

sky. Shadow-filled depths suggest leafy coolness, fresh retreats among the trees; amid the olives and vines rise the black spires of the cypresses. A little later and all this had disappeared. The country lies flat-looking, shadowless, each accident or surface almost lost in the broad and uniform sunshine. The distant hills are whitish-blue against the white horizon, the nearer ones hot and misty, showing bare spaces of earth. The trees look small and shrunk on a wide expanse of brown land, and the olives are little grey clouds, the vines narrow green lines drawn on the soil, the cypresses black spikes. Sunburnt yellow, gray-green, gray-blue colouring prevails, suggesting nothing but heat and light—a pale, hot, mist-tinted land beneath a pale, uniform cloudless blue sky. In the garden below a water-lily has opened on the small, stone-bordered pond, geraniums and marigolds bask in the sun, the shrill chirp of the cicadas never ceases. As the day declines and the sun sinks westward, the country will again gather colour and light; and later still, a moon will come to bathe it in a white and blue and green mystery inexpressible by words; a plain of pale-green trees faintly shadowed and silvered, melting into a white distance through gradations of exquisite and wonderful softness. So through the short summer night, till in the red dawn of another day, behind the vast foreground of deep, mysterious unlighted green, the blue hills rise against the new splendour of the eastern sky, as though carved in lapis-lazuli; a divine, an etherealized lapis-lazuli, of a blue never yet painted, transparent and yet solid, glowing as with light from within.

ANECDOTES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Mrs. Alice D. Shipman's "Reminiscences of Illinois Pioneers," published in the September number of the *Phrenological Journal*, state of Colonel W. H. Davidson that, though he supported Douglas in the contest of 1860, nevertheless "Lincoln, after his inauguration, wrote to Colonel Davidson offering him any office he might think fit to name, proposing himself the secretaryship of the treasury." The origin of Lincoln's intimacy with Joshua F. Speed is thus related: "Mr. Speed began his business life as a merchant in Springfield, Illinois, where he was settled when Mr. Lincoln came there to open a law office. One day as he was sitting in his store in an interval of leisure, Mr. Lincoln, whose ingrained awkwardness was then aggravated by youth, came up to the counter, and accosted him with visible embarrassment. 'I want to know, Speed,' he said, 'the cost of a bedstead and bed,' adding a rough description which indicated the cheapest kind of both. 'What you want,' answered Mr. Speed, 'will cost you about \$17.' At this Lincoln's jaw dropped, and a painful expression of sadness and perplexity spread over his countenance. Mr. Speed, noticing the look, and rightly interpreting it to signify that the price exceeded Lincoln's means, quickly added: 'Mr. Lincoln, I have a proposition to make you. My partner has just got married, and his bed in my room upstairs is vacant. If you are willing to occupy it, and share my room with me, you are more than welcome.' The painful expression instantly vanished from Lincoln's face as, with a few simple words of thanks, he accepted the offer and disappeared. In a short time he reappeared with a pair of old-fashioned saddle-bags on his arm, and, directed by his friend, shambled up stairs to the designated room. A minute had scarcely passed before he shambled down again, and, as he reached the shop, cried out, his face beaming with jocund content, 'Well, Speed, I've moved.' Henceforth unto death, Lincoln and Speed were bosom friends."

OLD CUSTOMS.

Old customs! Well, our children say
We get along without them;
But you and I, dear, in our day
Had other thoughts about them.
The dear old habits of the past—
I cannot choose but love them,
And sigh to think the world at last
Has soared so far above them.

We had not, in the years gone by,
The grace that art discovers;
Our lives were calmer; you and I
Were very simple lovers.
And when, our daily duties o'er,
We strayed beside the rushes,
The only gems you ever wore
Were bright and blooming blushes.

Our rustic way was slow, but yet
Some good there was about it,
And many ills we now regret
Old habits would have routed.
I know our children still can see
The fifth commandment's beauty—
May they obey, as we once did,
From love and not from duty.

The world to-day is far too high
In wisdom to confess them,
But well we know, dear, you and I,
For what we have to bless them.
Though love was in the heart of each,
I trembled to accost you;
Had you required a polished speech,
I think I would have lost you.

No doubt our minds are slow to gauge
The ways we are not heeding;
But here upon our memory's page
Is very simple reading.
It says the forms we still hold fast
Were wise as well as pleasant—
The good old customs of the past
Have leavened all the present.

STRAW LUMBER.

