and at a distance of 14 ft. from its extremity, which was nearly vertical. At a depth of 8 ft. a vault filled with clay was found, in consequence of which the bottom of the hole was tamped, leaving a depth of 7 ft. One liter and a half of nitro-glycerine was then poured in—it occupied 5 ft.; a match and stopper were then applied as stated, and the mine sprung. The effect was so enormous as to produce a fissure 50 ft. in length and another of 20 ft.; the total effect has not yet been ascertained, because it will require several small blasts to break the blocks that have been partially detached by this.—*Mechanics' Magazine.*

The Steel Pen Disease.

The Boston *Journal* says:—"Some of our readers will probably recollect a notice which appeared in the *Journal* relative to a theory advanced by President Felton, of Harvard, that the debilitating and sometimes paralytic affections of the hand and arm, experienced by those accustomed to write much, were attributed to the use of steel pens. Since the appearance of the notice in question, there has been a good deal of speculating regarding the theory it described, and many practical tests of its reliability have been instituted. President Fulton has received a great many letters proving the efficiency of resorting to the old goose-quill in curing partial, and almost complete, paralysis of the hand and arm, caused by using steel pens. One instance is very remarkable. An eminent publisher in this city some years ago found himself unable to write. His hand and arm swelled so that he was forced to employ an amanuensis; and such was his necessity, only at brief intervals, until he happened to see a description of President Fulton's theory in the *Journal*. He adopted the goose-quill instead of the steel pen, and in a month thereafter was able to do his own writing, which he continues to do without any trouble. It may save parties the risk of annoying President Felton with inquiries relative to the basis of his theory, when we inform them that he has none to explain."

Rich Herbs.

"Time is money," is a sage saying. Thyme may be money, but the mint produces it. Shakespeare tells us of "a bank whereon the wild thyme grows." A sweet time a man would have had getting money out of that bank! Bah! Time is a very good thing to be allowed when a bill falls due; but after all we would rather have a mint of money, and we should then be sure of having a good time.

The Toad.

The toad is the most abused of reptiles, and yet nothing is more undeserving of such abuse. It lives on all manner of insects. At night it comes out of its hiding-place and goes in search of food. It seizes its prey with an astounding quickness of tongue. So quick is the motion it is absolutely invisible. This fact makes up for its otherwise slow movements. The toad is truly harmless and inoffensive—children may be permitted to play with it, and it will become enamored of their attention. True, it has a homely, even repulsive, look, but then its eye is all the brighter for it. May it never be trod upon, but multiply and replenish the night! Instruct the children to spare it, for it troubles no one, and only when night hides its ugliness does it come forth. In the spring its trill is among the sweetest of childhood sounds. —*Coleman's Rural World.*

Petroleum Residuum a Substitute for India Rubber.

A Mr. Hanscroft, of Cincinnati, writes to the *Scientific American*:—"Among the many applications of petroleum I notice one of a very strange character—I refer to the invention of our citizen, Mr. John Root. After a great deal of patience and skill he has really succeeded in making a composition that vies with vulcanized rubber for strength and usefulness, from the solid residuum that remains in the still after the more volatile vapors are driven off the well-oil or petroleum. I have seen some very beautiful picture frames and medallions, equal, in fact, to any manufactured from rubber. He also makes bottles and jars of the same composition. Truly we live in an age of improvement.

A New Plan for Preparing Bird Skins.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—In your last paper I saw an article about skinning and stuffing birds. I have found myself that it is a tedious and often difficult job so to stuff them that they look life-like, and I, therefore, tried another plan, which succeeds very well. I do not skin the birds at all, but make only an opening in the lower part of the body, remove all the intestines and insert in the empty space cotton, impregnated with a mixture of one part of creosote, three parts of alcohol, and one quarter part arsenic acid; a wire, wrapped in cotton, saturated as before goes through the neck. After sewing the opening up I lay the bird on its back for about two weeks, when it is fit to be set up. The flesh dries up like a ham, without any perceptible shrinking and the bird retains its original shape. The largest bird tried was a duck but I think it might do with any size. To drive the disagreeable smell of the creosote away, I put the birds, after drying, in a baking oven when it is not too hot. I hope some of your readers may try this method and let us know the result.

GUSTAVUS H. SCHMIDT.

Swatara, August 6, 1865

How to Dignify Agriculture.

The *N. Y. Tribune*, in an article on the present state of the country, says:—"We judge that the migration hence to the Western States has been less than formerly; but there is a steady relative gain of urban over rural population, which we observe with regret. Our youth prefer to swelter on pavements rather than enjoy the scope and freedom of the pure, free country air. They forsake their fathers' farms to pull teeth or measure tape, or chop logic in some fetid city. We must try to teach them better. Nay, we must ennoble and dignify agriculture by making it the intellectual, liberal pursuit it might and should be. Now the pettiness of its processes disgust and repel; it seems to most boys to be mere coarse, rude mindless drudgery. It can be quite other than this, and in time it shall be. More of this hereafter."