

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 1893.

TRANSPLANTING A CAT.

A PEN PICTURE OF ITS LAMENTABLE FAILURE.

Geoffrey Cuthbert Strange's Experience with a Sedate Feline That had a Fondness for Chickens and the Feathered Songsters.

We have been trying the experiment lately at our house of transplanting an adult cat of the male persuasion, from the congenial surroundings of his early youth, and endeavoring to make him bloom like some fair exotic, in foreign soil, and the result of the experiment has been that we are fully convinced a cat is something which must either be raised on the premises or transplanted very young, in order to be an entire success. He was a beautiful cat, and when his owner, who was going away for the winter, told me I could have him for my own, I was overjoyed, and could scarcely get home soon enough to tell the joyful news that we had got a cat at last which was everything that the most fastidious critic could desire. High-bred, stylish in action, sound in mind and limb, and warranted to be thoroughly kind, and free from all tricks. We had long mourned our own especial pet who had been as the very apple of our eyes, and time had softened the sorrow of the family sufficiently to let us decide on trying to fill his place if possible. True, we were not entirely catless, but the one we had was a sort of visitor, and so small that he did not count much anyway. So urged on by a family chorus of "You are so lazy, Geoffrey, that I know you will lose that cat; someone else will go and ask for him, and his mistress will think you don't want him, or you would take the trouble to bring him home," and armed with a stout bag to carry the victim home in, I sallied forth as did the knights of old to conquer, and incidentally to bring home the cat.

It was a terrible night to ask a respectable cat to change his residence, and I felt really ashamed of doing it, so I did not ask him at all, I just seized him when he was not looking, plunged him into the bag, and started on the journey home. I am bound to say that he behaved like a perfect gentleman, and did not add to my difficulties by any unseemly struggles. He merely insisted on having his head out of the bag and being allowed to see what was happening to him, and then he took his reverses with a dignified calm that was beautiful to witness. But still it was pouring rain, blowing a perfect hurricane, and Thomas weighed over ten pounds so even his dignity did not make my path much easier. But I got him home at last, emptied him jubilantly out of the bag, and fondly hoped my troubles were over. But they were not; they had only just begun.

I have heard a good deal about the disease called nostalgia as the scientists term home-sickness, and of the miseries of trying to comfort a homesick child but I trust I may never be called upon to perform any more thankless task than to comfort a homesick cat; because our new acquisition broke out with nostalgia in its worst form, before he had been in his new quarters an hour. I suppose that dread disease affects different people in different ways, and but the effect it had upon our Tam, was most unpleasant, it seemed to attack his temper, and made him a very trying subject to live with. In the familiar setting of his own home circle he had been the gentlest and best of cats, addicted to clambering up as close to you as he could get, cuddling up under your chin and purring soft nothings into your ear, in the most fascinating manner; but now, all has changed, and Tam sulked and bewailed his hard fate in a corner and wanted to go home. He met the friendly advances of the dog with growls and swear words, and repulsed the coquetish attention of the other cat with contumely, and what was worse, blows: he even forgot himself so far as to swear at me, his only friend, the one member of the family whom he had known in happier days. I would be afraid to tell of all the mischief he wrought in the first two days of his residence amongst us, for the excellent reason that I know I should be blamed for it, as I brought him into the house! And the whole family vied with each other in trying to comfort him. But nothing can last forever, and on the third morning of his sojourn Tam—his name was "Tam, O'Shanter"—so far forgot his troubles that he came to the conclusion life might still hold some blessings even for a borrowed cat. So he began to take notice, and if he only had not done so, I suppose he would have been with us still.

I am afraid we are not particularly well situated for training up cats in the way they should go, and teaching them to lead a healthy, happy and useful life, because we are bounded on the east by, neighbours who have bestowed their hearts best affections upon a canary, and on the west by the most confirmed poultry fancier it has ever been my fate to encounter. Whether Tom was a poultry fancier himself in a small way and merely wished to exchange friendly views on the subject of frost proof new houses, and the relative superiority of the

