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THE SILVER WEDDING.

Come wife, sit here, and we'll rest awhile,
Till the merry dance is o'er;
Our silver wedding has made me feel
As if youth were mine once more.
ve quite forgotten my fifty years;
Dear wife, can it be true
at twenty-five years have come and gone
Since I loved and wedded you?

Our daughter there—God bless the child!
For she carries her mother's face;
Just so you looked when you won my heart
With your innocent girlish grace.
How fair she is! What! bless my soul!
Wife, what is that you say?
Our little girl has given her heart
To that rascal"—young John Grey?

Coaxed mother to tell me, did she, eh?
Well, wife, it never can be;
I'll never consent—you hear me, wife?
Just tell her that for me.
What is it you ask? If long ago
Your father had answered nay,
What would I have done? Hm, well, I think
I'd have—married you anyway!

"Judge John by myself," you say? Ah, well
The boy's a good fellow enough;
But I don't encourage this falling in love,
And this courting, and all such stuff.
What is it you ask me? "Have I enjoyed
This silver wedding?" There, there?
When a woman attacks the weak side of a man,
The game—is hardly fair.

Well, because of our silver wedding, wife,
(Dear, dear, how fast time flies!)
I can't say no to the child we love,
The girl with her mother's eyes.
So here's a kiss for the bride you were,
And one for the wife you are,
And another to crown this happy night,
Of which you are the brightest star.

—*Harper's Weekly.*

THE AGRICULTURAL ANT OF TEXAS.

A Wonderful Insect—His Extraordinary System of Political Economy—His Masonry Construction and Mining Operations—How He Buries His Dead—Etc., Etc.

[Extracts from a Paper Read by E. M. Hale, M. D., Before the Chicago Academy of Sciences.]

At Houston I had an excellent opportunity of observing these ants, for their homes are found even in the streets of that city, and all the country round.

I observed that they selected for their cities, or "Formicaries," as McCook calls them, the most sunny places. Standing upon the railroad track, which passes through a wide expanse of prairie, I was astonished at the number of their habitations. On every side, as far as the eye could distinguish their mounds, or open places around them, I could have counted them by thousands without turning around in my steps. It was like standing upon the Chicago water-works tower, looking around upon the habitations of the great city.

After remaining here a few days, I went to Austin, where Dr. McCook made the most of his observations.

I found that no particular kind of soil was chosen in preference by them. They were equally at home in stony ground, in sandy loam or fine gravel.

They did not, however, like a thick turf, and I never saw a formicatory placed in such a location. They prefer to live where the grass is thin, or where there is none at all. They reside on hills, in valleys, on the prairie, in the streets, in gardens, and even in places where it has been paved with flat stones, through which they find exit by the cracks in the cement by which they are joined. An ant community consists of males, females, major-workers and minor-workers. The last two differ from each other; the major has a longer head. The workers compose the bulk of the population. They do the most of the in-door and out-door work. The males are the drones. The females, or queens, attend to the rearing of the young ants, and originate the formicatories. These four divisions, together with the domesticated animals, make up the living beings of an ant city.

Were I to describe these ants as historians describe a people, I would say they are an agricultural nation, living in the southern portion of the United States, chiefly in Texas, a portion of Arkansas, the Indian Territory and a strip of Louisiana. A similar nation have their habitat in Florida.

The agricultural ant builds a city under ground, with halls, streets, galleries, chambers, nurseries, etc. The city is entered by two gates on the surface.

These gates may be on the level ground, or on the summit of a mound.

Around these gates on all sides, or one, or sometimes at a distance, lie their farms or plantations. This plantation Dr. McCook calls a "disc." To make this disc, the ant proceeds just as a farmer does who locates in a timbered country. They proceed to make a "clearing," i. e., they cut down all the grass, weeds and small shrubs which are useless to them, only allowing certain grasses or plants to remain as are capable of bearing seed, upon which they live. All over this clearing stand the stumps of grass just as the "stumps" stand in the clearings made by man. It is still an undecided question whether an ant sows crops, or whether he merely leaves such grasses as he needs, and relies on nature to do the sowing.

As one stands and watches these ants at their work he cannot help carrying the analogy further, for just outside of the cleared space he sees gangs of ants engaged in extending the clearing. The cutting of the grass, etc., the ants accomplish easily by means of their sharp and strong jaw, which can cut as saws, chisels, or scissors, as the case demands.

Dr. Lincicum says that in the fall of the year, after the grain of the needle-grass has been harvested, the straw is cut down and removed, leaving the farm clear till the next season. Here again is the farmer imitated by these intelligent creatures.

