

CURRENT NOTES.

Russian maneuvering for domination in China continues to hold the attention of diplomats. More astonishing progress has not been made in twenty years by any European power than Russia has made in Asia. The building of the great trans-Siberian railway goes on with all the rapidity insured by infinite resources of money and engineering skill, and although the extent to which tracks have been laid is unknown even in the news centers of the continent we can hardly doubt that a very few years will see the journey from St. Petersburg a matter of days.

It is a fact that to-day Russia exercises a practical protectorship over China. The far-sighted if brutal stroke by which the Japanese were robbed of all the fruits of victory except the hollow name left the other powers holding the bag. The announcement that a Russian bank of enormous capital will be set up at Peking with a branch at Shanghai, where the English have long been in almost absolute control, demonstrates how swiftly the advisers of the czar are moving to take advantage of their position. Little wonder that the news constrains an English journal to remark: "Russia will undoubtedly extort from China the right of way through Manchuria for the trans-Siberian railway. A struggle for supremacy is upon us."

This is appreciated by the foreign office. Lord Salisbury has supplanted Sir Frank Lascelles at St. Petersburg with Sir Nicholas O'Connor, long time a diplomatic agent of England in Asia and for many years past ambassador at Peking. The necessity of having a veteran hand in Asiatic politics near the court of the czar never was so convincing as it is to-day, and the English papers without regard to party applaud the appointment. They see impending, and much nearer than the world would have guessed two years ago, a "struggle for supremacy" which Russia no more than England can avoid.

THE DEEP WATERWAYS.

New York so Very Anxious to Become the Atlantic Terminus.

The question of a deep waterway to the sea, a channel enabling ocean vessels to penetrate to the upper lake ports, has been thoroughly and ably discussed at the Cleveland conference. One of the results of the discussion is the development of the fact that New York city is exceedingly anxious to become the Atlantic terminus. New York is prepared for a large scheme; its representatives think the project is practicable, and that it ought to be entered into. But the New York proposal means that some \$200,000,000 shall be expended in the utilization of the Erie canal and its feeders. The people who are to provide the \$200,000,000 are the owners of the Erie canal, the residents of New York State. It is a question whether the Erie could be dredged to the required depth. It is a long canal, and the problem of feeding it with water is one of moment. If rendered navigable, it is doubtful that ocean vessels could use it. Progress would necessarily be slow, and the cost of such navigation would be enormous. In addition to this, it is to be doubted that the relatively small vessels which are using the canal could continue the ocean trade. This is an

ERA OF LARGE VESSELS

and the size is constantly growing. The Liverpool Mercury reports the movements of the steamship Georgia, of the White Star line. Speaking of its cargo, the Mercury says: The shipment of live and dressed stock did not take up all the room that can be allowed for that sort of freight, and there was ample space on board for many tons of manufactured and miscellaneous goods after stowing away the following enormous entries of her freight list. Now note the cargo:—750 head of cattle; 9,000 sheep; 3,000 quarters of beef; 136,000 bushels of wheat; 90,000 bushels of corn; 550 bales of cotton; 2,000 sacks of flour; 1,800 bags of oilcake; 1,800 cases of oatmeal; 1,700 boxes of bacon; 300 barrels and tierces of provisions; 9,000 packages of lard; 3,900 barrels of rosin; 700 barrels of glucose; 1,000 cases of canned goods; 800 packages of soap; 400 barrels of wax; 300 barrels of bark extract; 1,000 barrels of lubricating oil; 100 tons of wood; 3,000 packages of acetate of lime; 150 barrels of oxide of zinc. This is the type of vessel that is to carry freight in the future and the idea of it navigating the Erie canal is scarcely reasonable. But there may be a chance for the smaller ocean grain-carrying vessels in the lakes provided that the means of approach and exit offer few obstructions, and that progress can be made at

A FAIR RATE OF SPEED.

For such a vessel, the best accommodation that can be procured is by way of the St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence canals. Here there is a short stretch of canal navigation and a long stretch of river and lake navigation. But the deepening will be a very expensive work, and it is idle to suppose that an enterprise which will be of as much service to the United States as to Canada will be undertaken at the cost and charge of the people of this Dominion. Assuming that it is practical and useful, our neighbors must join in the expense. Mr. Oliver A. Howland, who has given thought to the question, is evidently of the opinion that United States co-operation is essential to success. Hence his advocacy of the system of international arbitration for the settlement of all questions that arise between the two countries as a preliminary step. The subject is a large one, and it requires great care and forethought before anything is done definitely with regard to it. Certainly the pros and cons ought to be considered well in advance of action.

