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## AGRICULTURE.

### Potatoes.

The common potato is a vegetable so well known, that I need not describe it, nor do its botanical characteristics come within the range of my present remarks. The influence of different kinds of food upon the civilization of nations is a subject that might well engage our attention. I shall not discuss it at present, but only observe that as nations advance in civilization they require a higher standard of subsistence, a greater variety of food and more skill in its preparation. Savage nations live on a few articles and those imperfectly cooked. Those persons who, from whatever motives, commend the superior simplicity of savage fare and condemn the refinements of modern living, overlook several important particulars. Savages, it is said, preserve their teeth; a great advantage certainly, but not sufficient to compensate for the injuries done to health and life by their mode of subsistence. They are not long-lived. Man is an omnivorous animal, his teeth and stomach show that he was made to eat flesh, vegetables and fruit, and generally we find that health and comfort are promoted by a due admixture of all. Neither the Esquimaux who live on flesh, nor the East Indians who live chiefly on rice, attain a high development either of mind or body.

Ireland may be quoted as an illustration of the social results of living on one or a few articles of food. We may presume that before potatoes were introduced into general use, the Irish lived as the English did, chiefly on meat and bread; and it is certain that if the English were to abandon meat and bread, and undertake to live on potatoes, they would incur the same risk of starving that the Irish do. Even in favorable years, there is a time of six or eight weeks just before harvest, when the Irish endure intense privation. When a nation is reduced to one article of food, and that the cheapest, the difficulty is that in a famine, or even in a season of scarcity, they have nothing to fall back upon; they are already at the bottom of the hill. Had they lived on meat and grain, they might have substituted a coarser fare, but there is no going behind the coarsest. Indeed, considering the peculiar social state of Ireland, and especially the distribution and tenure of land, the introduction of potatoes can scarcely be regarded as a blessing.

Still every one knows that in ordinary circumstances potatoes are a profitable crop. Let two acres of land of the same quality be cultivated, one with potatoes, the other with wheat. Suppose the potatoes to yield two hundred bushels, weighing ten thousand pounds,—of this weight one-quarter is solid matter. We may suppose the wheat to yield twenty-five bushels, weighing fifteen hundred pounds,—of this eighty-five per cent may be solid matter. How far these two portions of solid matter will go towards sustaining animal life, is not so easily settled. If wheat flour be thoroughly washed, the starch, gum and sugar will be separated, while a tough, elastic mass will be left, commonly called gluten, or gluey matter. In one hundred parts of wheat, about twenty-three are gluten. In a hundred parts of potatoes, about three and a half. Gluten is easy of digestion and highly nutritious. It is this which, by its tenacity, causes dough to puff up in fermentation and to retain its texture full of air cells, forming a light loaf. Judged by this standard alone, wheat flour would seem to be far more preferable; yet wheat alone, though sometimes called the staff of life, does not appear to be capable of supporting prolong-

ed human existence in the best health. If one were kept on bread made of pure, fine wheat flour alone, and another on good boiled potatoes and salt, the latter would probably live longer and enjoy better health. For a short time perhaps the bread eater could do the hardest and most work.

Repeated experiments show that good potatoes, boiled, form a very nutritious article of food; and that baked potatoes are less nourishing than boiled ones. I will copy two experiments made in Glasgow prison:

First. Breakfast 1-2 lb. oat meal in porridge, with 1-2 pint of buttermilk. Dinner 3 lbs. boiled potatoes with salt. Supper 5 ounces of oat meal in porridge with 1-2 pint of buttermilk. Ten prisoners, five men and five boys, were placed upon this diet. They were confined for two months, employed in light work. At the beginning of the experiment eight were in good health, two in indifferent health. At the end of the time all were in good health, and had gained on an average more than four pounds each, only one man having lost. The greatest gain was about nine pounds, four ounces. The one who lost having been reduced five pounds, two ounces.

Another set received the same fare excepting that the potatoes were baked. They were found less nutritious than the boiled. The prisoners lost on an average one and a half pounds weight. The addition of 1-4 lb. of meat to the diet did not add to their weight.