The *American Architect* says: It is said that 3,000 feet of lumber can be made from an average acre of straw. If this is true we shall not need to cut another tree for the ordinary uses of builders. The trees on an acre of land will not average more than 20,000 feet of boards; and it is easy to see that if seven acres of wheat will produce 20,000 feet, the straw crop would vastly exceed all the lumber demand. It requires a hundred years to produce an acre of timber; in seven years the straw of an acre would make the same amount of lumber. The Fargo imagination may have outdone the exact facts in the case, but if it does not magnify more than ten diameters—if an acre of straw will produce 300 feet of lumber—the Fargo achievement is one of the greatest events of the century. The *Architect* says that this new lumber can be made for about the cost of the finer kinds of pine lumber, and for half that of walnut, and it is enthusiastic over its qualities as a finishing material.

WHAT RUM WILL DO.

J. B. Gough says: A minister of the gospel told me one of the most thrilling incidents I have heard in my life. A member of his congregation come home, for the first time in his life, intoxicated, and his boy met him upon the doorstep, clapping his hands and exclaiming, "Papa has come home!" He seized the boy by the shoulder, swung him around, staggered and fell in the hall. That minister said to me, "I spent the night in that house. I went out, bared my brow that the night dew might fall upon it and cool it. I walked up and down the hill. There was his child dead! There was his wife in convulsions, and he asleep. A man about thirty years of age asleep, with a dead child in the house, having a blue mark upon the temple, where the corner of the marble steps had come in contact with the head as he swung him around, and his wife on the brink of the grave! Mr. Gough," said my friend, "I cursed the drink. He had told me that I must stay until he awoke, and I did. When he awoke he passed his hand over his face and

exclaimed, 'What is the matter? Where is my boy?' 'You cannot see him.' 'Stand out of my way! I will see my boy.' To prevent confusion I took him to the child's bed, and as I turned down the sheet and showed him the corpse he uttered a wild shriek, 'Ah, my child!' That minister said further to me: "One year after he was brought from the lunatic asylum to lie side by side with his wife in one grave, and I attended the funeral." The minister of the gospel who told me that fact is to-day a drunken hostler in a stable in the city of Boston. Now tell me what rum will not do. It will debase, degrade, imbrute and damn everything that is noble, bright, glorious and God-like in a human being. There is nothing drink will not do that is vile, dastardly, cowardly and hellish. Then are we not to fight till the day of our death?

MEDICINAL VALUE OF VEGETABLES.

Asparagus is a strong diuretic, and forms part of the cure for rheumatic patients at such health resorts as Aix-les-Bains. Sorrel is cooling, and forms the staple of that *soupe aux herbes* which a French lady will order for herself after a long and tiring journey. Carrots, as containing a quantity of sugar, are avoided by some people, while others complain of them as indigestible. With regard to the latter accusation, it may be remarked, in passing, that it is the yellow core of the carrot that is difficult of digestion—the outer, or red layer, is tender enough. In Savoy the peasants have recourse to an infusion of carrots as a specific for jaundice.

The large, sweet onion is very rich in those alkaline elements which counteract the poison of rheumatic gout. If slowly stewed in weak broth, and eaten with a little Nepaul pepper, it will be found to be an admirable article of diet for patients of studious and sedentary habits. The stalks of cauliflower have the same sort of value, only too often the stalk of a cauliflower is so ill-boiled and unpalatable that few persons would thank you for proposing to them to make part of their meal consist of so uninviting an article. Turnips, in the same way, are often thought to be indigestible, and better suited for cows and sheep than for delicate people; but here the fault lies with the cook quite as much as with the root. The cook boils the turnip badly, and then pours some butter over it, the eater of such a dish is sure to be the worse for it. Try a better way. What shall be said about our lettuces? The plant has a slight narcotic action, of which an old French woman, like a French doctor, well knows the value, and when properly cooked is really very easy of digestion.—*Medical Record*.

FLOOR COVERING.

A new process for covering floors is described as follows: The floor is thoroughly cleaned. The holes and cracks are then filled with paper putty, made by soaking newspapers in a paste made as follows: To one pound of flour add three quarts of water and a tablespoonful of ground alum, and mix thoroughly. The floor is coated with this paste, and then a thickness of manila or hardware paper is put on. This is allowed to dry thoroughly. The manila paper is then covered with paste, and a layer of wall paper of any style or design desired is put on. After allowing this to dry thoroughly, it is covered with two or three more coats of sizing made by dissolving half a pound of white glue in two quarts of water. After this is allowed to dry, the surface is given one coat of "hard oil finish varnish," which can be bought already prepared. This is allowed to dry thoroughly, when the floor is ready for use. The process is represented to be durable and cheap; and, besides taking the place of matting, carpet, oilcloths, or like covering, makes the floor air tight, and permits of its being washed.