

THE AMERICAN HARVEST HOME.

Gathering the Wheat Crop in the United States.

In country life all the poetry of the year is concentrated in the drama of the harvest—the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the suspense and the reward for toil or the certainty of self-denial for a year, makes the time preceding the gathering of the great cereal crop one of anxiety, and the condition of the wheat the subject of absorbing interest in a million families.



WHEN THE DAY IS DONE.

that must have expression rises in Southern Missouri and Illinois and rolls northward from farm to farm, from May to September, always beginning somewhere and culminating elsewhere, until at last it dies away on the plains of Manitoba.

While yet, to the traveler on the railroad, "the billowy bays of grain, ever rolling in shadow and sunshine, are green and scarcely distinguishable from meadow land, the farmer has caught the first undergrowth of yellow that crops up the stalk from day to day, until the heavy head has turned to gold. Every day then is good or bad for the wheat. He wants the weather to be cool and dry; a thunder storm is a tragedy, a day of brass a disaster. He looks to the sky in the morning, and waits impatiently for the freight train to creep by with the Government weather signal displayed. He goes to town for the paper to read the prediction, and he decorates his horse's ears with the heaviest beads he can find to keep up his courage.

At this time he is a pessimist. A spot of rust on a yellow stalk will make him despondent for a week. If his daughter is counting on music lessons he will show her a Hessian fly found in the wheat, and the sight of a chinch bug will develop the whole family in gloom. With the first touch of gold on the beards a feverish activity begins. The farmer gets his reaper and binder ready and arranges with the neighbors to trade off work. There are trips to town for binding twine, for stores of sugar and coffee, and the butter is not sold but is stored away in the milkhouse. A sheep or a calf is penned up to be fattened, and chickens are confined in the poultry houses.

The first morning that smoke is seen from a thrashing machine down on the southern horizon is a great day. All day long it is watched. Perhaps it is busy at a small farm and is moved to another in the afternoon. Sometimes there is unaccountable delay when, if the smoke still rises from the thrasher, the farmer will venture to predict that Sam Brown's twenty acres are turning out better than he expected, and hopes rise. If, the smoke ceases there are dire predictions that the machine has broken down, and before it is fixed a storm will come and drench the shocks.

The farmer has finished the reaping and the shocks stand in the open field amid the stubble, like nuggets of gold lying on golden sands. Already poppies and Indian lilies missed by the reaper, have burst into flower and fleck the fields with crimson, the smaller cloud casts a sinister shadow and brings the whole family out in apprehension. Daily the thrasher creeps nearer, now east, now west, but always farther north.

At length the men of the family ride away in the big wagon to help a neighbor, returning at night with the news that "the machine may be here any day now."

The women are thrown into a flutter of excitement and the next day while the men are gone the oven is filled with loaves, then with pies and cakes. The soap kettle is hung on the case in the yard and hams are boiled. All the butter, milk is saved to be sent to the field, and root beer is brewed. The chickens are dressed and vegetables gathered.

Now the women sit down and wait. The thrasher sends out a clear whistle at noon and 6 o'clock. If the whistle should blow at 11 the women know that a piece of work is finished and they



AT THE DINNER TABLE.

watch the roads to see if their turn is to come next. The field is fairly a daze with the golden shocks. Perhaps a quickly passing cloud scatters a few drops of rain and creates consternation. At last the thrasher, drawn by four horses, pulls in the wagon gate and other wagons follow loaded with singing, shouting men and boys, most of them neighbors, only a few traveling with the machine.

The last wagon will contain women and girls, neighbors, who have come to help get supper and wait on the men. They come on to the house and have brought with them dishes, knives and forks and table linen to help out the ordinary family outfit. Such shouting and laughing and joking and good news and bad news. The women learn that John Smith's ten-acre patch turned out thirty bushels to the acre, and that the engineer is just too sweet to live and there are new songs, strange ballads, city streets, sung by the machine men; and say, did Jennie know that her fellow had come with his team from five miles away

—must want to get on the good side of the old man.

