USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

SWEET OIL rubbed on the skin is said to be a sure antidote for ivy poison.

A PUTTY of starch and chloride of zinc hardens quickly, and lasts, as a stopper of holes in metals, for months.

FROSTED GLASS, useful for screens, etc., is made by laying the sheets horizontally and covering them with a strong solution of sulphate of zinc. The salt crystallizes on drying.

VARNISHES, LIMPID AND FLEXIBLE.—Anhydrous alumina stereate, dissolved in turpentine, is an article much recommended for this purpose, and it is said to be unalterable by high temparatures.

A GOOD welding composition is made of borax fused with one-sixteenth its weight of sal ammoniac, cooled, pulverized and combined with an equal weight of quick lime. The compound is sprinkled on the red-hot iron, and the latter replaced in the fire.

MAHOGANY STAINING.—Wash the wood to be stained with diluted nitric acid, ten parts of water to one of acid. For rosewood, glaze the same with carmine or Munich lake. Asphaltum, thinned with turpentine, forms an excellent mahogany color for new work.

LAND DRAINS.—An excellent subsoil drain may be made by digging a trench and filling in the bottom with sticks of wood, compressing them together with the feet, and then covering them with the mold. The effectiveness of such a drain will endure for several years, and the final decay of the wood will serve to enrich the soil.

SPIRITS of turpentine poured upon seed corn before planting, and thoroughly mixed by stirring, so that all the seeds shall be impregnated with it, is a specific for the terrible ravages of the cut-worm. Put one quart of turpentine to a bushel of corn, or in that proportion, which is sufficient, and corn comes up two or three days quicker when thus treated. Besides the scent of the turpentine, which can be detected several weeks after the planting, aids much in keeping crows at a distance.

SAYS the Massachusetts ploughman: Green rye or clover may be cut green and fed to the horse in the stall to better advantage than turning out to pasture. But probably a liberal supply of Swedish turnips or rutabagas cut in slices and literally covered with Indian meal will lay on fat as fast as it is desirable. It is, we think, about the best substitute for green food, gives a soft and glossy coat, an elastic step and fine spirits. We do not think the yellow, or Swedish, turnip is appreciated as it ought to be, as a food for horses.

FLINT AND POTASH IN PLANTS.—They have many experimental farms, gardens and orchards in Germany, to which we are in the habit of looking for new facts in agriculture and horticulture. An expert says: "Divest the soil of all silica (flint) and alkali were useful plants and beautiful flowers are to be grown, and not one would attain to perfect development, simply because silica and potash are eminently essential to impart stiffness to the stems and elasticity and tenacity to the leaves. When grapevines, for example, which are growing in a sandy soil, have access to potash in abundance, the leaves will appear as tough as leather, and no mildew or rust will ever affect the foilage."

FISH CAKES.—Take codfish, either fresh or salt, that has been boiled the day before. Carefully remove the bones and mince the fish. Mix with a quantity of mashed potatoes, mashed with butter and milk in the proportion of one-third codfish and two-thirds mashed potatoes. Add sufficient beaten eggs to make the whole into a smooth paste. Season with cayenne, and if the mixture seems dry, moisten and enrich it with a little butter. Make it into cakes about an inch thick and as large round as the top of a common-sized tea-cup, or into round balls. Sprinkle them well with flour. Fry them in lard or beef dripping. When one side is done turn them over. If approved, you may add to the mixture two or three onions boiled and minced. Any large codfish may be dressed in this manner for next morning's breakfast

SALT-RAISING BREAD.—A contributor to the St. Charles Cosmos writes: "The night before you wish to make bread, boil one-half pint of milk; put one tablespoonful of corn-meal into a pitcher or bowl, and turn the boiling milk over it, stirring well; let it stand until morning, then add sufficient warm water to this batter to make it 'luke-warm;' then put in a pinch of salt, the same of sugar, and thicken with flour to the consistency of good batter; set the pitcher or bowl into a kettle of warm water, not hot enough to scald, and aim to maintain the same temperature by keeping it on the stove-hearth; when it has been risen to top of pitcher, make your sponge in a large pan of flour, with two pints or more of warm water (part milk is better); then stir the rising in, first adding a tablespoonful or more of salt; let it rise, then mold into loaves; do not mold so stiff as yeast bread. By closely following these directions, I will guarantee good bread. In summer I have my rising up by 8 o'clock; in cold weather it requires more time for fermentation."

