

# TYPICAL SCENES AT THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## STUDYING SAMPLE SOILS.

The Department of Agriculture in Washington has been wise in retaining during several successive administrations its able Chief of the Division of Chemistry. The result has been, declares the Scientific American, from which this article is taken, that during the years of his tenure of office, Dr. Harvey W. Wiley has been able to plan and complete several valuable series of experiments. None of these, perhaps, has occupied his closer interest and attention more than those which have had for their object the study of the growth of various plants under similar conditions but with vary-

for these experiments, which were begun in 1892, and a small green-house erected in which the plants are kept during the night and in rainy weather, but at other times they are rolled out into the air. This is easily accomplished, as the pots are all on trucks which may be moved at will along the tracks, as shown in the illustrations. For a portion of the season oats and beans were grown in duplicate samples of typical soils. After the crops from these plants had been harvested, the soil in the pots was again prepared for planting, and a crop of buckwheat grown. By this means two crops are secured during each season, so that the value of the experiment is largely increased, in consequence of duplicating the data obtained. Very careful attention is naturally given to the water supplied to the pots, and formerly at proper intervals a known amount of distilled water was added to the soil by means of glass measuring vessels, but as the work has progressed, these have been discarded and a number of tin vessels, each holding two pounds of distilled water, have been substituted. As the

preparation of a preliminary report is under way. It will contain statements in regard to the composition of the soils, their physical character, their water-holding capacity, their contents of humus, and the percentage of nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash contained therein, both as regards total content and in respect of the quantities removed by different solvents. This report will be illustrated, not only by analytical tables, but also graphically in such a way as to show in the most evident manner the relation which exists between the physical composition of the soil, its contents of moisture, and the quantity of dry organic matter produced.

This is but one of several investigations now being conducted under the direction of the Chief of the Chemical Division of the Department of Agriculture. The great value to the farmer is obvious, for as a result of this investigation a chemical analysis of a given soil will at once determine what plant foods may be deficient in it for the production of a given crop and at the same time it will show the farmer how to supply these deficiencies when practicable by the judicious application of fertilizers or by a suitable rotation of crops. Thus in the end it will demonstrate what crops grown on a given soil will yield the greatest amount of profit to the farmer. The slow and even tedious work necessary for the satisfactory completion of investigations carried on in the scientific bureaus of our Government is not always appreciated by the general public, but when the results that are secured are so far-reaching in effects as those of the investigation which has just been so briefly outlined, then, indeed, does the wisdom of the work become clearly manifest.

### A TREADMILL DOG.

One That Runs a Printing Press in a Wisconsin Establishment.

A dog which runs a press is a curiosity in Plymouth, Wis., and is probably the only animal in the world doing this kind of service. "Gyp," as the dog is known, is owned by the Plymouth Review Company, and not only runs off the edition of the paper once a week, but is also employed to run a large job press.

The dog is an English mastiff, weighing 150 pounds, and formerly belonged to a showman who became stranded there and left the animal at one of the hotels. The proprietors of the Review secured him, and his tricks of operating a wheel were developed.

A wooden wheel, eight feet in diameter and four feet wide, was constructed and balanced on a shaft on the end of which was placed a pulley to drive a main shaft. This shaft was connected with a nine-column power press, capable of carrying the forms of a six-column quarto paper. In the wheel Gyp was placed and in a short time taught to tread. Though usually tractable, there are two things which throw the dog into a rage. The first is to have any one turn the wheel, which Gyp has come to look upon as his own, and second the sight of a particular cat. The latter fact is taken advantage of when the dog does not tread fast enough. A glimpse of the cat is sufficient to increase the speed of the wheel, and if the cat is

not taken away after a time the dog would work himself into such a passion that the press would be torn to pieces by the speed. Gyp has been doing the work for two years, never missing a day, and seems to enjoy the work, frequently getting into the wheel in the middle of the night and running half an hour or more just to "warm up," as it were. When commanded, the dog will start up or stop like a horse.