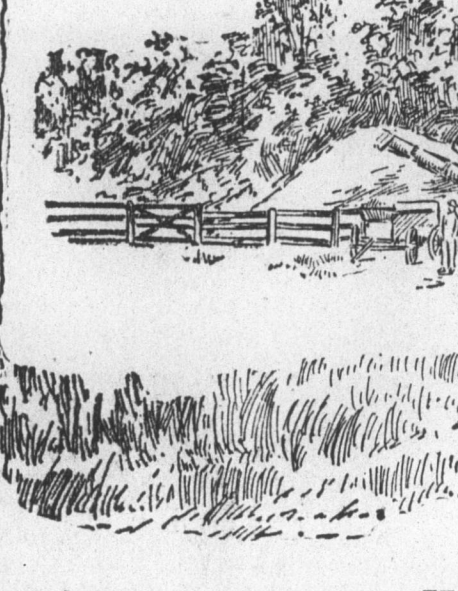
Within half an hour boys are dispatched to the field with kegs of water, buttermilk and root beer, and along in the afternoon a clothes basketful of ham sandwiches and pails of lemonade are sent out. Six teams are in the field hauling the wheat to the thrasher and two men are feeding the insatiable maw. All the golden afternoon the golden straw climbs and falls over in the smoky air; the chaff flies in a blinding cloud, the grain is caught in two-bushel canvas bags and loaded onto a wagon. Now and then a cheer goes up, and the women, catching the excitement flock out to the porch and wave their handkerchiefs and aprons. "Twenty-five bushels to the acre," shouts the boy as he trundles his wheelbarrow into the yard for a fresh supply of liquids. The feet of the women seemed winged by the good news, for they are not disposed, like the farmer to growl because there were not twenty-five bushels. How blistering hot it is—ideal harvest weather, but now there are fears, and prayers, maybe, for neighbors. In the common fortune or misfortune of fair weather or storms, the neighborhood is all one family, and they suffer for one another.

Many of the men wear red flannel shirts and all of them wide straw hats, and the field scene is tropical and foreign, with the big red thrasher belching clouds of smoke, and the mystic stair climbing, climbing, and the work all done in secret. The wagons drive a field, load up from the shocks and return to the machine. The risk of golden straw increases to a yellow killock, and the children climb up to the bales. How hot it is! The men drink gallons of liquids and keep wet sponges in their hats.

The women would be anxious for the men if they had time. The long afternoon is too short to prepare supper for twenty famished men and half as many women and children. The soap kettle just boils the carcass of a sheep, the wash boiler is filled with chickens and a bushel of potatoes to peel, beans and

remnants of the feast. The farmer waits for his wife at the kitchen door and whippers her that if present prices keep up there will be nearly \$1,000 in the bank, and winds up with: "You are going to have a black cashmere dress and a new cloak if it takes the whole pile. Yes, Jennie can have music lessons, too."

Unless it is a large farm a few hours in the morning will finish the work. There will be breakfast to get only for the machine men, who will sleep in the barn lofts on the newly thrashed straw after an evening on the vine-clad porch. The women are washing dishes in the kitchen, but they subdue the clatter if there are songs, and after awhile the harvest



THE STEAM THRESHER AT WORK.

corn to prepare, cold slaw to make, tomatoes to peel. A harvest supper table is a thing to remember when seen by one bred in a city where portions are calculated so exactly.

If there is a long veranda to the farmhouse the table is spread there—the extension pulled to its full length and placed out at the ends with tables from the kitchen. Perhaps the white table cloth will not cover the board, and turkey red cloths make brilliant squares at either end.

At intervals are stacks of white and brown bread, rolls of butter, pitchers of milk, dashes of apple sauce, pickled beets and jam. Platters of chicken cut in pieces, sliced ham and beef and mutton, and bowls of vegetables are placed conveniently for the men to help themselves as quickly as possible. Plates, knives, forks, spoons and glasses are at each man's place.

When the 6 o'clock whistle blows there is a great deal of excitement in the house, and boys of the butter and cream and milk, and some middle-aged woman,

all other blessings the Lord makes us truly thankful. That will do for a blessing. Pitch in, boys."

In ten minutes the bread plates are empty and are filled again with hot biscuits. Coffee cups are filled and replenished, and the meat platters make several journeys to the kitchen. A dozen apple and custard and berry pies disappear like snow before the sun. Then comes watermelon and cake, and if there is an ice-house on the farm the feast is topped off with ice cream, and the hostess gets three cheers and a tiger after the men go back to the yard.