A BEAUTIFUL ornament for the sitting-room can be made by covering a common tumbler with moss, the latter fastened in place by sewing cotton wound round. Then glue dried moss upon a saucer, into which set the tumbler, filling it and the remaining space in the saucer with loose earth from the woods. Plant the former with a variety of ferns, and the latter with wood violets. On the edge of the grass also plant some of the nameless little evergreen vine, which bears red (scarlet) berries, and whose dark, glossy, ivy-like foliage will trail over the fresh blue and white of the violets with beautiful effect. Another good plan is to fill a rather deep plate with some of the nameless but beautiful silvery and light green and delicate pink mosses, which are met with in profusion in all the swamps and marshes. This can be kept fresh and beautiful as long as it is not neglected to water it profusely once a day. It must, of course, be placed in the shade, or the moss will blanch and die. In the center of this a clump of large azure violets should be placed, adding some curious lichens and pretty fungus growth from the barks of forest trees, and a few cones, shells, and pebbles.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Practical Farmer says: "When grass is mowed at an early period in growth much more labor will be required to cure it thoroughly than if the crop were not cut until the blossoms are beginning to fall to the ground. Nevertheless, the hay made of early cut grass will make far better fodder, and a given quantity, when fed to stock, will yield more milk, more wool, and more flesh, muscle, and fat than the same area of grass if allowed to become fully ripe before the crop is mowed. On the contrary, ripe and dry hay with coarse weeds among it, will go farther in keeping stock alive than hay made of young and tender grass; but the stock thus kept will depreciate amazingly in condition, while supplied with such inferior fodder. If one has a meadow where there is a large quantity of coarse grass and only a few feeds, it will be far better in every respect to mow the crop early. In some instances, parts of a meadow may be mowed three times during the season. If one has bog meadows, the oftener the herbage can be mowed the sooner the coarse grass weeds will be run out.

CRYSTAL BASKETS.—These ornaments are not difficult to make. The basket or any other ornament, is first fashioned with copper wire, as a skeleton of the pattern desired. For blue crystals, take a saturated solution of sulphate of copper in hot water, place the pattern in this liquor, and set it in a quiet place; as the solution cools, crystals of the sulphate will be deposited upon the wire; the first crystals will be small; but to increase their size it is only necessary to place the ornaments in a fresh and perfectly saturated solution of the copper and salt. For yellow crystals use yellow prussiate of potash; for ruby use the red prussiate of potash; for white, use alum. The salts of chromium, and many others, are equally applicable for this purpose, if greater variety of color be wanted. To preserve these ornaments in all their beauty they should be kept under glass shades. All the salts named are more soluble in hot than in cold water; hence, as the hot solution become cold, a part of the material is deposited; in so doing each metallic salt assumes a particular shape of crystals, as if endowed with vitality. These crystals vary in form according to the salt, but are invariably the same for the same salt, and as characteristic of their origin.

Hopeful Look at the Business Future.

There are those who contend, and not unreasonably, that the country is not in a better condition now than it has been for many months; that trade is dull; a long, hot summer is before us, and there is nothing especially encouraging in our present commercial surroundings. This view may be partially true, but it is offset by so many practical facts that the weight of testimony is in favor of the class who look upon the future hopefully.

1. The most encouraging reports have been received concerning the crops in all portions of the country. Cotton is in a fine condition; wheat and corn are flourishing; the fruit and vegetable crops are unusually abundant; sugar and rice are said to be looking well, and there is a prospect of a good market abroad. Under such promising conditions the country will surely not go backward. With good crops there should be a general business revival.

2. The price of labor is being gradually reduced, thus enabling the manufacturer, to supply his products at lower rates. Cheap food and cheap manufactures lessen the cost of living and thus solve one of the disturbing problems of the day; for by the equalization of the earning and producing powers a cause of discontent is removed.

3 Money is abundant—too abundant, in fact—and too much confined to the financial centers. But we have passed through the worst of our dangers, and, although confidence is a plant of slow growth, when it blooms again it will be to give a vitality to new enterprises, put in active use our idle capital, encourage investment in whatever is cheap and possibly fruitful, and so start the country afresh upon its forward march.—*N. Y. Herald.*

The Hot Springs.

There is great activity of expectation at least, amongst the inhabitants of Hot Springs, Ark. The supreme court has decided that the property belongs to the United States and not to any of the numerous claimers and squatters on the premises. It is expected, therefore, that the government will appropriate money to put the place in charge of the military, sweep and garnish it, and perhaps clear out the faro gamblers, who are legion there. Judging from the eminence of many visitors, such as Senator Morton, Hon. John Morrissey, Gen. Hooker and others who have crossed the continent to get relief at the springs, and have revisited them in many cases, there must be more efficacy in the Hot Springs than in most of the puddles and schemes that are advertised. There are fifty-seven springs whose united supply could bathe 20,000 persons daily, allowing twenty-five gallons to each. There are also a number of mud baths where the poorer people lie like pigs in a puddle, often covered with horrible ulcers. The water is hot enough to cook eggs in a quarter of an hour, with minnows, sun-fish, suckers and bass. The springs are more than 1,900 feet above the sea; they fall in a brook twenty or thirty feet wide, and the mountain from which they emanate is a part of the Ozark system of Missouri and Indian Territory, The Indians used them for syphilitic, paralytic and rheumatic complaints, and still return occasionally to get rid of the white man's ailments. There appears to be no particular value in the water, but the force of the stream directed upon the body expels noxious principles through the pores, stimulates the circulation and arouses the tone of the system. It is twenty-one miles from Hot Springs to the nearest railroad station, Malvern. "No one can come to Hot Springs without receiving a good moral lesson. Parents would do well to send their wild boys to this school. If they would not learn wisdom here, there is but little hope of preventing the sowing of their wild oats."