ABOUT THE HOUSE.

Brushes.

Kitchen brushes can be put to a variety of uses. For the washing of dishes with handles, the outside of iron kettles, and other cooking utensils made of iron, they are especially serviceable. The smaller sizes are also excellent for cleaning out glass ware, in fact, any kind of ware with raised figures or corrugated surfaces. For cleaning a grater nothing is superior to one of these little brushes.

Such a brush is also most useful for washing celery or lettuce, as the uneven surfaces of the stalk and leaves make a thorough cleaning with the hands a difficult operation. Then if one uses a brush with handle, ice water, which adds to the crispness of the celery and lettuce, may be used for the cleaning, as there will be no necessity for putting the hands in the water. A small whisk broom is also valuable for the same purpose.

Such vegetables as potatoes, turnips, etc., are best cleaned with a brush. It makes work less disagreeable, as the hands need not be soiled; and in no other way can the cleaning be so well and thoroughly done.

The Brown, Plump Chestnut.

Deviled Chestnuts.—Peel the raw chestnuts and scald them to remove the inner skin; put them in a frying pan with a little butter and toss them about for a minute; add a sprinkling of salt and a dash of cayenne—not much. Serve after the cheese.

Chestnut Compote.—Roast the chestnuts and take off the shells; dissolve $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. sugar with $\frac{1}{2}$ tumbler of water, juice of a lemon and some chips of the rind, or a tablespoonful of vanilla extract; put this and chestnuts in a saucepan over a slow fire 10 or 15 minutes, so that the chestnuts may absorb some of the syrup. Serve in a deep dish and dust powdered sugar over the top.

Stewed Chestnuts.—Shell and pour boiling water over them; let blanch 10 or 12 minutes, after which skin, put to boil, adding salt to taste, and cook tender. Then put in colander to drain and dry, and serve hot. Cream sauce may be added.

Mashed Chestnuts.—Boil, remove brown skin and mash the same as potatoes. Add butter or cream, salt, pepper and serve at once.

Roasted Chestnuts.—Perforate an old pan to roast in, slit the chestnuts, remove one end and stir over a hot fire. All these recipes call for the common edible chestnut, of course.

Says the Oracle of the Kitchen.

That sponge cake will be pure white if you mix it with boiling water instead of cold.

That even on wash day a housekeeper, like a burglar, ought to take things quietly.

That it is sometimes dangerous to ask a hungry husband to do you a favor. Wait till after dinner time.

That tea ground up as fine as coffee will yield twice as strong a beverage as if used in the usual fashion.

That it is no use getting mad at a refractory lamp wick; draw out a few threads and it will fit the burner.

A good housekeeper with a churlish husband who hates to carve has hung up back of his place at the table, "No talking to the man at the head."

That there is scarcely a household in the land where a picked-up dinner does not prove a pleasant variety.

That nothing makes so excellent an iron holder as the felt from a man's soft hat.

That paper of any kind should never be used in cooking. Thin cheesecloth can always take its place.

That every cook may have fresh parsley at any time by growing a boxful of it in a sunny kitchen window.

"Mother's Pies."

We none of us realize that it is ourselves who change, and not the food that delighted us in our youth. Said a crusty, hard-to-please husband: "Wife, I wish you would make pies that would taste as good as my mother's used to do." "Well, my dear, you run out and bring me in a painful water, a hodful of coal and an armful of wood, just as you used to do for your mother, and maybe you will like my pies as well." He concluded the pies would do just as they were.

A Seasonable Mat.

When placed upon a cleanly scrubbed floor, this mat makes a room very inviting: Take pieces of matting a yard to a yard and a half in length, according to the place, and outline with paint, black or gilt, a stork or some Chinese or Japanese design, finish the edge by binding with cloth or braid. If desired you can crochet a scallop on the braid, which will add wonderfully to the mat's appearance.

Useful Recipes.

Pumpkin Pie Crust.—Fill your flour dredger with sifted cornmeal that has been ground very fine. Grease your pie pans well. Dredge the meal thoroughly over the grease. Pour in your pumpkin filling, and when baked you will have a crust both delicate and delicious. This crust will do for all custard pies.

Apple Cream.—Stew one quart of cooking apples with one cup of sugar and the rind and juice of one lemon until soft, then pass through a sieve and stand on ice to cool. Whip one cup of cream to a stiff froth and add an ounce of gelatine, dissolved in a little boiling water, and the apple pulp, pour into a mould and set on the ice to harden. Serve with a nutmeg sauce made by pouring a half cup of boiling water over two tablespoonfuls of sugar and a little nutmeg and boil for ten minutes.

