

Variety.

HOW TO MAKE MAPLE SUGAR.

Last year several essays were received in response to our call for experience on this important topic. We embody here the principal suggestions contained in these letters.

The time for tapping of course varies with the locality and the character of the season. In many places in ordinary seasons a large amount of sugar is made during February. The business should commence as early as the sap will flow.

Where but few trees are attended to, the ordinary utensils and fixtures used for household purposes will be sufficient; but where sugar-making is a part of the business of the farm, the grove or "sap bush," numbering from a hundred to thousands of trees, special, and in some cases, extensive preparations are necessary.

For tapping, a 3-4 inch bit is generally preferred. The holes should be 1-2 to 2 inches deep, entering only the sap wood, and inclining slightly upwards, to prevent the sap remaining and souring in the orifice. "Boxing," or chipping, is condemned as injurious to the tree, and the bark being exposed to the light and air, the wood soon dries, so as to require additional cutting or "freshening."

Wooden tubes, of quill elder, sumach, or pine, as may be most convenient, are preferable to tin or sheet iron. They should be fitted closely into the opening. Pails of tubs of cedar or pine, the inside unpainted, with a board cover to exclude leaves and dust, are the best vessels for receiving the sap from the tree. They may be hooped with wood, and made quite cheaply. It is well to have the top of larger diameter than the bottom so that ice may be easily removed, in case the sap should freeze in them. An auger hole or notch cut in the edge of the cover, admits the sap into the pail.

When the trees are quite near each other, labor may be saved by using leading troughs, running from tree to tree, and all finally emptying into a receiving tub. Or a line of troughs from near the centre of the bush to the tub, may be made, into which the collecting vessels are emptied. There is more waste in the manner from leaking, spilling, and evaporation, than in the common method of hauling the sap to the boiling place in a capacious covered tub, mounted on a sled.

Sheet iron pans, (Russia iron is best,) five or six inches deep, set in mason work, so that the bottom is exposed to the heat, will evaporate the sap much more rapidly than can be done in the old-fashioned arch kettle.

A brick wall built across the middle of the fire chamber, to within two inches of the bottom of the pan, will throw the heat against the bottom of the pan, and save much fuel. Some of the most successful sugar makers say, it is of the greatest importance in sugar making, that the sap be reduced to syrup in the shortest possible time after being collected. Although the sap may not sour in several days, its properties are undoubtedly affected by light and air, and the amount of crystallizable matter considerably diminished, so that even if the "run" be light for a few days, it is best to reduce to syrup every 8 or 12 hours. The precaution is even more necessary in the latter part of the season, when the sap crystallizes with more difficulty. By judicious boiling the available run may be prolonged several days.

To "sugar off," the syrup should be strained through a thick woolen cloth into a medium sized kettle, and reduced slowly carefully guarding against burning, as this would greatly injure the color and quality of the sugar. It is sufficiently done, when threads of the thick syrup break off short like glass, after cooling quietly in water or on snow. Then remove it from the fire, stir it continually, and when it begins to "grain," immediately turn it into the moulds. Grained sugar is prepared in the same manner, only that the stirring is continued until the mass is dry.

We have said nothing of clarifying, for experience has proved that if proper care be taken to keep every article used in the various processes scrupulously clean, and to prevent leaves, insects, etc., from falling into the sap, no clarifying agents are needed. We have eaten maple sugar of the finest quality both as to flavor and color, made entirely without clarifying.

The best form for the city retail market, is in small cakes, weighing from two to four ounces, as these are more convenient for peddling out. [Am. Agriculturist]

"Can you tell me what are the wages here?" inquired a laborer of a boy. "I don't know, sir." "What does your father get at the end of the week?" "Get," said the boy, "why, he gets as tight as a brick."

SATURDAY NIGHT.

What blessed things Saturday nights are and what would the world do without them? Those breathing moments in the march of life, those little twilights in the broad and gairish glare of noon when yesterday looked beautiful through the shadows, and faces, changed long ago, smiling sweetly—again in the hush, when one remembers "the old folks at home," and the old arm chair. Saturday nights make people human! set their hearts to beating softly, as they used to do before the world turned them into wax drums, and jarred them to pieces with tattoos.

The ledger closes with a clash; the iron doored vaults come to with a bang; up go the shutters with a will; click goes the key in the lock. It is Saturday night, and business branches free again. Homeward, ho! The door that has been ajar all the week, gently closes behind him, the world is shut out! Shut in rather. Here are the treasures after all, and not in the vault, not in the book—save the record in the old family Bible—and not in the bank.

The dim and dusty shops are swept up, the hammer is thrown down, and the apron is doffed and labor hastens with a light step homeward bound.

May be you are a bachelor, frosty and forty. Then, poor fellow, Saturday nights are nothing to you, just as you are nothing to anything. Get a wife, blue-eyed or black-eyed, but above all, a true-eyed—get a home, no matter how little—and a little sofa, just large enough to hold two, or two and a half, and then get the two or two and a half in it on a Saturday night, and then read this paragraph by the light of your wife's eyes, and thank God and take courage.