The second experiment was this: Ten prisoners were fed thus. Breakfast 2 lbs. of potatoes boiled. Dinner 3 lbs. Supper 1 lb. per man. At the end of two months the health of all was good; there was an average gain in weight of nearly 3 1-2 lbs.—the greatest gain 8 1-4 lbs.; only two lost a trifling quantity. The prisoners all expressed their satisfaction with this fare, and regretted the change back to the ordinary diet. Indeed we know from an experiment on a still larger scale in Ireland that potatoes and buttermilk and a little oat meal are sufficient for healthy nutrition.—*Monthly Visitor.*

BOOK FARMING.—But will any one say that book farming is all nonsense? It answers no purpose? How is a true thing the worse for being printed? and how much easier it is to detect a printed lie, than one that goes from mouth to mouth, with instant variations. You have the facts put down so that they cannot be altered. And if it depends on one man telling his neighbor, and he another, the fourth man's story bears scarcely any resemblance to the first. It might indeed come back to the first man as a piece of great news. Carpenters, mill-wrights and workers in metals, all study their books. Cloth dressers, dyers, and distillers have their books. A farmer will hunt up an old newspaper to find somebody's new way of curing hams; but if he is asked to read in a book a way of increasing his crops, his answer is "pshaw!—don't I know all about it?"—*Address before the Union Agricultural Society.*

A STRANGE FARMER.—A gentleman was in our office on Saturday last, talking about farming, who said he had been tending less and less land every year. He also informed us that his crops increased in quantity in proportion as he reduced the quantity of land. Keeps his cattle haltered nights, and says he has manure piles worth seeing.—*The Plough.*

TURNIPY BUTTER.—When cows are fed with turnips, the milk and butter not unfrequently has an unpleasant taste of that root. Various means have been tried for removing this flavor, but the mixture of a pint of boiling water with a gallon of milk, at the time it is strained, is one of the most simple and effectual.

## MISCELLANEOUS EXTRACTS.

ITALY.—Here are some sentences recently passed upon political offenders of the Italian government. We ask, is it in nature that any country should long endure such tyranny?

Battista Pessina, for concealing a sabre, condemned to death—commuted for a year in a military prison.

A. G. Pagani, a concealed fire arm, 10 months in a military prison, on bread and water.

Catullo Pizza, for not denouncing Arrivabene, four months under arrest.

Antonio Pedrazza, a custom-house guard, for offending a soldier, 3 weeks arrest in irons, 36 hours with a short chain, and one fast weekly.

L. Protti, a priest, for belonging to a secret society, 4 years in a fortress.

G. A. Pedrani, 60 years of age, for aiding a deserter, 4 years hard labor in chains.

G. Raimmazzi, for circulating revolutionary writings, 2 years hard labor in chains.

L. di C. Ruspina, for circulating incendiary books, 2 years hard labor.

P. Rugozza, for do. four months hard labor.

D. Ravagnati, priest, 60 years old, arrest.

G. Roberti, for possessing books and tracts, 3 years in a fortress.

F. Rossi, for having revolutionary writings, 2 years severe imprisonment.

G. E. Radelli, priest, having arms and ammunition, 3 years in a fortress.

A. Sciosa, for posting up revolutionary writings in Milan.

G. Saugentini, insulting soldiers, 15 blows.

Count G. L. Tedeschi, circulating revolutionary tracts, sentenced to be hung—commuted to 10 years in chains.

P. Taurini, subversive expressions, 20 blows.

Achille Torre, student, seventeen years of age, opposition to smoking, one year military arrest, chains and bread and water.

These are only a part of the list given by the "Eco d'Italia," which contains also the following condemnations in Rome, in March, by the French court martial:

D. Palapandi, and several other Italians, for fighting and wounding French soldiers, on different occasions, to different punishments.