Mock Chicken Salad.—Beat three eggs light, add a half cup of vinegar and a teaspoonful of yellow mustard and stir until thick; butter the size of an egg, small teaspoonful of salt, pepper to taste, one tablespoonful of cream, and one of sugar. Let boil, and pour over one head of cabbage and one bunch of celery chopped fine.

Corn Pudding.—Take the corn out off of five ears, three eggs, one pint of sweet milk, a tablespoonful of flour, a pinch of salt, a teaspoonful of sugar and a piece of butter the size of an egg; beat the yolks of the eggs first, stir in the other ingredients and add the well beaten whites last. Bake twenty minutes.

ENGLISH VEGETABLES.

Pleasant Now, but Scarce in Elizabethan Days.

Before a wide intercourse with foreign countries had led to the introduction of new vegetable food, our home resources were scanty to a degree that is difficult to realize, says the London news. We had, it is true, a very scrubby little cabbage or colewort, indigenous here, and it was credited with all sorts of medicinal and other virtues. It was the subject of many learned dissertations and was cultivated as carefully as the horticultural knowledge of medieval times permitted, but it would certainly have cut a sorry figure beside the poorest of the cabbages shown to-day at Chiswick. The probability is that none of the white-headed monsters of to-day's exhibition can claim indigenous connection with the soil of England. Gerard tells us that Master Nicolas Lete, "a worshipful merchant of London," imported seeds of new kinds from Italy, Spain and Germany, and these no doubt superseded our own coleworts, just as in their turn they have been displaced by later importations and by scientific propagation and cultivation.

THE POTATO.

of course, it is well known, is not a native. Nobody can say exactly where it came from originally, but it was to Sir Walter Raleigh that we owe its introduction. In the garden of some of the wealthy it began to be cultivated as a curiosity early in the seventeenth century but long after this the poorer classes would have nothing to do with it, even where they could get the potato as an article of food. It was commonly believed to produce dysentery and leprosy, and it was only very gradually that the root came into general use. A prejudice equally strong was for a long time entertained against the kidney bean, which, apparently, we owe to the gardeners which Henry VIII. fetched from Holland when he was a doting young husband.

The dwarf kidney bean came from the Netherlands about 1509, but the people got it into their heads that the color of its blossom was due to its being manured with blood, and for a long time would not eat the bean. The taller kind, the scarlet runner, did not reach this country for more than a hundred years later. We got it from South America in 1633. Both varieties were first grown in this country for the sake of their flowers only, and it was not till the eighteenth century that the young seed pods began to be generally eaten. No doubt they were introduced as an edible vegetable, but so strong was the popular prejudice that it took two centuries to wear it out, and thus add another item to our stock of vegetables.

Carrots such as may, no doubt, be seen to-day have a very poor relation, a native of this country. But it is as tough as a hemp rope, and hot and unpleasant in taste, and though attempts have been made to cultivate it into something more creditable to our soil, they have signally failed. It does not seem quite clear where our cultivated carrot comes from, though, as it was originally known as the Canida carrot, it seems probable that that island was where we found it. But carrots are very common in most parts of the world where soil is sandy, and it is likely that we are indebted to several foreign countries for better varieties than our own. Rhubarb is said to belong to China, and only became an article of diet in this country very slowly. It was not known at all in Europe till 1535. Asparagus is a native of Britain, and so are turnips. Gerard highly commends the small turnips that "are grown by a village near London, called Hackney." He says they are raised on "sandie ground," and brought to the Cross in Cheap, and by the women of that village to be sold. They are the best, he says, that he ever tasted.

Ten Thousand Rats Drowned.

In describing the great fire at Blackfriars, London, recently, the St. James's Gazette, says:—A remarkable incident in connection with the fire was the fact that when the conflagration was at its height the crowds who were watching it from the embankment had their attention attracted by an unusual commotion in the river. Presently a black mass was seen floating toward the Middlesex shore. It was some time before the appearance was understood; but it was then seen that some thousands of rats, finding their quarters on the Surrey side attacked by fire had taken to the water, and were attempting to swim across the Thames. The swiftly running tide carried them a considerable distance out of their course. Some hundreds were drowned during their journey, but a number, computed at nine or ten thousand, of the rodents crossed from the Blackfriars to the Middlesex shore. Unhappily for them, the wall of the Embankment made a landing impossible, and, as far as could be seen, with the exception of a very small number, the entire rat battalion perished in the dark waters of the Thames.

Always an Exception.

Benny Bloombumper—Papa, when you say there are no flies on anything, you mean the thing is pretty good, don't you? Mr. Bloombumper—Not always, Benny. The rule has its exceptions. Suppose you are speaking of fly paper, for instance?