different breeds of high class poultry; whether Creve Coeur, Pencilled Hamburg, Brahma, or common Barn Door, were the most succulent eating, I know not, because, Tam was never permitted to explain, or justify himself in any way, when the worst construction possible was placed upon his action. But he first viewed the attractive panorama from his own fence, peeped over cautiously and finally ventured upon a nearer view, slid nimbly down the side of the fence, and selecting the top of a grain bin for a coign of vantage, he was peering down into the nearest hen-coop when a shower of stones rattling about his ears and flung by the proprietor of the hens recalled him to the "living present" and impressed upon his youthful mind the truth, well known in history, that all explorers must expect to many things at the hands of the natives of the invaded country. But Tam did not stop to make conclusions with the natives, he fled, and in fleeing he lost his bearings, plunged recklessly in at the wrong back door, and when next heard from he was seated on the dining table at the canary's home, clasping its cage in a loving embrace and making plaintive dabs at the terrified occupant. The bird's mistress arrived on the scene just in time to prevent bloodshed. What transpired at the interview, I have never learned but I know Tam's call was as short as the average New Year's call is supposed to be in the best society, though his leave taking was much more abrupt, and the end of the matter was, that amid the lamentations of the family, I slipped our new-found treasure into the same bag in which he had come, freighted with so many bright homes and rain water, but two nights before, and returned him to the bosom of his family.

No, the cat is a lovely domestic pet, but it is a mistake to wrench him from the parent soil after he is full grown. He is an exotic which must be either grown from a cutting, or transplanted very early, in order to be a thorough success.

Geoffrey Cuthbert Strange.

ALONG THE INTERCOLONIAL.

Points that Have Impressed Themselves on a Commercial Traveller.

When the late Geo. Taylor, who by the way was not a bad soul, was in charge of the freight department of the I. C. R., some claims for refunds took years to collect. Under Mr. Wallace the new freight agent a few weeks sufficed. A drummer accustomed to the old regime was more than surprised to have his claim adjusted and paid in a few weeks.

Mr. Pottinger is said to be a fairly good official by those who have met him, but to the common herd, the way to an audience is barred by the well gotten up young gentlemen who put on airs enough to own the road. Even letters to the chief have an unaccountable habit of getting lost, of course in transit.

The treasurer looks as though his position was no sinecure. Hard work tells on most men but he is just as affable as when years ago he was away down the ranks on the P. E. I. railway.

The old station at Moncton is no credit to the road. It has caught fire several times. The approaches to the station across so many tracks is positively dangerous and it is surprising there have been so few accidents. A new station should be erected on the line of the main street, so that passengers could enter and leave the station without crossing any tracks. At the same time trains should enter the town from below the sugar refinery. As it is, the track cuts through the resident part of the town diagonally crossing the main street at grade in its busiest part. The continual tooting of trains and the attendant smoke, noise and dust is a nuisance to householders and a source of danger as well.

I was surprised to be told by a deputy head of a department some time ago that superannuation, or retiring on a pension, was confined to the heads. Said my informant, "I have been in the service (I have forgotten how long, but many years), and I am as far from a retiring pension as ever. As drummers do not get pensions the writer is opposed to the whole pension business. But it does not seem fair that in the government service only the highly paid official is entitled to a superannuation allowance.

Previous to the advent of the C. P. R. the fast express used to take all day and part of the night to come from Halifax. Now you leave the Garrison City at 12.20 and reach St. John by bed time, and oh my, the cars ride so much easier. So much for modern methods. Even the maritime leader should see some improvement.

As a rule I. C. R. conductors are decent, civil fellows, whether they knock down anything or not, this deponent knoweth not. Occasionally one meets a conductor whose rigid interpretation of the absurd conditions printed on tickets, would lead one to infer that he had a direct interest in squeezing the passenger. However these cranks are rare.

I wanted to talk about the equipment and road bed, these iron bridges and etc., but this letter is about long enough.

DRUMMER.

ENGLAND'S HOP FIELDS.

SCENES OF THE BIG HARVEST IN THE SHIRE OF KENT.

The Foundation of British Beer and How It is Secured—Workers by the Tens of Thousands—Sketches of the Daily Life in the Hop District.