EDUCATION.—If I were to reduce to a single maxim the concentrated wisdom of the world on the subject of practical education, I should but enunciate a proposition which, I fear, is not incorporated as it should be into the practice of schools and families. That principle is, that in educating the young, you serve them most effectually, not by what you do for them, but what you teach them to do for themselves. The popular opinion seems to be that education is putting something into the mind of a child, by exercising merely its power of receptivity, its memory. I say nay. The great principle on which a child should be educated, is not that of reception, but rather that of action, and it will ever remain uneducated, in the highest sense so long as its higher mental powers remain inert. It was well said by the eminent Dr. Mason, "Let the aim of education be to convert the mind into a living fountain, and not a reservoir." That which is filled by merely pumping in, will be emptied by pumping out.

PRAYE YOUR WIFE.—Ay, praise your wife! and not by words only. Why do you praise any one? to please him, make him happy? Well, whom do you more wish to please and to make happy than she on whom your own happiness depends? So, praise your wife, man! For, "just in proportion as you render her happy, you increase your own happiness." Why not have your house filled with sunshine and beauty all the time, when you can do it by kind feelings and pleasant words, rather than shut out the cheering and health-giving light by clouds of churlishness? Your feelings may be good enough, and you may have enough of them; but how will they benefit your family while they are hidden? What good does the gold as long as it is concealed in the mine? Bring out the glittering metal, circulate it; its ring will make music in the house, if it be blended with other tones. If you can smile, smile on your wife. You would be indignant, as you ought to be, if told you did not love her; then make yourself agreeable to her; when you praise her, do it in a delicate way; let her not think others more refined in heart than her husband. How came she to love you at first—to marry you? Did not you, by your words and your demeanor, show an appreciation of her excellencies, thus praising her? In this way, you attracted her, till she became, with you, one in heart and interest, one in purpose. Having drawn her to yourself by the exercise of attraction, strengthen the union by a continued exercise of affinity. Praise your wife!—Whom should you praise, if not her? How delicious, once, came to her ears words of

praise from your lips! How she treasured them in her heart, and lived on them! Is she less a woman by becoming your wife? If so, shame on you! Does she less need the expression of your love? Never!—Words of affection are as necessary to the perfection of her happiness, to positive enjoyment, as they ever were, and from you more so, as to you only she now looks for them. If she ever seek them from others—should your praise become indifferent to her—blame your own remissness. You are unpardonable if you do not prevent her love from declining by the same means which attracted her to you. If you respect her rights, regard her feelings, and give her the attention she ought to expect as well as to receive from you, your children will render her loving obedience, and be ready to anticipate her wishes. Praise your wife, then, and not by words only!

WHAT PRECIOUS STONES ARE MADE OF.—And first, as to the diamond—which, though the king and chief of all, may be dismissed in two words—pure carbon. The diamond is the ultimate effort, the idealisation, the spiritual evolution of coal—the butterfly escaped from its antenatal tomb, the realisation of the coal's highest being. Then the ruby, the flaming red Oriental ruby side by side with the sapphire and the Oriental topaz—both rubies of different colors—what are they? Crystals of our commonest argillaceous earth, the earth which makes our potter's clay, our pipe-clay, and common roofing slate—mere bits of alumina. Yet these are among our best gems, the idealisation of common potter's clay. In every 100 grains of beautiful blue sapphire, 92 are pure alumina, with one grain of iron to make that glorious blue light within. The ruby is colored with chromic acid. The amethyst is only silica or flint. In 100 grains of amethyst 98 are simple pure flint—the same substance as that which made the old flint in the tinder-box, used before our phosphorus and sulphur-headed matches, & which, ground up and prepared, makes now the vehicle of artists' colors. Of this same silica are also corneal, cat's-eye, rock crystal, Egyptian Jasper, and opal. In 100 grains of opal 90 are pure silica, and 10 water. It is the water, then, which gives the gem that peculiar changeable and iridescent coloring which is so beautiful, and which renders the opal the moonlight queen of the kingly diamond. The garnet, the Brazilian—not the Oriental topaz, the occidental emerald, which is of the same species as the beryl, all these are compounds of silica and alumina. But the beryl and emerald are not composed exclusively of silica and alumina; they contain another earth, called glucina—from *glukos*, sweet, because its salts are sweet to the taste.—The hyacinth gem is composed of the earth, not so long discovered, called zirconia—first discovered in that species of hyacinth stone known as zircon. The zircon is found in Scotland. To every 100 parts of hyacinth 70 are pure zirconia. A chrysolite is a portion of pure silicate of magnesia.—Without carbonate of copper there would be no malachite in Russia or at the Bura Bura mines; without carbonate of lime there would be no Carrara marble; the turquoise is nothing but a phosphate of alumina colored blue by copper; and the lapis lazuli is only a bit of earth painted throughout with sulphure of sodium.

GENEALOGY.—There are few families we imagine, any where, in which love is not abused as furnishing the license for impoliteness. A husband, father, or brother, will speak harsh words to those he loves best, and to those who love him best, simply because the security of love and family pride keeps him from getting his head broken. It is a shame that a man will speak more impolitely, at times, to his wife or sister, than he would to any other female, except a low and vicious one. It is thus that the honest affections of a man's nature prove to be a weaker protection to a woman in the family circle than the restraints of society, and that a woman socially is indebted for the kindest politeness of life to those not belonging to her own household. These ought not so to be, the man who, because it will not be resented, inflicts his spleen and bad temper upon those of his hearth-stone, is a small coward, and a very mean man. Kind words are a circulating medium between true gentlemen and ladies at home, and no polish exhibited in society can atone for the harsh language and disrespectful treatment too often indulged in between those bound together by God's own ties of blood, and the still more sacred bond of conjugal love.

Special Notices.

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