The Tables Turned.

Shall you keep a latchkey, my dear? asked Mr. Newlywed of his up-to-date wife.

Certainly not. You men are so fond of late hours I shall expect you to sit up and let me in.

CRIME OF A LITTLE BOY.

A YOUNG MONSTER STABS HIS MOTHER TO DEATH.

An Awful Crime of a Boy Thirteen Years of Age—His Reason for the Dreadful Act—A Characteristic Letter—His Trial and Sentence.

The trial of two boys, Robert and Nathaniel Coombs, in London, England, has resulted in the discharge of the latter and the committal of the former to an asylum. The case has challenged a sort of horrified attention from one end of England to the other. The two boys, who are the sons of a steward of an Atlantic steamship running to New York, are aged respectively 13 and 12. They were left with their mother, on the father's last voyage, at a town called Plaistow. Nathaniel, the younger boy, told the story in the witness-box of what happened after the father left home. Previous to his departure Robert bought a knife for a sixpence, with the deliberate intention of killing his mother with it. He slept with her, and on the night of the 7th July stabbed her to death. He then told his brother, who was sleeping in another room. Nathaniel would not believe in the fact until he went and saw his mother lying dead on the bed.

Then they took what money they could lay hands on and locked her door. They indulged in some

INNOCENT DISSIPATION.

such as attending cricket matches, etc., with the money thus obtained. They lived in the house, and when arrested were smoking and playing cards with a partial imbecile named Fox, whom they had picked up as a companion, while the mother's body was putrefying upstairs. Nathaniel, being asked what reason Robert gave for desiring the death of his mother, replied that he wanted to get money and go to "some island." This allusion brings up another phrase of the case. It is alleged that the boy Robert was an ardent student of the class of literature known as "porny dreadfuls," and the English press almost unanimously traces the abnormal moral condition of the lad to the influence of this class of reading matter. It is, no doubt, unwholesome pabulum with which to stuff the young mind, but to say that it made this lad the moral monster that he is, is straining the matter a little too far. It will very likely be found that many of the men who are to-day distinguished in law, divinity and literature both in England and America have in their callow days been devotees of the penny dreadful. While doubtless they received some curiously disproportionate views of life, the perusal of the absurd stuff did not lead them into the commission of even the lesser misdemeanors, let alone the awful crime of murder. The boy Coombs is evidently

A MORAL MISFIT.

and to argue from any thing he may have done to general principles would be very misleading. The reading of the yellow-backed literature may have given a direction to his evil propensities, but it did not create them. The boy's extraordinary callousness may be estimated from the following letter which he wrote from prison to Rev. Mr. Shaw of Plaistow:

"From R. A. Coombs, H. M. Prison, Holloway, 14 Sept., 1895: "Dear Mr. Shaw,—I received your letter on last Tuesday. I think I will get hung, but I don't care as long as they give me a good breakfast before they hang me. If they don't hang I think I will commit suicide—that will do just as well. I'll strangle myself. I hope you are all well. I go up on Monday to the Old Bailey to be tried. I hope you will be there. I think they will sentence me to death. If they do I will call all the witnesses liars. I ramble your affectionate friend, R. A. Coombs."

There was attached to it a drawing of a gibbet with two figures being pushed forward by another, over whom there was the word, "Executioner." There was the line, "Scene 1, going to the scaffold." At the other side there was another

DRAWING OF A GIBBET.

a person being hanged while the words good-bye issued from his mouth, and below the words, "Here goes nothing." There was a postscript:—"My will: Doctor, £3,000; Mr. Payne, £2,000; Mr. Shaw, £5,000; my father, £60,000; all the warders, £300 a piece. Signed R. C. Please excuse crooked scaffold. I was too heavy, so I bent it. I leave you £5,000."

The tone of this letter can of course be traced to the penny dreadfuls, but the heart and the spirit behind it belong to the individual. The jury evidently did not want to have the lad hanged, and brought in a verdict of "guilty, but insane." At the same time it is quite evident that while he is abnormal he is not insane. He was nevertheless sentenced to be confined in some insane asylum during her Majesty's pleasure.

Immigrants From Austria.

Prof. Oleskow, who was sent to Canada to enquire on behalf of the Austrian peasants into the advantages this country offers for settlement, has returned to Ottawa after a thorough tour of the North-West. On Monday he had an interview with the Minister of the Interior, and submitted a proposition looking towards an extensive movement of Austrian peasants to Canada. The matter is under consideration, and if the offer is found to be to the advantage of Canada it is altogether likely that the professor will bring a large party of his fellow-countrymen to this country. He leaves on Friday for Europe but the determination of the Government on the offer he has made will be forwarded to him.