Their farms vary in size. I saw some six and eight feet in diameter. Dr. McCook saw some twelve feet. But this cleared disc does not include all their plantation. Outside of it are small open spaces where some clearing has been done, and where they evidently do some harvesting, and to which their roads reach. Their roads and highways are very interesting. From their city gates reached out in two or three, often eight or ten directions, well-built, hard and straight roads. They are from two to five inches wide. Dr. McCook mentions one that at the gates was six inches wide; at six inches, was four wide; at a foot away, was three and a half inches; at four feet, two inches; at ten feet, one inch. The length of this forked road was sixty feet. Dr. Lincicum declares he saw one over three hundred feet long. I traced several nearly fifty feet, and doubtless the sharp eyes of the ants can trace them many times as far, for to the human eye they gradually grow smaller until they almost imperceptibly blend with the open spaces between the tufts of grass. These roads are for the purpose of reaching their fields and harvesting grounds, and all day, and even in the night, hundreds of ants are going and coming on them, reminding one of the people going to and coming from a large town on market days. The following illustrates the plan of their work: A cone nest is a nest in which the gates are on the flat surface, with a crop of needle-grass on it. The gates are the entrances to the underground homes of the community. Just inside of the gate is the vestibule where they unite, and from this vestibule extend galleries to the various rooms and sleeping places of its inhabitants.

The gates are one-third to one-half an inch in diameter. Often there is only a single gate, sometimes only three or four, but generally only two, which are usually separate—an inch or two apart. Sometimes they are connected by a sunken road. The vestibule is usually an inch and a-half from the surface; it is one to two inches wide, and one-half to three-fourths of an inch high, and quite smooth.

Dr. McCook, who pretty thoroughly explored their subterranean cities, gives extensive descriptions, excellently illustrated by drawings made on the ground.

The rooms, especially the granaries, were plastered with a kind of cement, smooth and hard. The granaries which Dr. McCook saw were filled with a mixture of green and dry seeds, some husked and some not. No Illinois farmer could fill his granaries with better judgment. The seeds, small grains like rice, and the seeds of grasses, are piled up nearly to the roof; narrow gangways are left at the outer margin, between the grain-heaps and the wall. In some cases, probably to prevent the grain from sprouting, the seeds are covered with a glutinous material. In some granaries nearly a pint of seed has been found. These granaries are often found two or three feet below the surface of the ground. The galleries extend many feet below the surface. A gentleman informed me that in excavating for a well he has found them eighteen feet below the surface.

After my return from Texas, I sent to my friend Eugene Bartholomew, of Austin, for a colony of ants. They were sent by express in a tin box perforated with small holes. Only a few died on the journey. I placed them in a jar. There were probably fifty ants. The jar was filled with moist, sandy loam. At first they wandered about apparently in much agitation and curiosity, examining every portion of the surface; but in less than an hour a few began excavating a hole near the edge of the glass. I supposed they would begin in the center of the jar.

They dig with energy, much as a dog digs for a rat, throwing up the dirt with their fore legs, and throwing it still further with their hind ones. Often the hole is so deep that the dirt cannot be thrown out; the mandibles are used, and they seize the dirt and press it into small pellets by the aid of the point of the abdomen. These they carry out and scatter on the surface above, placing them principally on the opposite side of the jar, so that the surface soon becomes an inclined plane. When one ant becomes weary, another takes its place, and so soon as the gallery is large enough several work together. Their various positions when mining greatly interested me. They will lie on the side or on the back, just as colliers do in coal mines.

Their wonderful forbearance and good temper is amazing. They do not turn out for each other generally, but a worker will walk right over his comrades, overturning them, even when carrying loads; but I never have seen the slightest approach to an angry or impatient action.

In Texas, near Austin, the earth is composed in some places almost wholly of granules of silicia of the size of duck-shot, some larger, some smaller. The mounds in such places are wholly made up of these small stones. Their individual weight is ten times as much as a single ant, yet they carry them without any difficulty. If they come upon a small stick they dig around it until it is loose, then one or more will take it as men would a piece of timber, and carry it above ground. By close inspection of this jar it will be observed that the galleries are dug in various directions, but they all seem to go to a common gallery, which runs around the bottom. Here the ants love to congregate, amuse and clean themselves, and perhaps engage in "grave debate." They are never all below the surface, at least I have always found one or two on the surface, acting as sentinels, for on dropping anything on the surface they immediately run to it, examine it, and, if they think it necessary, they go to the opening of the gallery, give some alarm, and several come trooping up.

Their food consists of the seeds of small grasses. These seeds, under the microscope, resemble oats and barley. A species of pepper-grass is always found growing on their farms. All other vegetation except those which they use as food is cut down and carried off. But they are not vegetarians. They are carnivorous, eating with avidity nearly all small insects. I fed these in this jar with butterflies, spiders, small beetles and earthworms. On one occasion a large wasp was put in, and before he could recover from the shock was pounced upon, maimed and captured. Their actions when attacking a spider or wasp were very interesting, reminding one of a pack of bull-dogs. They rush excitedly around with open mandibles and angry appearance. Seizing an opportunity they lay hold of a wing, leg, or antennæ, and all the frantic efforts of the victim cannot shake them off. I have seen a wasp rise and fly around the jar with five or six ants hanging to various portions of his body. While holding on with their jaws they sting the victim, and otherwise worry him till he dies. Then they calmly dissect him. The wings and legs they carry and deposit upon the refuse heap which they always have. The juicy bodies they either feed upon on the spot or carry down below and place with the other food deposits, to be brought up and placed with the rubbish when the juices are sucked out. They are fond of sugar, cake and sweet fruit. My colony eat peaches and pears with avidity, and would carry off into their granaries all the homeopathic sugar globules they could get. The principal food of these ants in the jar has been coarse oat meal, which they are quite fond of.

