

Stray Notes of Travel in the United States.

[EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.]

NEW YORK, Aug. 26, 1868.

WHAT you see when on a journey, or in a strange place, depends quite as much on your own eye as on the objects that are about you. This is true, not merely in a literal, but also in a metaphorical sense. The artist is on the look-out for scenes of beauty, the merchant has an eye to business, the politician studies the phases of public opinion, and the ladies keep a sharp watch of the fashions. An editor travels with his thoughts dwelling much on his next issue, and his eyes peering sharply around for the material of leading articles. If the journal about which he is anxious be general in its scope, he will have no difficulty, for topics will spring up on every hand. But if his journalistic sphere be a special one, his observations will be less fruitful. Still it will be a barren journey indeed, if it yield nothing to his purpose.

Railroads, it is well known, do not usually pass through the best portions of the farms they cross, and hence it would be hardly fair for an agricultural editor to judge the farming of a region by looking at it from the cars. Taking the evening train from Suspension bridge, there was but a short period of daylight in which to see things. It gave opportunity, however, to observe that Western New York has been passing through the same ordeal of heat and drought with which our own country has been afflicted. Long as the eye could distinguish objects, there was the same yellowness about the pastures and meadows, the same stunted vegetation, the same burnt-up look we had left behind us in Her Majesty's dominions. When morning dawned, however, a very different picture was presented. As our train neared Albany the corn fields on the Mohawk flats rose to view all fair, fresh, and green, as if no pinch of drought had touched them all the season. We saw once more, vegetation glistening with dew and rain, and the earth moist with showers. It was indeed a welcome and refreshing vision, and enabled me to realize, in a measure, how oriental travellers must feel when, after journeying for weeks over the desert, they gain at length the verdant valley of the Nile.

There cannot be a more delightful sail than that in the day-boat from Albany to New York, on the Hudson. This noble river has been not inaptly styled "the Rhine of America." Its ample bosom stretches from bank to bank, a mile or more in width, and on either side it is one panorama of natural and artificial beauty, the scene continually shifting, but always attractive and picturesque. Villas and gardens, towns and villages, wood-crowned heights, mountain ranges, and lovely intervals, diversify the landscape, while the river itself, winding along in stately majesty, and alive with all manner of craft, from the skiff up to the mammoth passenger steamer, is an object of tireless interest. The railway trains thundered along the river side, leaving our vessel far in their wake, though she nobly steamed away at fifteen knots an hour; but the day was only too short, and the trip too like an enchanting dream. As you near New York, many charming residences line the river, their ample grounds reaching to the brink of the stream, and the very boat-houses catching the contagion of the scenery and becoming tasteful, if not elegant. Commend us to a home on the Hudson, when we retire from active toil with an ample fortune!

After the day's charming sail, we passed the night (we were about to say slept) at lower Ravenswood, on East River, opposite Blackwell's Island, and never before listened to such a noisy insect concert as was kept up all the livelong night. Sleep was out of the question. We have been kept awake before this by in-door insects, but never until now, so far as we can recollect, by insects out-of-doors. Such an orchestra of stridulous music would, no

doubt, have put our entomological confreres into ecstasies. We cannot say it had that effect on us. The Katyids were the noisiest of the choir, and weary enough we got of the constantly-threatened-to-be-told tale of what "Katy did," before morning. But though we never before heard so powerful an insect orchestra, it was thrown completely into the shade by the one that performed three nights afterwards at Athens, a village 100 miles up the Hudson, which we had occasion to visit. We have got a vastly enlarged idea of the vocal powers of the Cicada. But though it can be loud, it is far from pleasing, at least in our judgment. It may be, however, that our taste needs educating, duly to appreciate insect music. We thought of the ungallant couplet of old Aristophanes:

"Happy the Cicadas' lives,
For they all have voiceless wives;"

and wondered to what pitch of dissonance the domestic music would rise, if both sexes were but to perform their parts.

Many agricultural items may be picked up in New York, as we begin to find after a few days' sojourn in and near the city. It is interesting to visit the markets. Just now quite a panic exists in reference to diseased beef. Notwithstanding the utmost precaution on the part of the authorities, it is said that cattle affected by the Texas plague have been spirited to this city, and their carcasses vended in the meat markets. Beef-steak, that favourite American dish, is quite out of repute, and, much against their will, the people are taking to mutton, for fear of being poisoned. Poultry are scarce, fish are hardly in season, eggs are dubious, butter is dear, and milk as well as beef may be spoiled by Texan fever; so that the question, what to eat, is not the easiest New Yorkers have to discuss just now. Happily the vegetables are wholesome, and there are plenty of them. The market-gardeners that supply New York have had no cause to complain of lack of rain the present season. If anything, they have had too much. How glad we should have been to relieve them of all they wanted to spare! Potatoes are a fine size here, and they seem to be abundant. Yet they are far from cheap;—two dollars a bushel, American currency. All vegetables bring a high price here, as compared with Canada. The fact is they are grown at immense cost, and must be dear. Land within market distance of New York is enormously expensive, and without the best of tillage and high prices, market gardening could not be profitably carried on. There are plenty of tomatoes, musk and water-melons, lima beans, and green corn in the New York markets just now. Sweet potatoes from the South, a much coveted luxury here, though in our view not to be named the same day with a mealy pink-eye, or Scotch kidney, are abundant, and go at the hotel tables in a galloping consumption. Fruit is scarce, and high in price. A single decent plum costs you three cents, and a good peach from eight to ten cents. Red Astracan apples are from three to five cents, and Bartlett pears as dear as the peaches.

