be seen, on reference to advertisement, will commence on Monday next.

DRY WEATHER.—The great drought now felt in this section extends through New England, and even beyond. It retards the pasturage, and may affect the hay crop seriously, though the advantage to some meadows will balance the injury to others. Those who so far trust Providence as to improve in labor the days they would have devoted to rain, will in the end find their portmanteau right side up.

LUSUS NATURE.—We were last week shown one of those curiosities, that Nature in her wild freaks sometimes produces—a lamb dropped by a sheep belonging to Mr. Jonathan Hallet, of West Waterville, which though blessed with twice the number of legs and tails that are ordinarily assigned to such animals, was yet without life. It was a queer jumble, truly.

CHANGE OF TIME.—By referring to the advertisement of that popular line of steamers between Portland and Boston, it will be seen that the hour of departure from the first named port has been changed from 7 to 9 o'clock P. M. This change is made to accommodate passengers from the west for Boston.

STATE FAIR.—The Portland Argus states that the next State Agricultural Fair will be held in that city, and the City has appropriated \$1000 to defray the expenses of grading and preparing the track.

THE NEGRO RISING.—Two prosperous and intelligent colored citizens of Worcester, Mass., have been put upon the jury list this year.

BLOOD AND THUNDER!—It is said that the Great Eastern has been ordered to New York. Won't there be some tall swearing in the Forest City, if that should prove to be true.

Mr. Geo. S. Mulliken, formerly Judge of the Municipal Court of Augusta, died at San Antonio, Texas, on the 20th of April. Mr. Mulliken was a lawyer formerly residing at Gardiner, and graduated at Bowdoin College in 1843.

Dr. Charles M. Morse, will be at the Williams House, Waterville, all day Thursday and Friday of next week; 17th and 18th inst. His last visit to this place for some time.

LOOK TO YOUR SHEEP.—Forty-nine sheep and fourteen lambs in the flock of Maj. Abbott, of Bangor, were killed by two dogs one night last week.

AN INFAMOUS APPEAL.—The Wheeling (Va.) Union, on the day before the Republican Convention met, addressed the following appeal to the people to break up that gathering. It was unsuccessful, however, and the Convention was a great success, both in point of numbers and enthusiasm. Here it is:—

"To-day the Black Republicans propose to offer a gross indignity, a grave insult to the Old Dominion, the mother of States. How far they will succeed, and whether they will be suffered to proceed with their sacrilegious work in peace, remains to be seen. We hitherto deemed the idea of convening these infamous traitors on the soil of Virginia as an absurdity. But to-day, in the State and on the soil profaned by the crimes and blood of John Brown, they intend, if not prevented, holding one of their traitorous assemblages. It is with shame, deep and burning, that we chronicle the fact. Where is the old Virginia pride, the hot impetuous nature and fiery spirit, once so proud to resent any insult cast upon her glorious old name. It must be dead indeed when we stand coolly and unconcerned, while those arch traitors are plotting in our very midst, the vilest treason; counselling opposition to her tried, trusty and time honored institutions. The name of Wheeling will henceforth be a reproach and a bye word—there will be none so poor as to do her reverence. The very traitors engaged in this work will scorn her for want of spirit and fidelity to her State laws. Will it, shall it be suffered?"

THE CATTLE DISTEMPER.—Several of Mr. Cheney's cattle at Belmont were slaughtered on Friday and Saturday, by order of the Commissioners. This is the herd from which emanated the disease that has spread such consternation, and resulted in the loss of so many valuable animals. The number now slaughtered, all told, is 387. The Commissioners will to-day proceed to North Brookfield and order the killing of all cattle that are in any way diseased with the pleuro-pneumonia. Delegates from the County Agricultural Societies have been invited to accompany the Commissioners to Brookfield and witness the operation of extermination.

The pleuro-pneumonia has made its appearances at Pawtucket, R. I. The Providence Press says:—

"The fatal disease to cattle which has raged in Massachusetts for a few months past, and which has created so much excitement in that State, has made its appearance in Pawtucket. Mr. Zelotes Wetherell lost a cow, Friday, which died in a few hours after it was attacked, and so remarkable were its symptoms, that it was deemed advisable to ascertain, if possible, the cause of its sudden disease. Drs. Hammond and Wetherell accordingly opened the animal, and, after a long examination, pronounced it to be the same disease which has prevailed among the cattle of Massachusetts. It is said that lightning is more liable to strike a building of a lightning rod manufacturer, when unprotected by rods, than that of any other; and so, in this case, the disease has first made its appearance among the cattle of a veterinary surgeon."