While they lap up the soft juices of insects and fruits, they evidently do not eat, so to speak, the hard substances of grain. Dr. McCook is of opinion, from his observations, that they rasp off with the tongue the starch powder on the grain and lick up the oils and juices. In fact, their eating is a "steady licking" of the surface of the seed. He likens it to the licking of a cat or dog. Some of their attitudes when eating are strongly suggestive of the squirrel or monkey; holding the fragment of seed in their paws, they lick it as a squirrel gnaws a nut. Miss Treat, in observing the eating habits of an allied species, the Florida harvesting ants say they feed their young as birds do, and that the young ants hold up their mouths for the food like young robins.

The toilet habits of these ants are neatness personified. They cannot endure untidiness in their own person or others among themselves. They clean themselves after eating and sleeping with scrupulous care. For this purpose they like to gather in groups on the side of the jar where the sunlight or gaslight is strongest, and dress themselves or assist their companions.

They have a very interesting habit of leaving windows, so to speak, when digging their tunnels. The windows are where the tunnel is left open against the side of the glass jar, and are about a third of an inch in diameter and half an inch high. In these windows the ant likes to sit and beautify herself, taking as much pains as any fine lady who is dressing for a ball. Often I have seen two ants at a window taking turns washing each other. They seem to enjoy their cleaning and washing process greatly, leaning over in various positions so as to allow their friends to go all over their body. Many of their toilet habits so closely resemble those of the cat that the similarity is very striking. The motion of the paws when washing the head is peculiarly cat-like. Their gymnastic feats when cleaning themselves are truly astonishing. They resemble gymnasts on the turning bar, or a performer on the trapeze. Hanging by one paw to a blade of grass, they will comb and wash every portion of the body with the most surprising nonchalance.

After placing bits of sugar in the jar and moistening them, the ants lick them with as much avidity as school children, and, like children, get their hands all "stuck up" with it. Then comes a troublesome time. I have seen four or five ants hard at work trying to get the sugar from the limbs and paws of an unfortunate epicure. And they work with the greatest patience till their comrade is presentable.

Their sleeping habits are very curious. They love to sleep after meals, when their toilet is done. They go to sleep in every conceivable position, but prefer some eminence, like a clod, pit of wood or the side of the jar. Unlike the bat, their paws are not involuntarily prehensile, and it is very amusing to watch them go to sleep clinging to some object, and, when fast asleep, fall off suddenly. But they quietly climb up and try it over again. Their actions when waking are ludicrously similar to those of sound-sleeping mortals. They yawn and stretch, turn on one side, then on the other, and, when thoroughly waked up, begin to wash and comb themselves.

Their funerals have a peculiar interest. When one of their number is sick or maimed, they are very careful of him, going up to him frequently, and stroking him with their antennæ, as if pitying him in his trouble. I have seen an ant take up very tenderly a sick friend and carry him below. I have watched him carry him down to the lowest gallery, where it was warm and dry, and carefully lay him down; and when this same ant was dead, this same friend or another would carry him above ground and bury him in the cemetery. The word cemetery may strike you as odd, but I assure you they have them. In Texas each city of ants had a cemetery situated just outside the cultivated grounds. It is used not only as a place to bury the dead, but to deposit all sorts of refuse which has accumulated in the city limits. In this jar you can see the cemetery where they have deposited, and tried to bury their unfortunate comrades, and mixed up with the dead bodies, dismembered as they always are, various refuse stuff which they have cleared off their grounds, or brought up from the galleries below.

They seem greatly perplexed, in the jar, as to the proper place to bury their dead, for they evidently want to carry them at a greater distance. Their inherited instinct impels them to try and carry them eight or ten feet, as that is the ordinary limits of their domain. So they wander excitedly and anxiously around, vainly trying to climb the sides of the jar; but ever falling back with their burden of sorrow. Even after leaving them on the heap or half buried, the living do not seem quite reconciled to their presence, for now and then one of them will disinter a body and carry it round and round for many minutes. Miss Treat relates a curious habit of the formica sanguinæ, or slave-making ants. They do not deposit their dead black slaves with their own dead. In this respect they seem to possess the same color prejudice or caste prejudice which still exists in this country.

I cannot omit saying something relating to the rapidity of their movements. Comparing their size with that of a man, we get the following astonishing results:

An ant, three-eighths of an inch long, carrying a burden of one-sixth of a grain, moves at the rate of one mile in eleven hours. The weight (a small one compared with that they can carry) is eighteen times their own.

They compare with a man five and a half feet high, weighing 140 pounds, carrying a weight of 2,500 pounds at the rate of 176 miles in eleven hours.