MAIDSTONE, Eng., Oct. 14.—A traveler journeying through the magnificent garden shire of Kent cannot fail to be impressed with the amplitude and snugness of most of its country homesteads. They are very ancient, stone-built and exceedingly large; low, but wide, with outspreading wings and "lean-tos." Centuries-old ash, lime or oak trees cluster about them. Fine old walls enclose shaded lanes leading to and from them. The outbuildings are large and substantial. Great orchards are set about them. The groupings are pictures of rustic opulence, thrift and good husbandry. They almost cause the wanderer to long to know them and tarry with them. But a stranger not understanding one of the sources of the great wealth of Kent, will curiously regard certain strange looking structures standing near every farmhouse in many districts.

They are round and tall and white. Some have red-painted cones, and these are in turn surmounted by white crows, shaped like an arched fan, their mouths always opening in the direction opposite that from which the wind blows. Against gray and wintry horizons these odd structures form weird silhouettes. But wherever you see them you may know, at any time of the year, that you are in the long-famous hop country of Kent. It is to these quaint, and always picturesque old kilns, or "oast-houses" as they are here called, that the hops are brought for drying, or curing, after they are picked by the motly throngs in the odorous gardens and fields.

In all of England perhaps 80,000 acres are planted in hops. Nearly one-half of the entire area is within the shire of Kent. The system of hop-raising, picking and drying is simple and interesting. The plants, which are perennial, are set in hills one foot high, six feet apart and in rows, as we plant Indian corn in America. These hills from being rounded are called "crons." There are about 1,200 to the acre, and each one requires from two to four poles from ten to sixteen feet in length according to the variety of the hops planted. These poles are of larch, alder, ash, chestnut, and occasionally of oak, and owing to the scarcity of woods in England, in themselves represent a very large outlay.

Early in April the "crons" are opened and trimmed of the last year's shoots which have been cut close to the ground, and these "sets" are used for propagation in nursery beds. The new bine or stem now springs from the bottom of the permanent setting. In the open winter months the hop-garden has been dug to a depth of eight inches with flat-tined forks. Shortly after the opening of the "crons" and trimming of the old bines "polling" is begun. This is done by the acre, or by the hundred poles. The laborer's wife and children lay out the poles while he makes the holes with an iron hop-pitcher. Women are solely employed in the next process, called hop tying. The puny shoots must be trimmed away, and two or three of the hardy ones tied to the poles. This is done by the acre, and whatever portion of the hop-garden is thus attended to by one woman is called a "taking." For securing the shoots to the poles without injury, rushes are exclusively used, and these are harvested from marshes, haunts beside streams or wet meadows, and dried in a manner to render them tough, by children. The women must go over their "takings" many times, cutting out sickly or broken bines and tying in newer and healthier ones until the work is beyond their reach.

Then the men resume the work. They go over the "takings" as the women have done, standing upon short rough step-ladders, until they reach the top of the poles. Then "niggeting" season begins and only ends when the hop-gardens are in full bloom. The nigget is an implement with iron tines, something like a huge hoe slit into several narrow divisions. With this the "alleys" between the rows are kept as clean of weeds as a newly ploughed field, and the soil is constantly broken and pulverized about the "crons" that the roots may derive all possible nutrition, air and free moisture. These comprise all the necessities of cultivation; but the alarms, vexations and anxieties of the hop-grower are only fairly begun as the heaviest labors are ending.

No one ever knew of an American peach crop, good or bad, that was not a half dozen times menaced by this or that, or ruined by something else altogether. So it is with the hop-vines and hops in Kent. For nearly two months before they are secure from danger every true Briton who quaffs his "tourale" or "butter," is subjected to qualms and starts and pangs through announcements of successive impending calamities to the brow bantling of Kent; and every hop district of that shire is in perturbation and turmoil indescribable. The "mildew" has rotted the hop; the wet weather has drowned it; the flies, from which it can only be rescued by millions of mysteriously arriving "lady-birds," are eating its head off; innumerable insects are preying upon its tendrils and body; and even the pestiferous fleas have made deadly assault upon its very stem and roots! Bulletins are posted at every ale house in Kent. Nothing else is talked about in every parish of the shire. The London market is "feverish" while the hop is in its throes. In fact, all southern England is

solemn and serious until the hop has passed from bine to bud and bloom and is ready for the tens of thousands of hands that are tingling to wring its neck for gain.