"Where on earth did they put all that food?" is the admiring plaint of the women, who manage to find enough to satisfy themselves and the children from the



A SELF-BINDING HARVESTER.

"Oh, I guess I can haul it back. Horses haven't got anything else to do."

In a few minutes another buyer appears and makes the same offer. The price is agreed upon beforehand among the buyers. As the hours go by other farmers come in, and perhaps a sale is made. Then, as the farmers begin to hitch up again, the buyers begin to bid against each other in their efforts to secure the wheat. A miniature Board of Trade is thus organized impromptu, and the storekeepers come out of the shops to see the fun. One after another the loads are purchased and driven off to the warehouses or freight cars standing on a side track, for the buyer may be under

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Miss Townsend—"Do you find much difficulty in keeping help here?" Mrs. Suburb—"Indeed, yes. It is next to impossible to keep a girl more than a week." Miss Townsend—"Why is that—too far from the city?" Mrs. Suburb—"Oh, no, I think not; but you see we have only one policeman in the town, and he's married."—Judge.

Hospitality. A peculiar epitaph is inscribed on a tombstone in the old churchyard of an Ohio town. General Wayne was at one time in command of the fort mentioned in the epitaph.

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Some times when a man dies, the mourners are sorry because they can't feel more sorry than they do.

HUMOR OF THE WEEK

STORIES TOLD BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Odd, Curious and Laughable Phases of Human Nature Graphically Portrayed by Eminent Word Artists of Our Own Day—A Budget of Fun.

Sprinkles of Spice. Put away the blythe straw hat—let And the trowsers of duck. Soon we'll don our winter ulster—That is, if we are in luck. —Washington Star.

Little Girl (to her mamma)—What is a dead letter, please? Mamma—One that has been given to your father to post.—Household Words.

Passenger—That fellow back there is raising a great row because he has to stand. Conductor—Yes; he's riding on a pass.—Chicago Record.

Cholly Yachtsman—O, could I be your mainstay? She (looking at the clock)—You are. No one else stays after half past 11.—Syracuse Post.

Bixby—What idiots girls are when they imitate men! Marie (flattered)—Do you think so? That proves how excellent the imitation is.—Truth.

Fogg says they are quite stylish at his boarding house. The servant is not in livery, but the breakfast is, six mornings in the week.—Boston Transcript.

"Why, Mr. Counsellor, you are trying to open the front door with your cigar." "Really, now! I wonder if I've been smoking the latch key?"—Schome Blau Donau.

Realization.—Nephew—Do you know, Uncle, I dreamt last night that you lent me \$10! Uncle (generously)—Is that so? Ah! well, you may keep them, Otto.—La Perroquet.

Uncle—"You only write me once every month, when you want money." Nephew (a student)—"I beg your pardon, uncle; last month I had to write twice."—Lustige Blatter.

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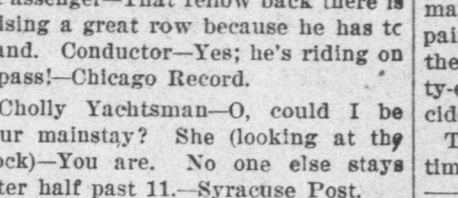
KILLING CATS AND DOGS.

Over 21,000 Put to Death in Eight Months in New York City.

New York's Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is now invested with full power to license dogs, and to capture, detain and, if necessary, to humanely destroy captured animals, so that the spectacle of a cage full of howling dogs and crying cats on their way to the pound is no longer seen in our streets.

The first steps taken by President Haines, of the society, says the World, were to provide a suitable shelter for the stray creatures and to fix upon a humane method of putting them to death. Accordingly the old pound, at the foot of 102d street and the East river, was converted into a home for strays. The interior has been fitted up with every possible convenience for the maintenance of captured animals and for destroying them without pain in case they are not claimed within the time fixed by the law, which is forty-eight hours. Asphyxiation was decided upon as the kindest method.

The society's service at the present time requires four ambulances and two



WHERE HOMELESS CATS ARE PENNED.