The fact is, that these ants will carry burdens a hundred times their own weight, as if a lumberman could take up, in a supposed pair of mandibles attached to his head, a saw-log weighing thousands of pounds, and carry it many miles.

Compared with this achievement the building of the pyramids was boy's play. If man were as strong comparatively, a few hundred could dig the inter-oceanic canal across the Isthmus of Darien, even at the widest part of it, in a few days, and tunnel the mountains in the same time.

These ants have no mean weapons of defense and offense. Their sting is venomous as that of a honey-bee, and their mandibles are of enormous strength.

I have never seen a battle of these ants with their enemies, but I have witnessed them in attacking and killing hornets, spiders and other insects. They do not seem to know fear, but will singly attack a venomous insect ten times their own size.

Great and decisive battles between these ants and their enemies have been described by Dr. Lincicum, McCook, and Miss Treat. Compared with human battles, they will vie in slaughter and bravery any of the great battles in the world's history. They do not merely kill, but, like the warriors of the Middle Ages, they sever the head from the body by a few strokes of their mandibles, or tear their enemies limb from limb. They not only make war on different species, but, like human beings, will make war upon rival colonies of their own when they are jealous of territorial encroachment.

An examination of the bodies of dead ants after a battle discloses as many forms of mutilation, ghastly wounds and horrid fractures as any number of war's human victims could show.

The enemies of the agricultural ant are many, else the whole State of Texas would be made uninhabitable by them. Spiders are among the most potent. In order to test their power over the ants in my colony I introduced one of the common house spiders. In an hour or two he had spun a web, and had caught a victim and was feasting on him. Giving him a pinch with a pair of forceps sufficiently to stun him, I dropped him among the ants, who soon finished him and made a meal of him.

—*Inter-Ocean.*

In the Coils of a Serpent.

One of the most intrepid wild-beast tamers in Europe, Karolyi, a Magyar of colossal stature and extraordinary physical strength, has recently fallen a victim to a dread contingency of his perilous profession. He was performing, before a crowded audience in Madrid the other day, one of his most sensational feats, which consisted in allowing a huge boa constrictor, over twenty feet in length, to enfold his body in its tremendous coils, when suddenly a piercing cry escaped him, which was greeted by the public with a round of applause, under the supposition that its utterance constituted part of the performance. It proved, however, to be the outcome of a strong man's death-agony. The gigantic snake had tightened its coils and crushed poor Karolyi's life out of him with one terrific squeeze. As his head fell back and his eyes became fixed in a glassy stare, the plaudits died away, and were succeeded by the stillness of utter consternation. The snake and its lifeless victim swayed for a second or two of inexpressible horror, and then toppled over on the boards of the stage; but the boa did not in the least relax his grip upon the corpse, which remained for more than an hour imprisoned in its hideous thralldom, nobody daring to approach the lithe monster, of whose powers such appalling proof had been given. At length it occurred to one of Karolyi's attendants to place a bowl of milk in a cage within sight of the mighty serpent, which slowly unwound itself from the dead body and glided into its den, irresistibly tempted thereto by its favorite dainty. A post-mortem examination of the unfortunate athlete's remains discovered no fewer than eighty-seven fractures of his bones, effected by the constriction of the serpent's coils. His death must have been almost instantaneous, as the spine was disarticulated in several places.—*London Telegraph.*

THE WISE-BURR ASCENSION.

The Conditions Under Which It Was Made—Afloat in the Air Without a Drag-Rope.

The ascension of Burr and Wise was made from Lindell Park, Sunday afternoon, September 28. The balloon filled much faster than Professor Wise had expected it would, the gas-pressure at the Lindell Park being greater than had been represented to him. At twelve o'clock the balloon was inflated sufficiently to carry four passengers, and it was the Professor's intention at this time to take three companions with him—young Burr, Charlie Gonter, and Mr. Downey, his nephew. The ascension was not to be made until five o'clock. About three o'clock a gentle breeze turned to strong wind, and the balloon surged about in a violent manner and finally broke its fastenings—the net-work to which the sand-bags were attached. Professor Wise and his assistants, one of the latter his grandson, caught the balloon and held it down till the valve was opened and the gas let out. The balloon, of course, collapsed and fell to the ground entirely. The Professor was disgusted with the way the Pathfinder had acted, and he said that he would postpone the ascension to some future day. The netting was all broke and it would take all the afternoon to fill the balloon again. The ascension would no doubt have been actually postponed had it not been for the Professor's friends, and particularly the three that were to accompany him on the voyage. They could fill the balloon again in time, they said, and repair the netting. There would be a big crowd of spectators there, and it would be a shame to disappoint them. Balloon people were generally looked upon as humbugs, any way, and it would never do at all to disappoint the hundreds and thousands who would surely gather on the grounds to see an ascension. Young Burr was particularly anxious that the ascension should be made. He was all fixed for the trip; the Professor had promised him time and again to take him along, and he didn't want to be disappointed. Beside, if the Professor wouldn't make an ascension himself, he, Burr, would for him, for the people must not be disappointed. At last the old aeronaut gave in, and the inflating of the balloon recommenced and the netting patched up.