Picking and curing are the final processes. Perhaps from 80,000 to 100,000 souls could at one time be found in the hop-gardens of Kent. Half of these are from London, and comprise the most indescribable lot of "human warions" ever drawn together by a common interest in all the world. If a field of twenty acres is to be picked, there will be from six to ten "sets" of pickers with from half a dozen to a score of pickers in each set. These, ranged along the entire length of the field, are each supplied with a "bin." The bin is a rude, low frame-work of old poles, built after the fashion of an American settler's log cabin, about three feet wide and six feet long, with elevated cross-stakes at each end supporting a stout pole above the pickers' heads like the "rider" rail of an old-fashioned stake-and-rider American rail fence, against which the hop-poles and their leathery, odorous burdens are rested while the hops are being picked and flung into the sack, depending from the bin corners below.

The pickers are supplied with poles of hops by "pole-pullers," employed by the hop-raiser. There will be one to a set, if the set comprises a large number of pickers, and often one man will supply two or three. He is provided with an implement called a "hop-dog." With this he not only cuts the bines or vines close above the ground but also prunes ("prizes" he will call it) the pole out of the ground, and carries it and its downy fruitage to the busy pickers near. Women follow the pullers and stack the discarded vines for use by the compost-makers or the mills where the cheaper grades of paper are made, and stack the poles into tidy piles against the next season's use. In this way a hop-garden is cleaned up as closely as it swept by an army of grasshoppers or an all consuming fire.

In the meantime huge four-wheeled carts and waggons are gathering up the hops for the "oasts" or kilns. The "master" usually measures the hops from the bins. Pickers are paid on the basis of a certain agreed upon number of bushels to the shilling—four, five, six or even eight, according to the leanness or fatness of the crops. Precedent old as hops in Kent demands that he shall not have a "heavy hand" that is, that he shall not press them together the hops taken from the bin; and an equally unimpeachable custom will not permit him to pack or heap the almost weightless stuff in the measures. Scores of keen and almost savage eyes are upon his every movement. Th' ops must "hover" in the bushel, or be dropped in as lightly as can be; and were the bushels heaped an iota above their rims the master knows that instead of hops a series of strikes and riots would be on his hands. Following him is always the tally-man who credits the measurement to each "set" in the "tally-books;" and the custom is that the pickers may at any time draw in cash to the amount of three-fourths of what is due; the remaining one-fourth to be forfeited should the pickers leave the master before the crop is gathered.

All sorts of signals are used to bring the pickers together in the morning and afternoon. Some of the old farm-houses have bellies and bells. At others hand-bells are rung in and about the pickers' quarters and camps. Tin horns are common and the conch-shell horn is not infrequent. Work begins shortly after dawn. The mid-day rest as well as quitting time at night are indicated by the master or the tally-man entering the field and shouting "No more poles!" This is in turn shouted by the pole-pullers; and at once scores, and often hundreds, of pickers' voices will echo, frequently derisively, and always in mimicry, the order for temporary release

MANCHESTER, ROBERTSON & ALLISON.

GRAND SALE OF COLORED DRESS MATERIALS

During the Month of October.

Ladies who are desirous of purchasing a Fall and Winter Dress will find a line of desirable Dress Material placed on the centre counter of our Dress Goods Room, the choice of which we are offering at

Seventy-Five Cents per Yard,

There are bargains in this lot.

We would call attention to a special line of DIAGONAL ALL-WOOL SERGE

At 45 Cents per Yard.

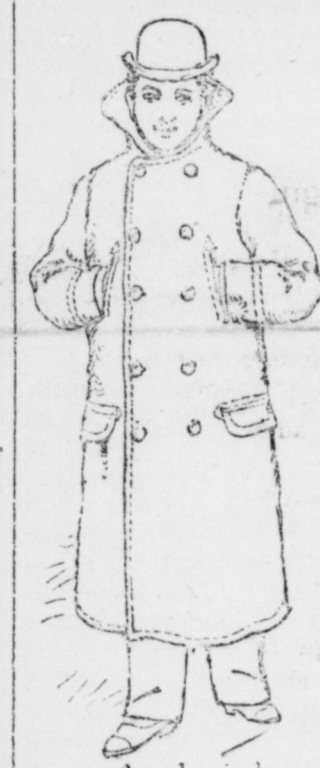
These are shown in 13 colorings, including all the New and Popular Shades. This line is exceptionally good value.