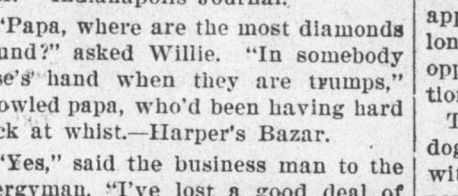
wagons specially constructed for their purpose, eight horses, with necessary stable room, and twenty-two persons, who are at work in different relays by day and by night. Only unlicensed dogs are seized.

Any cat found without a collar bearing the name and residence of its owner is promptly captured. If a dog is taken to the shelter wearing a collar on which its owner's name and address appear, the person to whom the dog belongs is immediately notified, and an opportunity afforded for its redemption. Any dog may be redeemed for \$3.

The shelter has five or six pens for dogs, the floors of which are covered with clean sawdust. Each of these pens, which are larger, lighter and better ventilated than most bedrooms in apartment houses in New York, is provided with a window. On the opposite side of the building are rows of cages for the reception of cats.

In the center of the building stand two large iron kettles, in which the animals' food is cooked. The cooking is done by steam. The animals are fed twice a day.

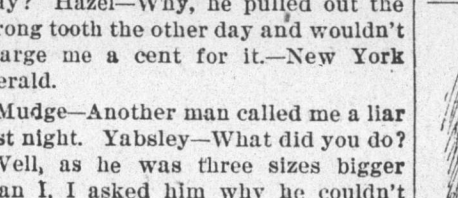
The "death chamber" is a large room containing a tank in which the poor



DROPPING A DOG INTO THE "DEATH CHAMBER."

dumb creatures are asphyxiated. This tank is ten feet long, four feet high and five feet wide. Every afternoon at 4 o'clock the tank is charged with gas, and the animals that have been kept for forty-eight hours are dropped in through a sort of trap door at the top.

BENDING BICYCLISTS. They Are in Great Danger of Sustaining Spinal Concussions. Accompanying picture is from rough pencil sketches made by Dr. E. H. Woolsey, of Oakland, Cal., to prove that bicycle riders who bend over are in greater danger from concussion than



STRAIGHT AND CURVED SPINE.

those who keep the back straight. When the back is curved the vertebrae impinge upon one another at the ends.

Tired of Making Up. Lizzie and Ferdinand Schless, of St. Louis, seem to have broken the matrimonial record. No divorce petition is remembered in which so many separations and reconciliations are catalogued as in that filed by Lizzie Schless, born Hambrecht. She has been deserted in nearly every large city in the United States, but she never failed to put faith in her husband's professions of repentance for past misconduct and promises of future good conduct. She bided and made up every time, letting bygones be bygones, until July 11th, 1894, the fifth anniversary of their marriage, when Schless gave her a ticket to St. Louis. Since then, she says, he has not written to her.

Character Changed by Illness. Chopin, the pianist and composer, was a very gentle man, and scrupulously considerate of the wishes of others. During his long illness his character seemed to change completely, as is often the case with chronic invalids. He became selfish, petulant and hard to please.

Another Bicycle Record. Two hundred and thirty miles have been ridden on a bicycle without dismounting.

BANDITS ROB A CAR.

CHICAGO ELECTRIC PATRONS BOLDLY PLUNDERED.

Murderous Brutality Shown by the Daring Marauders—Passengers Assaulted, Money, Watches and Diamonds Taken and Thieves Escape.

Bandits Shoot to Kill. Four masked and armed men held up a street car on the Evanston electric line at Edgewater, a Chicago suburb, Monday night in true Western style. They succeeded in carrying off between \$200 and \$300, besides several gold and silver watches. Of the twenty-three persons aboard the car, only three offered resistance, and one of these was shot and the other two badly beaten.

The highwaymen stopped the car in Evanston avenue at the corner of Berwyn. Evanston avenue between Montrose boulevard and Edgewater is a lonely place at night. The street is not paved, except in the car track, and threatening to travel either by teams or pedestrians. When the men stopped the car two of them jumped on in front and two behind. The front men were masked, with white handkerchiefs tied over the lower part of their faces, while the two in the rear one had a black mask and the other a red one. They all carried revolvers. The man evidently the leader, a tall, slender fellow, with deep sunken eyes and wearing a light overcoat, ordered the motor-man, J. O. Merriman, into the car, threatening to shoot him if he disobeyed. Merriman, however, obeyed promptly, and the robber, following him in, immediately commanded everybody in the car to give up whatever of value he or she had in his or her possession.