A Gentle Hint.

Down by a little running brook I first met Maggie May; Her father was a dairyman Who made the business pay.

HEALTH.

Simple Rules of Health.

A recent writer on health, who seems to be somewhat pessimistic in his views, quotes another writer as saying:

"Let a man retire to a nearly deserted mountain region, where the air is pure and dry, and there are too many stones to set a plow. Let him be of fine physique, and cool, dispassionate mind stored with medical knowledge. Let him set up his water distillery and food laboratory, bounce the cook and hire a corps of servants, nourish his body with precisely the elements it needs, and no others, and exercise much. He cannot travel, for the microbe waits at every turn to lay him low. He cannot visit his friends, for they may poison him with sausages and beer. He might live 150 or 200 years, scarcely more than that, because he is handicapped by a heritage of death."

On the above we have to remark that one man might do that and live to be 150, and a large number might die of disease induced by being compelled to think almost exclusively how to live. On the other hand, we have known a man who violated nearly every so-called law of health, including total abstinence from baths and washing, who lived to be nearly 100 years of age. What shall be said, then? Does location make no difference? It may make much. Does diet make none? Comparatively little if a man lives in the open air, works hard, goes to bed early, and sleeps seven or eight hours; but if his other habits are unhygienic, it may make a great deal. Shall he drink nothing but distilled water and eat nothing but the original elements? We believe such a teaching to be science run mad. If he boils the water he can drink it with safety, and good spring water in the country, where the cattle and sheep and people generally are healthy, will do. Nature can be trusted to eliminating food, and a well-nourished man can resist most microbes if he lives in the open air. Even two hours a day of exercise, with nothing much to think of at the same time, makes all the difference.

Healthful locations can often be obtained 100 yards from the most malarious. A few precautions will keep malaria out of almost any house and almost any system. This "man-in-the-mountain" writer would find in the end [or if he did not, some of his family would] an unfavorable influence upon the nervous system. The high winds of the region might some day carry him off with pneumonia. With a proper recognition of the doctrine of divine providence we would undertake to keep well in the most exposed lake front, provided we could arrange life with reference to keeping well a few broad principles.

This is an age in which altogether too much attention is paid by some to such matters and not enough to others. An acquaintance of ours spent a whole season in dodging cholera microbes, upon the theory that they could not be got into the system so as to do any damage except through the digestive organs, worried himself into a nervous fever, and died. Another, pursuing the same course, caught the cholera, but did not know how. On the Hudson River lived a physician who believed he was to die from consumption, and he endeavored by living on the most carbonaceous food to escape it, but died, and a post-mortem examination showed that there had never been anything the matter with his lungs, and that his death was caused by confining himself exclusively to anti-consumptive, heat-producing food, and also by eating more than was necessary.

There is not a single theory now adopted or proposed by the medical profession by empyrics, cranks, hypochondriacs, food analysts, or any other class that is not carried to a pernicious extreme by its propounders or their converts. And yet there is scarcely one such theory that does not embody any important truth. The difficulty with many is in violating the simplest things. Adults are killing themselves by doing habitually what they would punish their children for doing. Almost every table or house contains extempore lectures on health to children, who are pursuing a course almost opposite to what they are recommending. They forbid tea and coffee to their children, but take it themselves in large quantities. They tell the children to eat slowly and take small mouthfuls and then they eat as if they had four minutes at a railway restaurant. They desert on the evils of pastry and devour two pieces of pie, crust and all. They inculcate early to bed and early to rise and sit up until 11 o'clock or even 1. Then there are tobacco users who prohibit harmless indulgences to the members of their family.

The true system of diet—whatever it does—will avoid extremes and will not approve any system that undertakes to exclude from the diet of the well man anything upon which millions of the race live, a large proportion in excellent health, unless it be some article that can be demonstrated to be essentially poisonous or dangerously liable to produce a tendency to excess.

Any system of diet which instructs a person to eat entirely without regard to the pleasures of the appetite is contrary to Scripture, common sense and hygiene.

A Delicate Slicer.

Guest—Do you have machines for making these Saratoga chips?

Waiter—No, sah. Th' fust assistant cook shaves 'em off wif er knife.

I don't see how he gets them so uniformly thin.

He uses er dah roas' beef carver in er boardin' house.

A Compromise.

Wife—Then we are not going to Europe after all?

Husband—No.

No tour through Switzerland?

No, no.

No crossing the Alps?

No, no, no.

Well, have you any objection to buying me a new hat with an Alpine crown?