It was agreed between the four parties most interested in the ascension that in case the balloon received only sufficient gas by five o'clock to take one man, that Burr should go up. If there was gas enough for two, then Professor Wise should go. If three could go, the third should be Charley Gonter, and if four, then Downey was to be one of the voyagers. When the hour of five o'clock arrived the netting had been repaired and the balloon about two-thirds inflated. The Professor thought that she would carry no more than two persons besides the packages of Mabley's advertisements and the Iron Mountain Railroad circulars and a couple of sand bags for ballast. All these things were put into the basket, and also several bottles of Anheuser's bottled beer and a dozen or two sandwiches. The park was pretty well filled with people, or at least that portion of it about the balloon was, and the street outside the park was crowded with people. The scene in the vicinity of the balloon was of a very lively character. "Crazy Ward," a cracked-skull painter, with an ambition for the stage, was making himself very conspicuous in the crowd about the balloon, sawing the air with his arms, reciting Shakespeare and Byron and yelling to Professor Wise every now and then, asking him if he didn't remember the time when they two sailed over Lake Michigan once in a balloon. When the gas was cut off and shut off, and the basket fastened to the netting, about forty men in the crowd stepped forward and took hold of the netting. The sand-bags were then all unhooked from the netting, and the basket and balloon were dragged over to the extreme southwest corner of the open space between the trees, some forty feet from the position the balloon first occupied. This was done because a strong wind was blowing from the south, and the Professor wanted all the room he could get in which to clear the trees. Burr stepped into the basket and stood upright. He was smoking a cigarette at the time, and his hands were kept busy shaking hands with his friends. Professor Wise climbed into the basket.

"Now can you all let go when I say the word?" he asked.

"Yes," answered half a dozen of the men holding the top rim of the basket.

"All right, let her go."

The hands of all left the basket at the same time, and up shot the balloon, taking a direction almost due north.

The basket brushed through the tree tops on the north side of the open space, but it was only momentarily, and no damage was done. Young Burr stood upon the rim of the basket and waved his hat at the crowd below with one hand, while holding to the rigging with the other. The drag-rope, about the size of an ordinary clothes-line and 1,800 feet long, lay in a coil on the ground when the balloon started up, and there was a shout, "Keep away from the line. Let he unwound!" The crowd obeyed, giving the rope plenty of room. In a few seconds, perhaps nearly a minute, the end of the drag-rope was reached, and drawn up through the trees and out of sight. As the balloon passed over the fair grounds, some of the visitors there caught hold of it, and Professor Wise was compelled to cut the rope loose from the balloon. This was the only anchor line the aeronauts had, and a balloon without a drag-rope is in a much worse condition than a ship in a harbor is without an anchor. Had the idiots at the fair grounds let the rope alone, Professor Wise and George Burr would probably be alive to-day.—*St. Louis Times.*

—"The worst drunkard in America" has been hooked in Bath, Me. He is sketched as a young tramp of a personal appearance that is rough and coarse to the last degree. But there rolls from his lips the most beautiful language ever heard. All the standard works of literature in the dead and living tongues come readily in quotations the most choice to his lips, and impromptu verses are dashed off with snap and bubble. A Bath merchant offered the tramp, who is a graduate of Oxford, a clerkship, but the Bohemian refused, saying that he wouldn't give up his whisky for $1,000 a day.

—The boomerang is an unsatisfactory missile to use, because it is apt to fly back and hit the hand that threw it. There are boomerangs of various kinds, but they are all equally dangerous, and for the same reason.

USEFUL AND SUGGESTIVE.

Gold Cake.—One cup sugar, three-fourths cup butter, one-fourth cup sweet milk, yelks of eight eggs, two cups flour, a teaspoon cream tartar, one-half teaspoon soda.

Plainfield Cake.—Put two eggs into a coffee-cup and fill it with sour cream; beat thoroughly with one cup of sugar; then add one cup of flour, one teaspoonful of soda, one teaspoonful of vanilla extract.

Milk and butter are remarkably sensitive to odors. Dr. Nichols mentions the case of a pan of nice butter which was spoiled by the odor from the boots of a man who came into the milk-room with some of the manure of the stable on them.

Walnuts, hickorynuts, acorns, and all late maturing forest-tree seeds can be planted in the fall just before the ground freezes. But there is danger of mice and ground-squirrels destroying them. In such case the nuts can be buried in moist sand where they will freeze. Then plant in spring so soon as the earth thaws.—*Iowa State Register.*

Hon. James Wilson says: "Farmers are beginning to see the wisdom of keeping cows to raise good calves from. The cheapest commodity in Iowa is the young heifer while her power to raise a mortgage is beyond any other leverage on the farm. What folly to butcher her and burn the forage or let it rot. The active demand of this fall for feeding steers will drive feeders into raising good calves of their own."