Next perhaps in importance to the addition of water to the soil is the determination of the amount of moisture contained in the pot at any given period. For a long time this factor was determined chiefly by an inspection of the surface, with an occasional weighing of the pot. This method, while capable of yielding excellent results when under the immediate supervision of an expert, was frequently interrupted, owing to the absence of Dr. Wiley, who was liable to be called elsewhere by other duties. Accordingly, it was deemed advantageous to have a more rigid control of the quantity of moisture present. Consequently, weekly weighings of the pots are now made, so that the quantity of moisture which has been evaporated during the seven days may be directly determined. Knowing the quantity necessary to produce complete saturation of the soil, a simple calculation will show the quantity to be added in order that the amount of moisture in the soil shall be between sixty and seventy per cent. of the total quantity necessary for its complete saturation.

For a time the weighing of each individual pot not only consumed a large amount of time, but also proved a very arduous undertaking for the attendant in charge of the pots. Accordingly, the method of weighing was improved by an ingenious mechanical device which renders it possible for one person, without assistance and without undue physical exertion in the way of lifting the pots, to weigh the entire lot of 176 in about four hours. This is shown in one of the accompanying illustrations, which is also of special interest as showing Dr. Wiley himself in the act of writing down the weights.

The single-column illustration shows the screen or hood that has been devised for the purpose of protecting the plants from the action of the wind and from the attacks of birds. The laboratory work includes determinations of the total amount of dry

matter produced in each pot, together with the amounts of nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash removed from the soil by each crop. The data from seven seasons is now at hand, and the

amount of water added to every pot must be known (so that the conditions may be identical), this improved method makes it possible to add one portion of water to each of the pots in the course of two hours. This is accomplished by inserting the tin funnels containing water in the funnel holder on the side of the pot, as shown in the illustration.

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# SINGULAR HAPPENINGS.

## Some Uncommon Incidents of Poverty, Law, Crime and Accident.

### AN AUCTIONEER WOMAN'S BID.

A Pauper Woman Sold at Auction For Board Bids in Herself-Fondal Pullman Town to Be Free-Committed Suicide at Wife's Orders-A Mountain Falls in Canada After a Thaw.

Mt. Penn. (Special).—An unfortunate old woman, poor, her usefulness gone, her friends driven from her by peculiarities incident to old age, has just been sold at auction to the lowest bidder by the overseers of the poor of Lackawanna Township, Pike County. Despite her age, however, her mind is acute, and she started the auctioneers by bidding in herself.

The woman who was put on the block was Mrs. Elmira Quick. She is seventy-seven years old, and has resided nearly the whole of her life in Lackawanna Township. Her sale at auction was in pursuance of a custom which long has prevailed in that township. It has been customary with the various poormasters to sell the poor of the township each year to the lowest bidder in preference to being annoyed with the care themselves, and about the beginning of the year a large sign with the glaring headline, "A Woman for Sale," can be seen posted about the township, for it seldom betrays a man to become dependent upon the district.

When the bidders assembled at Warren K. Rutan's Hotel, at Rowland Station, the Overseer of the Poor, Mr. Rosenrath, former Pike County Commissioner, and Warren Rutan, who also acted as auctioneer, took the floor and announced that a woman was to be "sold to the lowest bidder for keep." The bidding started at \$4 a week and was very spirited. The auctioneers were a bit "knock down" for \$1.50 a week for board, clothing, and fuel. No one seemed to bid, and Mrs. Quick, who had been a silent listener to the proceedings, arose from her chair and in quiet tones said:

"I will bid \$5 a month. I will have no trouble to maintain myself on that amount." This turn in the proceedings was wholly unanticipated, and created general surprise. For how was the aged woman spreading her wings? In a quarter of an hour it is all over, and death has come. But it is worse still to live the living death of a drunkard, to feel one good thing after another going out of you, that you have asked about, and less and less of their loved ones. Every name is getting worse and worse, further and further from God and goodness and everything that is beautiful and noble in the world. He every day not only in your body, but your soul as well. Better far by killed by a serpent than endure such a fate as this. But if you are asked, "What a fountain of living water," you should say, "I am a fountain of living water, and I will give it freely to you."—Father Mathew Herald.

### PULLMAN TO BE A FREE CITY.

The Town Will Be Absorbed by Chicago and Its Buildings Sold.

CHICAGO, Ill. (Special).—The dream of George M. Pullman's life has been shattered. The fenced-in model town of Pullman, Ill., to become a free community. The anomaly of a city within a city is at an end. The Pullman Palace Car Company has accepted the decision of the Supreme Court of Illinois sustaining the contention of Attorney General M. T. Maloney. The Pullman company has instructed its attorneys to close the suit. The terms of the decree are now being prepared. The decree will divorce the great corporation from everything save the business for which it was incorporated.