B. Filiperi, for contumacy, 5 years imprisonment and 15 francs fine.

The French went to Rome, it will be recollected, to drive away "foreigners," and set the people at liberty!

MICE AND REPTILES.—In an English work, called "The Life of a Soldier," we find the following account of battles between mice, scorpions, and centipedes, in Barbadoes. The brief narrative is full of interest. In clearing the ground for the camp, we disturbed a variety of noxious reptiles, such as whipsnakes of an extraordinary length, but not thicker than a goose quill; centipedes of a large size, whose backs were plated like a lobster's tail, and scorpions. Having heard that mice were natural enemies to the two latter, I procured a few, that I might be a witness of their combat. The arena was the space circumscribed by a glass bell; and upon letting a mouse and scorpion loose in it, a grand display of manœuvring ensued—the mouse flying to bite off his opponent's tail, which terminates in a sting, and the scorpion watching for an opportunity to strike him with it. Should the former succeed in his first object, the latter falls an easy prey: but if stung, the mouse swells up and dies in convulsions. However, the mouse is generally the victor. Equal generalship is required in the engagement with the centipede, which defends itself with two small nippers, placed at either side of its mouth

near the poison bags. One of our men found a large tarantula on his shoulder one morning when he awoke, and it suffered itself to be removed without doing him any injury. He brought it to me, as an amateur: and I accordingly placed it under the bell with one of my hardest-bitten mice. It immediately reared itself on its hinder part, and extending its long arms, remained motionless in this posture, while the mouse ran round the bell, evidently unwilling to face its new antagonist. This continued a short time; and then, as if under the influence of an irresistible fascination, the mouse jumped suddenly into the arms of the tarantula, which quickly seized him with two nippers, resembling the claws of a cat, and situated at each side of the head, and with such deadly effect, that the little quadruped instantly swelled up and burst. I next let loose two or three mice at a time on the tarantula, but they all shared the same fate.

MORE INTOLERANCE.—The following, from the "Rambler," one of the principal Roman Catholic papers in England, almost exceeds in intolerance the extract we published last week from the St. Louis "Shepherd of the Valley:"

"Religious liberty, in the sense of a liberty possessed by every man to choose his own religion, is one of the most wicked delusions ever foisted upon the age by the father of all deceit. The very name of liberty—except in the sense of a permission to do certain definite acts—ought to be banished from the domain of religion. It is neither more nor less than falsehood. No man has a right to choose his religion.—None but an Atheist can uphold the principles of religious liberty.—Shall I therefore fall in with this abominable delusion? Shall I foster that damnable doctrine, that Socianism, that Calvinism, that Anglicanism, and Judaism, are not every one of them mortal sins, like murder and adultery? Shall I hold out hopes to my erring Protestant brother, that I will not meddle with his creed, if he will not meddle with mine? Shall I tempt him to forget that he has no more right to his religious views than he has to my purse, or my house, or my life blood? No; Catholicism is the most intolerant of creeds. It is intolerance itself, for it is the truth itself. We might as rationally maintain that a sane man has a right to believe that two and two do not make four, as this theory of religious liberty. Its impiety is only equalled by its absurdity."

BE GENTLEMEN AT HOME.—There are few families, we imagine, any where, in which love is not abused as furnishing a license for impoliteness. A husband, father or brother, will speak harsh words to those who love him best simply because the security of family pride keeps him from getting his head broken. It is a shame that a man will speak more impolitely, at times, to his wife or sister than he would dare to any other female, except a low and vicious one. It is thus that the holiest affections of man's nature prove to be a weaker protection to woman in the family circle than the restraints of society, and that a woman usually is indebted for the kindest politeness of life to those not belonging to her own household! Things ought not so to be. The man who, because it will not be resented, inflicts his spleen and bad temper upon those of his own hearthstone, is a small coward and very mean man. Kind words are the circulating medium between true gentlemen and true ladies at home, and no polish exhibited in society can atone for the harsh language and disrespectful treatment too often indulged in by those bound together by God's own ties of blood and the still more sacred bonds of conjugal love.