In the meantime the two robbers on the rear platform had also driven the conductor, W. G. Osborn, inside, and then a robber stood at each door, threatening to shoot any one who attempted to get out, while the other two went down the aisle, grabbing watches from the men, searching their pockets for money, and seizing whatever women's pocketbooks happened to be in sight. After that the robbers had things their own way, and asked the passengers at leisure. More than \$500 in personal property and money was secured from the passengers. Some of the ladies had earrings torn from their ears.

Passengers Are Dazed. For a moment nobody attempted any resistance. The men in the car seemed dazed and the women, of whom there were seven, did considerable screaming. Finally, when the robbers came to N. O. G. Johnson, of Galesburg, Ill., who is in Chicago visiting friends at Edgewater, and whose wife was with him, he strongly objected to parting with a valuable watch and \$50 which he had in his pocket. The robber grabbed him by the shoulders, and Mr. Johnson struck at him with his fist. The robber replied with a heavy blow with the butt end of his revolver, striking Mr. Johnson under the left eye and at the same time his companion beat him badly over the head. Just then A. E. Westman also offered resistance and was set upon and also badly beaten.

He had a cane in his hand which he attempted to use against the robbers, but one of them took it away from him and used it against himself. Just then Thos. P. Nesbitt made the strongest fight which had yet been made against the robbers. The robber who was armed with a revolver, with broad shoulders, and built like an athlete, He jumped up from the rear end of the car, overthrew one of the robbers who was in his way, gave another one a blow which knocked him against the side of the car. The robber in the light overcoat, who seemed to be the leader of the gang, leveled his revolver at him and fired one shot. The bullet took effect in Mr. Nesbitt's left thigh, and, while inflicting only a flesh wound, still brought him to the ground.

The whole affair took five minutes. When the robbery was completed the highwaymen all got off the front platform, taking with them the lever with which the motor-man controlled the motor. They also swung the trolley off the wire and cut the rope, leaving the car in darkness and stationary on the track.

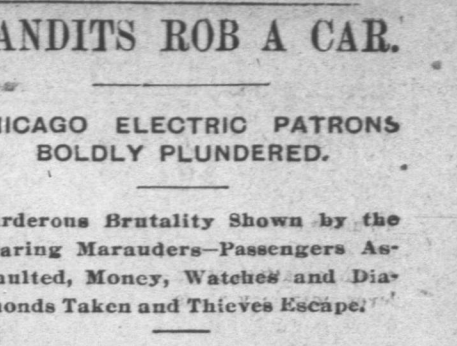
UNCLE SAM'S MITTS ON. Prize Fighters Will Not Be Allowed to Meet on Federal Domain. Commissioner Browning of the Indian office has taken prompt and decisive action to prevent the Corbett-Fitzsimmons prize fight taking place in the Indian Territory. He has prepared a letter of instructions to Agent Wisdom at Muscogee, I. T., directing him to see that the laws are enforced and to eject forcibly any intruders who may enter the Indian country for the purpose of creating a disturbance or engaging in anything that may be detrimental to the Indians. The commissioner states that the statutes of the United States are ample to cover the situation and to prevent the fight. The agent will have at his back not only the Indian police but all the United States troops necessary to eject the fighters.

The statutes give the United States authority to keep out of the Indian Territory all persons whose presence would be detrimental to the peace and prosperity of the Indians. The commissioner says there is no doubt that the presence of the prize fighters and the gang that would follow them into the Indian Territory would be very detrimental to the Indians and that it is therefore the duty of the Indian office to keep them out. He says that the agent at Muscogee has not as much authority as the agents on reservations, but nevertheless has enough to prevent the fight taking place in the Territory of the five civilized tribes. The commissioner intends also to notify all the governors and head men of the five civilized tribes that they must not allow the fight to take place and must assist the United States authorities in preventing it.

Captain George A. Armes. The retired soldier who was arrested in Washington recently for sending an insulting letter to General Schofield.

Sparks from the Wires. At Belmore, Ohio, the stove and heading factory burned, throwing 200 men out of employment. Loss, \$75,000.

People of Washington and California discredit the report that the lander being fitted out in Oakland Creek for piratical purposes.



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