This will end, as a feudal institution, the town of Pullman. Its churches and schools, its hotel, its magnificent arcade and market house, the public library and two thousand brick residences, will be sold to the highest bidder. The Pullman Iron and Steel Company will be reorganized, and the Pullman will pass from the control of the company. The streets of Pullman will be given over to the authorities of the city of Chicago, and the waterworks will also pass into the hands of the city. Pullman will cease to be a hedged-in municipality.

### AN EXTRAORDINARY SUICIDE.

A Wife Orders Her Husband to Kill Himself to She Can Live Money.

LONDON (The Times).—The Vienna correspondent of the Mail telegraphs: "An extraordinary story of cold-blooded crime is published in Monday's papers. John and Anna Braune were a middle-class couple with three children. The husband owned a successful business, Braune squandered his money, left the business to a rule and became a bankrupt. One evening his wife said to him: 'John, I am starved for money. If you can get the insurance on your life.' 'The husband went into the next room and shot himself, but, although desperately wounded, eventually recovered. 'Soon after his recovery his wife said to him: 'John, you were too stupid to shoot yourself properly. Go and hang yourself tomorrow.' The next morning the obedient husband was found hanging from a rafter, this time dead."

"Anna Braune then tried to get rid of her mother-in-law. She told her husband a workman to murder her, explained to him how he could get into her mother's house; where he could find a hammer, with which to do the deed; where he could hide the body and the tools; and she promised him a reward of \$1000 for murdering her mother, but he reported the matter to the police, and the inhuman daughter was arrested on Saturday."

### A CANADA MOUNTAIN FALLS.

Great Chunk of Earth Dams a River, Causing a Flood.

VANCOUVER, B. C. (Special).—The recent thaw had the effect of loosening the sides of a small mountain which overhangs the Fraser in a precipitous manner. Shortly after midnight a few days ago with a roar that could be heard over a mile, fully a hundred acres of the hill, anywhere from twenty to fifty feet in depth, crashed into the Fraser, jamming it completely and sending the water in torrents over the fertile Nicola Valley. The course of the river was changed completely. No one was hurt, but the water, which was in the country has grown into a broad, majestic, but shallow stream, is fully half a mile out of its former course. The district is sparsely settled, and no lives were lost.

Barns and houses, however, were carried away and thousands of acres of valuable land will never be reclaimed from the waters of the Fraser in its new course.

Kentucky Mountaineers Go Into the Army. The army recruiting station at Lexington, Ky., is doing more work than all the other Western stations combined. The mountaineers are pouring in at such a rate that the examiners are kept busy. A few days ago a large contingent was shipped to Fort Sappington, and others will follow.

Britain Supports Peace Proposal. Lord Salisbury has replied to the Czar's disarmament proposal, assuring him of the "cordial sympathy of the English people" and promising the support of the British Government.

Sent to Prison For Life. Colonel Julian San Martin, who was in command of the Spanish garrison at Ponce Porto Rico, when the United States troops under General Miles landed in the island, and who abandoned the place without resistance, has been sentenced to imprisonment for life at Puerto Rico. He will be exiled to Ceuta, the Spanish penal colony in Morocco, opposite Gibraltar.

Volunteers to Be Mustered Out. The Secretary of War, Washington, has ordered the muster out of the First West Virginia, Second Ohio and First Territorial Regiments, all volunteers.

# A TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

## THE DRINK EVIL MADE MANIFEST IN MANY WAYS.

Take a Drink?—What Alcohol Does to the User—It is Foolish to Buy an Ounce of Present Pleasure With a Pound of Future Pain—Abstinence is Safest.

Take a drink? No, not if Reason's trumpet be better Than to bind my very soul With a galling fetter. We sweat and cool and free, Has no cruel chains for me.

"Bitch Like a Serpent." Few things are so much dreaded as serpents. They are so stealthy, and, except the rattlesnake, so silent and so deadly. There is no cure known for the bite of some snakes; the only chance is to cut out the piece of flesh which has been bitten or to burn it out with a red-hot iron, and even this will be of no use unless it is done directly after the bite is received. Now, this is very like what alcohol does to the drinker, who has no other chance of escape but to cut out his thirst for drink when that thirst has once been formed in him. His only chance is to get the drink out, and keep it out of his system. If he cannot do this, he must die; he has patiently to abstain from it until it has ceased to long for it. Sometimes it is many years before this can be done, and the sufferer has to live a hell of time after time for the whole of a man's life, and keeps him in danger and anxiety.