Ordinarily trees that are large enough to produce a crop of fruit should be very lightly pruned. If two branches interfere, one of them should be removed so as to give the other sufficient room. So, too, branches that are injured from over-bearing, or other causes, should be cut off. But if a well-shaped top was formed when the tree was young, it should not be removed without special cause. Occasionally, however, an old fruit tree, more especially a peach tree, may be made to "renew its youth" by very severe pruning. Old peach trees are often rendered thrifty and productive by cutting off most of the large limbs within a few inches of the trunk. The effect of this "heroic treatment" is to cause the production of new branches which grow to a size to produce fruit in a remarkably short time. When treating a tree in this manner it is well to follow the injunction given in the Scriptures about the management of a certain barren fig tree.—*Chicago Times.*

Marketing Produce.

This is the farmer's market season. Consumers are laying in their winter stores of vegetables, beef, pork, butter, apples, etc., and farmers are receiving the returns for their summer's labor. Marketing is one of the fine arts, which every farmer does not understand. It is the trade of the farmer to produce; the trade of the merchant is to buy and sell, and it must be confessed that the buyer is often too shrewd for the producer. As we once heard it put, "Farmers are too honest to make much profit out of their produce," but this is not so. Honesty is the best policy for producer, middle-man and consumer. If farmers do not always sell their produce to the best advantage, it is not the fault of their honesty, but rather of their ignorance. The merchant studies the markets closely. He knows what the demand is and what the supply is; where there is a surplus product and when there is a deficiency; when the market is likely to rise and when to fall, and buys and sells accordingly, often clearing more in one day than the producer gains from his summer's toil. True, the middle-man also loses heavily occasionally from bad debts and mistakes in his calculations, so that the advantage is not all on his side; but we wish farmers would give more attention to marketing their produce. In order to do this they need not become merchants, for we believe fully in every man sticking to his trade, but they should study some of the ways of the middle-men. One of the most successful farmers of our acquaintance when a youth became restless on the farm, wanted to go to the city "and buy and sell and get gain" more rapidly than he could on the old homestead. His father remonstrated at first, but seeing his son bent on a mercantile life secured a clerkship for him in New York. Things went nicely for a while, but one of those unaccountable commercial panics came up like a sudden tornado and overwhelmed many merchants, and among others the firm for which our young friend labored. He was thrown out of employment, and finding no other situation, came home, sadder, but wiser, than when he went away. His mercantile experience was a blessed one to him. He had not only seen the folly of seeking sudden wealth, and was, therefore, contented with the slow and sure gains of the farm, but he had also learned systematic habits of business, the mode of keeping accounts, and what some would call "the tricks of the trade," but what we prefer to call the secrets of success in buying and selling, for we believe merchants as a class are just as honorable as farmers. There are cheats among them, as there are in every class of society, but the great distinction between the merchant and the farmer is that the former studies the art of buying and selling more, and is, therefore, more shrewd in this line, the farmer giving his main attention to the art of producing. It is worth while to know how to do both. Our young friend to whom we have alluded cannot only raise a good barrel of apples, but he can sell it at the highest price, and his Ayrshires and Cotswolds always go off at top figures.

It is doubtless true that some men are born farmers and others inherit a constitutional tendency for trade, and it is not worth while to go contrary to the law of heredity and spoil a farmer by making a merchant of him; but every producer should understand the principles of trade sufficiently to dispose of his own produce to the best advantage. He must also buy groceries and dry goods to a greater or less extent for his family, and so far is, necessarily, a merchant. We therefore may do farmers a service by calling their attention to the tricks—we mean principles—of merchants. We have already alluded to one—studying the state of the market. The merchant looks over the price current as soon as his daily newspaper comes into his hand. He knows whether cheese is rising or falling, and buys and sells cheese accordingly. The same is true of apples, potatoes and every other product. He not only looks at the price current in one city, but in all the great markets, and compares production with consumption on a large scale. If potatoes are rotting in one section of the country and not in another he knows when to buy and when to sell. This range of vision is not confined to one township. The farmer having a good crop of apples is too apt to think that every one else has the same, and contracts to sell under this impression at too low a rate, thus not only diminishing his own profits but damaging his fellow-producers by establishing low prices. Merchants are careful not to run each other's prices, knowing full well that this practice reacts to the damage of their own trade. Farmers may not intend to undersell each other, but they do not connect together as do merchants, and, each acting independently, some one selling ignorantly at too low a rate makes a precedent which buyers plead in their purchases from others. If A sells apples at three dollars per barrel and B at two dollars, the price is far more likely to fall to the latter figure than to rise to the former. If B has only a few apples to sell and does not much care at what price they go, he should have some regard for A, who has a large orchard, on which he is mainly dependent for an income. A little more consultation and co-operation in marketing would be of great service to the farming community.