REMARKABLE CURE OF LOCKJAW.—The New York Observer says that a young lady ran a rusty nail into her foot recently. The injury produced lockjaw of such a malignant character that her physicians pronounced her recovery hopeless. An old lady then took her in hand, and applied pounded beet roots to

her foot, removing them as often as they became dry. The result was a most complete and astonishing cure. Such a simple remedy should be borne in mind.

Despairing Dick and Robin Ready.

Richard and Robin Broadax were the sons of a well to do miller, and I cannot better describe the difference between them than by quoting the old nursery rhyme—

"Richard and Robin were two pretty men.
They lay abed till the clock struck ten;
Robin starts up and looks at the sky,
'Oh ho! brother Richard, the sun's very high
I'll go before on little Jack Nag,
And do you follow after with basket and bag!'"

This was the usual mode of procedure with my two heroes. Robin always had his eyes open first, and was ready to seize upon every advantage which offered. He rode forward upon any little Jack Nag of any opportunity there was going, while poor Dick brought up the rear, under all the heat and burdens of day.

When they were boys, and had a hard task to learn, Robin put his mind to it; and though he was not more gifted than Dick, he accomplished it first, because Dick always thought, "I can never get that; it is too hard! I can't possibly learn it, as it is no use to try," until at last he had to be made to do it, with the ruler and rattan!

Richard was always saying, "never borrow trouble," which he interpreted to mean, "never do anything you can help doing, and put off all exertion until you are forced to it." Robin's favorite maxim was, "drive your work—don't let your work drive you!"

So, when they grew up, Richard always fancied everything too much for him, and never made any effort till pushed to extremity by necessity,—like a dog by an unavoidable bull, whom he only tries to run away from until he gets pinned to some wall by the pursuing animal. Now Robin, in a dilemma, was ready to take it by the horns and overturn it, which is the easiest way to escape, if one can only have the courage and promptness to do it.

Richard left everything overcome him from faint heartedness. Robin considered himself a match for whatever might turn up. So Richard got the name of Despairing Dick, and Robin was called Robin Ready.

Just before the father died, he said to his sons, "I leave Richard my mill, because all he has to do is to put the corn in and let it come out flour, and there is no risk or danger about it."

"And to Robin I leave my farm. It is a poor bit of land, not worth half so much as the mill. But Robin inherits my energy and hopeful temper, and they are treasures to themselves. So boys, you will soon be equally rich, and I don't know how I could do more fairly by you."

When the old man was dead, his two sons separated—one went to his mill and the other to his farm.

It was winter, the time for improvements, fencing, etc. Robin went heartily to work and by the labor of his hands he put up substantial stone walls, trenched a meadow, built a spring-house, and hauled off stones that cumbered his fields. He repaired the house and barn, and made all snug about the place. In the Spring the tax assessor said his farm was nearly doubled in value.

The old miller had just completed a fine new dam to the mill pond—which required a very strong and high one—but the machinery of the mill was a little out of order and pretty old.

"Why don't you set about renewing the belts, and getting those cog wheels mended Dick?" asked Robin.

"Oh there is so much to be done, that I don't know where to begin."

"No, there is not much the matter. All is right but a few trifles, and it don't make any difference where you begin. Now I'd have that wheel new-belted this very day, and one of your stones has ground uneven."

"Yes, yes; I know. There are a thousand things to be done, and I can't bear to begin. I don't know when I could stop."

"Now Dick, you've heard that old proverb, which says, 'if you can't master the whole, don't forsake the whole.' You could make a good speed out of this mill if you would only set to work. But if you spend your time sucking your thumbs, you must expect to live on the milk there is in them!"

Dick only sighed for an answer, and Robin went away quite grieved.

When the Spring came, and the deep snow-banks began to melt, the pond filled to the flow over finely. The mill hummed and rattled, and ground snowy flour, or golden meal, all day long. But a very warm, copious rain fell and produced a great freshet.

Robin went over to see if his brother's new dam were safe, and when he got there he saw Despairing Dick, sitting in the rain, on a bank above the pond, crying and bemoaning.

"What's the matter? Is your wife or child drowned?" asked Robin in a fright.

"Oh no! oh no! But the freshet will sweep away my new dam, the only thing about the mill that is first rate! Oh dear! dear! I don't see the swirl in that corner, and the jet of water under the main fall? It is undermined—my new dam! all is over with it! there go hundreds of dollars!"

"No, no," said Robin, but he looked pretty pale; "we won't be beat yet! We must save it!"

"But we can't. It's no use to try."

"But we will," said Robin. "I'm not going to give up to every little freshet that comes! Here Dick you run home