Owing to the dry weather in Britain, the steamers from this port are taking novel freight across the Atlantic. Several shipments of hay, tightly baled, have been already sent, and more are to follow. Some of this hay that we have seen is rascally stuff, coarse, wiry, prairie and swamp grass, that will provoke from British farmers and shepherds curses loud and deep. Why cannot Canada do something in this trans-Atlantic hay trade? All that is wanted is pressing and baling machinery. The utter failure of hay and turnips in Britain, makes it certain that such an export business will be remunerative from now until next harvest. First-class machinery for pressing and baling can be had here, from R. H. Allen & Co., Water Street, New York, and others in the agricultural implement trade. By the way, an inspection of the Messrs. Allen's premises justifies all that we said when giving a synopsis of their voluminous cata-

logue in the CANADA FARMER some months since. It is a very complete establishment, and the implements are of first-class manufacture.

We spent five or six hours very pleasantly in Central Park yesterday. The purchase and laying out of this large tract of what was originally rough waste land, as a vast pleasure-ground, was a magnificent conception. Here are some nine hundred acres, that during the past ten years have been transformed from wilderness to Elysium. We are not sufficiently familiar with landscape gardening to venture the opinion that the plan of these grounds is the best imaginable, but as we surveyed them, we vainly tried to think of something that would be an improvement. There is nothing stiff or formal about the style of adornment that has been carried out. Winding paths, miscellaneous grouped trees, irregularly planted shrubs, and flowers that seem to have come where they are quite by accident; lakes here, fountains there, rustic seats and arbors yonder; rock-work, now on a limited scale, and now in mimic mountain grandeur; with a roomy carriage drive, nine miles in length, smooth and even as though shaped with a housewife's rolling-pin, gracefully curving here, there and everywhere—form a scene of natural and artificial beauty that must be seen to be appreciated. Here pedestrian Five Point poverty and wretchedness is as free to roam as mounted and equipped Fourth Avenue wealth and gayety. The varieties of character and condition to be seen here are quite a study. Beneath you cozy little arbor that shades a seat just large enough for two, are a couple of lovers, telling and listening to "the old, old story" with which Cupid charms his votaries. There on a rise of ground, seated on one of several seats in a large rustic edifice, is a pale-faced student with book in hand, drinking in health and knowledge at once. Near him, on another seat, is an aged and spectacled man reading a magazine. A little farther, a care-worn woman with a babe in arms, and another little one by her side. Yonder in a single-seated lonely recess, is a sorrowful young creature, who looks as if she had grown weary of life and were debating whether or no to renounce all this beauty, and "rashly importunate" go to her death. Fast young men lounge here and there, with misses to match them not far off. But the diversity is well-nigh endless. New York may pour out its millions, and these avenues, walks, arbors, grottoes, terraces and seats will not be crowded. The lake is a curiosity. This whole formation is rocky. Here and there natural rock-work shows itself and gives great boldness to the scene. To form the lake-bed, the rock has been blasted fully a mile in extent, but not all in one large area. There are straits, channels, points, promontories and islands. A fleet of twenty-seven boats equip this lake for voyaging, and for ten cents you may have a sail from end to end of it. Swans of large size and magnificent plumage float on the bosom of the water, and add much to the beauty of the scene. At the upper part of the park you find the highest point. There, on a rocky eminence of considerable elevation, you may see on the one hand Croton reservoir, and on the other New York itself, which owes so much to that reservoir. Croton water and Central Park are fountains of health to this great city, with which it could not well dispense.

But this letter, already quite long enough, must close, leaving us lingering in the loveliest spot we have seen since leaving home. You too, gentle reader, would feel like lingering in Central Park, were you in it, we can tell you.

VICK'S ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE OF BULBS.—We have received a copy of Vick's Catalogue of Bulbs for the present autumn. The list is full, and accompanied with clear and simple directions for the culture of the several varieties. The name of Mr. James Vick, of Rochester, N. Y., is sufficient guarantee for the excellence of any article advertised by him in this department of Horticulture.