It is a principle with merchants and manufacturers to give their goods an attractive appearance. Dry goods are well starched and glossed, and groceries are done up in neat packages. Farmers should learn a lesson in this regard from the manufacturer. If two tubs of butter are taken to market from the same dairy and of the same quality, and one is neatly balled and tastefully stamped, and the other is in uncomely rolls, the fancy balls will bring a fancy price, while the untidy rolls can with difficulty be sold at any price. We have heard it said that the Star butter is no better intrinsically than that of a hundred other dairies that sells for a third as much, and that it is folly for the consumer to pay so much for a stamp; but if consumers prefer to pay this extra, then it is folly for farmers not to put on the stamp. Good looks go a great way in selling produce as well as in securing husbands. The quality of the product should be the first aim, but as a beautiful woman may be made to look ugly by an unbecoming dress, so good butter looks badly and sells poorly when thrust carelessly into a rusty tin pail. A little taste on the part of the farmer pays wonderfully when he goes to market, and it is not enough that this taste should be manifest in his products. It should be seen also in his person and equipage. A stylish delivery wagon has sold much goods for many a merchant.

Another principle in marketing is to sell when a thing is ready for sale, if the current price is anything like a reasonable one. Most farm products are of a perishable nature, and to store them away for higher prices is generally a losing business. Sometimes it pays, but it is like a lottery in which there are many blanks to one prize. Those who stored their apples a year ago, saying they would never sell apples for one dollar per barrel, were compelled to sell in the spring for a very small advance on this price, with a loss of some rotten ones, and with no little labor in storing and sorting. At the harvest-time of any product, buyers are usually around in search of it, and the wise farmer strikes when the iron is hot. With such an imperishable product as wool, storage may sometimes be practiced with profit, but we have known a farmer to refuse ninety cents a pound for his wool, hoping to get one dollar, and afterward glad to sell it at fifty cents. Such a result makes one feel ashamed of his bed-fellow when he sleeps alone. Storage is almost always accompanied with some loss. As coal merchants put it, "You can't pick up a ton of coal where you have dumped one."

The most important factor in marketing produce is a reputation for furnishing a good article and dealing squarely. If a purchaser buys once and is suited, he is not only apt to buy again, but to recommend others, and thus the sale makes the best sort of an advertisement.—*Alexander Hyde, in N. Y. Times.*

How to Save and Keep Manure.

There is no question more frequently or seriously considered by the farmer than how he shall get, keep and spend an adequate supply of manure, nor is there anything about the farm which is of greater importance to its successful management than the manure heap. There are few farmers now left who pretend to ignore this feed for the land, and few localities, even in the newer Western States, where manure now is thought to be a nuisance. We have gradually come to the inevitable final end of our "virgin farms," and have now either to save what is left of their wonderful natural fertility or to restore them slowly and laboriously to a profitable condition. We have reached the end of our tether, and are obliged to confess that we have trespassed over the line which bounds the territory of the locust, or have improved the face of the country so much that, the protecting timber being removed, the water supply is becoming precarious, and springs, brooks and rivers no longer flow as they did heretofore. To some extent the tide of emigration, which has flowed Westward so many years, is now eddying or even ebbing, and the cheap, worn lands of the East are finding purchasers who undertake to bring them back to their former condition. At the same time Eastern farmers are discovering more and more certainly that they must increase their crops and make one acre produce as much as two have heretofore done. The only way in which either of these classes can succeed is by keeping sufficient stock to manure their farms liberally; to feed these animals so skillfully and well, that they shall pay for their feed with a profit, and in addition leave a supply of rich manure, with which the soil can be kept in a productive state, and to use and save the manure with such care that no particle of it be lost. It is not every farmer who can procure all the manure he needs; but very many can save what they have with far greater economy than they now do; and this, although it may seem a question secondary to that of getting manure, is really of primary importance, for by using what one has to better purpose he opens a way to increase his supply. We have found this to be the case in our own experience, and by strict attention to saving and preserving every particle of manure in its best condition we have succeeded in so enlarging our supply of fodder that the number of stock that could be fed was largely increased each year, and very soon it was necessary to go out and buy animals to consume the surplus. To bring a farm into improved condition there is no cheaper or more effective way than this. The ordinary management of manure, in open barnyards where it is washed by rains, dried by the sun's scorching heat and wasted by every wind that blows, is the worst that is possible. In this way half or more of the value of the manure is lost. By figuring up what it would cost to purchase a quantity of manure equal to what is thus lost, the costliness of this common method would be discovered, and the question how much could be afforded to take care of the manure would be settled. When properly littered one cow or ox would make a ton of manure every month, if the liquid as well as the solid portion is saved. Ten head would thus make 120 tons, or sixty two-horse wagon loads, in a year. A pair of horses will make as much manure as one cow, or twelve tons in the year. A hundred sheep, if yarded every night and well littered, will make 100 tons of manure in the year, and ten pigs will work up a wagon load in a month if supplied with sufficient coarse material. The stock of a 100-acre farm, which should consist of at least ten cows; ten head of steers, heifers and calves; a pair of horses, 100 sheep and ten pigs, would then make in the aggregate 310 tons of manure every year, or sufficient to give twelve tons per acre every fourth year. If this were well cared for it would be, in effect, equal to double the quantity of ordinary manure; and if a plenty of swamp muck could be procured, at least six hundred tons of the best manure could be made upon a 100-acre farm. If this were the rule instead of a rare exception, or only a possibility, what a change would appear upon the face of the country and what an addition would be made to the wealth of the Nation!—*American Agriculturist.*

Youths' Department.