—Recent advices from the Sandwich Islands state that "rum is digging the grave of the Hawaiian race."

Athenian and Roman Courts.

The Athenian and Roman courts presented fine fields for the exercise of legal talent, and not a few practices were in vogue which would be considered remarkable at the present day. At Athens it was not customary for a man to speak in any cause unless he had a personal interest in the suit at issue. At first every one was forced to speak in his own behalf, but this rule was afterwards so far relaxed as to permit a relative or intimate friend to intercede for him. After this, persons who were themselves incompetent to frame an oration, employed others to write for them, and some of the most legal orations of antiquity were thus written for pay and delivered by others.

There was famous in Athens, as well as Rome, a large class of men who obtained a livelihood solely in this way. Another species of orations were those which were written but never delivered in public. An instance of this is the famous speech of Demosthenes against Midius, and in view of this fact, it is amusing to read in it the complacent account he gives of the attempts which have been made to bribe him to be silent, and of his contemptuous rejection of all others. Of the fifteen extant orations of Antiphon, twelve were never delivered; and of Cicero's six speeches against Verres, only one was uttered, because Verres prudently went into voluntary exile.

Pericles is said to have been the first who wrote his speeches beforehand and committed them to memory, but if this be so, his example was soon widely followed; because not long after, we hear of Demosthenes delivering a set speech at the court of Philip, and forgetting what he had written, was forced to stop. Akin to this is the case of Cicero, whose splendid oration for Milo is the delight of all scholars, but its delivery was a grand failure. He was embarrassed by the presence of the yelling populace and the armed guards at that celebrated trial, and forgetting his speech lost his cause.

The juries of the ancients were strange bodies, often forming, in fact, popular assemblies, numbering hundreds, and sometimes even thousands. Any notable cause among the Athenians was tried by an assembly of the people who crowded together and in person judged the case. At other times they delegated certain deputies to hear the argument and give judgment. These judges as they were called, or jurors, as we would say, were in such numbers as to form a kind of popular assembly. Every year, a body of six thousand citizens was set aside to hear causes, and from this body the jurors were chosen, five hundred at a time, sometimes several juries sitting together. The votes of the jury were taken by each man casting a bean or pebble into an urn passed around for the purpose.

Among the Romans the juries were not so large, except on special occasions. The king, afterwards the consul, and in later times the praetor, presided at the trial, but seemed to have little influence in modifying the decision, acting merely as a presiding officer.

In Athens there were large numbers of professional jurors, who gained a livelihood by sitting as judges and hearing causes, but in Rome no such classes of persons existed. One of the finest comedies of Aristophanes, "The Wasps," was founded on the abuse of justice among the Greeks. In his time the jurors were well paid by the state for their servicee, and besides had a good chance of receiving bribes from the contending parties, as well as having their ears daily tickled by the most lavish flattery that the silver-tongued Greek orator could bestow, so that the office of "Dicast," as it was called, was coveted. In Rome, although there was bribery enough, few persons had the opportunity of becoming judges, and, of course, fewer sought the opportunity.

Our National Vice.

The average American spits, it is said, just as the average crow caws, and, although the people aim so boastfully at excelling in brain culture, there seems to be lacking, thus far, the moral and social cultivation necessary to shake off this filthy habit, which is scarcely short of a national vice. In no other country, civilized or barbarous, would notices requesting men "not to spit, out of respect for the ladies," be called for, and to our shame be it said, in no country would this modest, reasonable request be so persistently disregarded. Nor is the nauseating practice confined to common youths asserting manly freedom, but men old enough to have to pay for spoiled dresses are guilty of an equal disregard for others' rights and feelings. Every woman who uses to any extent public conveyances can recall having her clothing soiled—and every man of decent habits who has been sickened by the expectoration he has been unable to escape. The right of man to spit in public conveyance or building, at the expense of others' clothing, feelings, and comfort, is no greater than his right to perform any other dirty trick.

THE NEW PANACEA.—Modern science having demonstrated that alcohol is "neither food nor physic," but, on the contrary, a species of poison, the introduction of a potent tonic which is entirely free from it is certainly a subject for congratulation. Dr. Walker's Vinegar Bitters is a medicine which may be fairly characterized as an unobjectionable specific for many distressing and dangerous diseases.

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