What good reason we have to avoid being bitten by this serpent of strong drink. The mischief that it does is like many other bad things, the drink comes to us with a smiling face; it is pretty to look at as it sparkles in the glass; we see some of our friends taking it, and we know that many people not only take it, but even praise it. If we were to take some, very likely at first it would seem to be doing us good, and we might think it a useful thing to take. But it would all be a mistake; every kind of strong drink is "a mocker," and soon after we had got into the habit of taking it, we should find that we had more or less difficulty leaving it. It would be like the serpent's tooth would be felt, and if we had wisdom enough left we should cast the habit away from us in fear and horror. If we did not, the poison would enter more deeply into the system, and would flow through our veins; we should become the prey of the serpent. Wise men look well ahead, and so do wise boys and girls; they do not let themselves be misled by the siren song of the tempter; they want to know how it will be in the end. They know better than to buy an ounce of present pleasure with a pound of future pain. It is because the good people do not remember and act at the first that we so hate and fear it.

It must be terrible to feel the poison spreading through one's body after the bite of the snake. In some cases it is a quarter of an hour it is all over, and death has come. But it is worse still to live the living death of a drunkard, to feel one good thing after another going out of you, that you have asked about, and less and less of their loved ones. Every name is getting worse and worse, further and further from God and goodness and everything that is beautiful and noble in the world. He every day not only in your body, but your soul as well. Better far by killed by a serpent than endure such a fate as this. But if you are asked, "What a fountain of living water," you should say, "I am a fountain of living water, and I will give it freely to you."—Father Mathew Herald.

Beer and Wine and Intemperance. It should not be forgotten that the use of malt liquors and light wines has not been found in Europe to be means of checking intemperance. The French for generations have used light wines in large quantities, and within the last two or three years have been developing a taste for distilled spirits which threatens, if continued, to convert those who were formerly considered to be abstemious into a nation of drunkards. The same statement holds true of Switzerland, where the people have for a long time past used light wines in great quantities, and are now finding the inducement to resort to distilled spirits almost irresistible. Even in Germany, the home of beer and also light wines, the official reports announce that there is a material increase in the average consumption of distilled liquors—a statement which we believe also holds true of the kingdom of Belgium.

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# THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

## INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR JANUARY 29.

Lesson Text: "Christ at Jacob's Well." John iv. 5-16—Golden Text: John iv. 14—Commentary on the Day's Lesson by the Rev. D. M. Stearns.

5. "Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." He is anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power and goes about doing good. He is the Father, and all His steps as well as all His words and actions are ordered by the Father (Acts x. 39; John vii. 38; 19. Ps. xxviii. 23). To live such a life is the business of the Christian, and Christ in us will live that life if we yield fully to Him.

6. "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well, and it was about the sixth hour." As we said in a previous lesson, probably 6 a. m., according to John's way of counting. He would be journeying early so as to avoid the heat of the day. He is weary, for He is truly man and in all points tempted like as we are. We have not a high price; we cannot be touched with a feeling of our guilt, for our guilt is not our frame; He remembers that we are but dust.

7. "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." For our sakes He put Himself in the limitations of a mortal body, liable to weariness, hunger, thirst, suffering and death. He who made all things and upholds all things made Himself dependent upon the ministry of others for the necessities of life. He fed millions with manna for nearly forty years and brought water from the rock at His pleasure.

8. "For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat." He said, Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price (Isa. lv. 1). Jesus' disciples to buy from money to treat with the body. It is very difficult for us to believe the extent of His humiliation. We cannot understand how rich He was nor how poor He became for our sakes (1 Cor. ii. 8). But we can look up gratefully and say, Lord, I thank Thee for bearing it for me!

9. "How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Thus answered the woman Samaria. How different from Esau's wife! Esau's wife was a Samaritan, and she was a Samaritan in her heart (Gen. xxiv. 45, 46). See in II Kings, vii, the origin of these Samaritans. Do good unto all, especially to the household of faith, and give to him that asketh thee, as thou art able (Rom. xii. 13). In practice, for not only is it more blessed to give than receive, but not even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple shall lose its reward (Acts xxi. 35; Math. x. 42).

10. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God