CHEVIOT COSTUMES.

A big lot of Cheviot Costumes, fancy mixtures seven yards to a Costume. Price, \$3.50 each.

FINE DISPLAY OF HIGH CLASS NOVELTIES IN WOOL DRESS FABRICS.

MANCHESTER, ROBERTSON & ALLISON, St. John.



WONDERFUL—how particular you're getting! Must have your ready-made clothing fit just as well as if you'd left your measure—and it must be just as stylish.

Be particular—and exacting; to you heart's content; haven't we got just the suits, overcoats and ulsters you want, and whenever you want.

And ain't our furnishings the best we can get for the money. Neckwear, gloves, underwear.

OAK HALL,

King St., of The Corner of Big German St., of Shop.

SCOVIL, FRASER & CO.,
ST. JOHN.

from toil. In many fields the pickers wed their cry to improvised doggerel rhymes fitted to the air of the most popular London music-hall ballads, and make much melodious clamor as they are leaving the fields.

Most experienced men are employed in the oasts or kilns. They get no rest during the season of hop-gathering, except from Sunday morning until Monday morning. From six to eight small brick stoves are constantly burning in each kiln. Charcoal and smokeless Welsh coal are solely used, and a dash of sulphur is occasionally added, which gives the drying hops a slightly yellow tinge. About eight feet above the cement chambers enclosing the stoves is an open floor constructed of strips like laths. On this is laid a loosely woven covering of horse-hair; and upon this horse-hair cloth the hops are piled to about the depth of twelve inches. They are frequently gently turned, and remain in the kiln for eleven hours, an hour being allowed for the change from a dry to a green "shift" of hops, each of which consists of 300 bushels. The dry hops are then spread on the floor of the oast, not only long enough to cool, but also to regain a certain amount of atmospheric moisture, without which they would remain brittle and break into slivers and dust. They are now packed in "pockets" or long, strong bags holding a few pounds above one hundred weight, and are ready for the London market.

Of the 80,000 to 100,000 souls who secure nearly a month's lucrative employment in the hop-gardens of Kent, perhaps one-third are Kentish cottagers and villagers. The remainder are from the lowliest and one might say the most hopeless classes of London and its immediate suburbs; although a sprinkling of respectability leavens the latter in a few broken-down folk who have seen better days, and invalids with lung and throat troubles who have been told that the country air and a long "smell o' the 'opes" would relieve their ailments. But this great army of pickers which each year takes possession of Kent, divides instantly and sharply into three grand divisions.

The first comprises the Kentish rural

and village folk. These are favorites with the masters. They include the entire families of the farm laborers, the hedge-builders, the drain-layers, the hop-driers and all countryside folk; while from the village comes the painter, the shoemaker, the saddler, the carpenter, the bricklayer and stonemason, and all their families; while I have even seen the family of the schoolmaster and the poor country curate not ashamed to thus add to their yearly dole. Separate fields are nearly always given to these folk. Among them you will find most interesting groups; lusty youths, handsome lasses, fine and rugged old men and women, and some of the peachiest and prettiest children in all England. To these the hop-gathering days have a bright, genial, almost social aspect.

Another class, numbering all told from 3,000 souls, whose guest I have always been whenever visiting the hop-gardens of Kent, are the London and suburban Gipsy van dwellers. I have previously written extensively of this class. Its members, living in vans or house wagons of every conceivable description, circle around and around the outer edges of the great city; hovering like birds of prey near race-tracks, outing resorts, and all places where crowds of the lowly may gather. I am glad to say that while any dukking and dickering among the hop-garden throngs is never overlooked by them, that they always come here for honest work. They travel in their creaking vans, which contain all that may be required for food and cooking; pitch their hooded tents or "whumml" their single carts for additional housing; are adepts of all the little shifts and exigencies of out-door living; are really the best conditioned of all the "foreigners" who sweep in upon Kent; and as to morality and common decency, which are generally utterly abandoned in the hoppers' camps, they are infinitely superior to all others who come. They are quick, deft, silent. They are the fastest, cleanest pickers in Kent; and I have frequently known a single large family return from their season's work with as much as £20, with which to assist them in tiding over the long, weary, and to them, bitter winter months.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.