"IT WOULDN'T BE A VINE."

A little girl I know of was very fond of flowers,
And if she had one given her, oh, how her eyes would shine!
And by a neighbor's garden she would stand and look for hours
At the pretty climbing roses, and the honeysuckle-vine.

One day she found some seeds that were long, and black, and narrow,
And "Ha, ha, ha!" she laughed aloud, I know just what I'll do!
I'll put these in the ground. Now, go along, you greedy sparrow:
You needn't think that I am going to share my luck with you!"

Beside the garden fence she hid them under cover,
And put, for their convenience, a lattice-work of strings;
And hoped ere many days to see them clamber up and over
The dingy boards, and soar aloft on pretty emerald wings.

Soon up came a slip of green; and the little girl beheld it,
With a cry of joy; for patiently she'd waited for this sign,
And twice a day she watered it, and many days she smelled it,
And wondered if it wouldn't be a honeysuckle-vine.

The naughty thing grew tall, and straight, and stubborn, for it couldn't
Be coaxed around the slender threads against the fence to curl,
Though the little maiden tried her best, and cried because it wouldn't
Do such an easy thing as that to please a little girl.

But still it grew and grew, despite the weeds around it,
And still refused persistently round any thing to twine;
And grieved and disappointed was the maiden when she found it
Would neither be a climbing rose nor honeysuckle-vine.

It greeted her, one morning, in a robe of dazzling splendor,
No other blossom, far or near, so showily was dressed;
And the little girl exclaimed, with an accent soft and tender,
"I forgive you, dear old sunflower, for you did your very best!"

—*Josephine Pollard, in Nursery.*

HOW SOME DOLLS BROKE THE LAW.

At William Hackett's dingy, cramped quarters in London there were three very busy people. These were Mrs. Hackett, Miss Hackett and Master Hackett. They were working upstairs in an attic room, sitting about a table on which there were dolls, doll-heads, doll-bodies. All about the room were boxes of dolls, undressed, except for those inevitable little paper-cambric slips which seem to embody the only inalienable right that dolls have in this world.

Were the Hacketts—Mrs., Miss and Master—dressing dolls to help out belated Santa Claus? No. Were they making dolls? Again, no. They were unmaking the creatures.

First, the lovely dears were beheaded. Then they were ripped open about where their clavicles would have been if the doll-makers hadn't left the clavicles out of the darlings. When they were all ripped, and gaping in a ghastly way from shoulder to shoulder, they were emptied of what would have been their vital organs if it hadn't been sawdust. Then the heads and bodies were stuffed like Thanksgiving turkey, not, however, with oysters or curry forcemeat, but with costly laces—laces fit to adorn a Duchess.

Mr. William Hackett was going to emigrate to America. He was going to open a toy-shop and a lace-shop in the United States, and make his fortune. He had put his means, the gatherings and savings of thirty years of work and economy, into fine laces.

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When the Custom-House officials boarded the incoming steamer, Mr. Hackett, without hesitation, reported his dolls and toys, and stood by while his wares were rummaged so roughly that Master Hackett, also standing by, thought that some of the doll-heads must surely burst open and let out their secrets. But the investigation ended without any cracked skulls; duty was paid on the dolls, while the laces passed in free.

The Hacketts, in good humor, took rooms, and again the dolls were beheaded, disemboweled and reconstructed. The laces were worked over and carded; a toy-shop was opened, and Master Hackett, instead of going off to fight the Indians, and get scalped, was set to keep it, while Miss Hackett presided over the lace-shop. You and I know why her laces could be sold at low prices—low prices bring quick sales—thus Mr. Hackett soon found himself back in London, ready to bring out another lot of immigrant dolls, to find homes in little Yankee girls' hearts. In the meantime some things had happened—among others, the Chicago fire. By this, many and many a little girl was left doll-less, and many a boy topless. All over the country, from New England and New York and Ohio and the great Northwest and the Pacific coast, while mammas were boiling, and baking, and packing boxes of clothing for the burnt-out folks, and papas were giving their checks freely, the dear little boys and girls were getting tops and dressing dollies to comfort the burnt-out children.

And Santa Claus, you must know, was one of the heaviest sufferers from the great fire. Thousands and thousands of his Christmas toys were destroyed. But when the great holiday came around, the children in the land stood by their blessed old saint and friend. Many a Christmas-box they sent to Chicago for this and that burnt-out Sunday-School. And so it came that there was a Christmas-tree for a certain Presbyterian Sunday-School in Chicago, all of whose gifts had been sent by children of nobody-knew-what-places; that is to say, nobody knew by the time the articles had