

FOR FARMERS, STOCK BREEDERS AND GARDENERS

NEWSY NOTES

BY AGROLOGA

OLD CARD GAMES

Round about the year 1870 we Victorians away up among the mountains were wholly dependent upon our native ingenuity in the matter of entertainment. When the dark nights came no radiant picture palace threw open its garish doors. Newcastle could boast two theatres offering drama, comedy, or sometimes operatic singing, but that city was far distant. In our village we were perforce content with a concert—got up by the church choir—once in the winter season. Rarely a travelling minstrel or phenologist would pitch his tent (figuratively) for the night in our midst, and entertain us with the spectacle of some well-known character frolicking under the hypnotic influence. But these were "red-letter days," or rather nights: the rest of the time we depended on ourselves.

There was a great deal of singing; every village had its band of Solfa enthusiasts who could give a good account of themselves at a local concert. Many collieries had "brass bands" with silver instruments; the bandsmen practised in the village inn, to the great scandal of

the unco 'quid during the winter and competed against other bands in the summer. As the Christmas season drew on there was sure to be a mild outbreak of card games (also frowned upon) which disappeared with the New Year. About one village in twenty had a "hall" where an occasional dance was held; and the waltz was the favorite dance.

Coming to the card games "Double Whist" at which four persons played, was the pastime of the seriously-minded; its very name "Whist" called for silence. To be a good whist-player required a long memory, an observant eye, and a Machiavellian brain; the game was therefore looked askance at by the younger folk. They preferred what was termed a "round game" which was not restricted as to the number of players, and did not call for silence. These round games were as funny as they made them! And I must try to describe them, as they seem to be unknown to this generation and place.

"Snap" was a noisy game, calling for alertness. The players sat round the table and the cards were dealt without cutting. When this was done each player took his

cards into the palm of his left hand, backs upward, and in a solid pack. He was not to see what cards he had. Place his right thumb on the back of the top card he slid it on to the table before him, bringing it face upwards with the other movement. In turn each of the other players "played" their cards in the same way, but if one of them happened to play a card with the same value as one already lying on the table, he cried "Snap!" He could then take up his own card or cards and also the cards belonging to the person snapped and slip them into his palm under the cards already there. Sometimes both called "Snap" and the one adjudged to be first got the cards. A ten, say, of diamonds could "Snap" a ten of hearts or a ten of clubs, etc. Court cards were treated in the same way. When Snap was called in error the player forfeited all cards he had on the table. It was quite exciting; all the players flashed looks lightning round the circle of cards at every play. As a player was "skinned" he fell out of the game, and at last the winner had the whole pack. It took a good many dea's for that, though.

"Beggar-my-neighbor" might be played by two or more players. The cards are dealt and held the same way as in "Snap." The top card is slipped off in the same way but laid face upward in the centre of the table, and the rest player covers it in the same fashion. The scoring may be illustrated thus. The first man, say, leads a ten (not a court card), the second puts a two on it; all by chance, because they cannot see the cards in the hands. The third may put down a court card and now there is something doing; he stands to win the former two, but depends on the fourth player. Suppose the card is an ace, the fourth player has the privilege of playing four cards on to it. If all the four are low cards, player No. Three takes the ace and slips it under his pack in his left hand. But if one of No. 4's cards is a court card, No. 3's chance is gone. Suppose No. 4 plays a Queen, No. 5 must then play two cards, and as before if both are low cards, No. 4 takes the lot. The rule is: a player may play four cards on an ace, three on a king, two on a queen and one on a knave. The knave (or Jack) brings quick results! In the above play if No. 5 happened to put down a low card and a knave, No. 6 could only play one card to the pile.

If that was a low card, No. 5 took the lot. Sometimes the game would fluctuate so much that the whole evening would go before one player or beggared his neighbors by winning all their cards. A much easier card game was "Old Maid" (or Bachelor) as the case might be. It is doubtful whether it would be called a game in these sophisticated days. A single card was drawn from the pack and laid face down in the centre of the table. The cards were then dealt to the players who might be of any number and of either sex. Each player put his (or her) cards into the orthodox fan shape and then proceeded to throw out all duplicates (if any). Thus if the player had a five of hearts and a five of spades, he threw both into the middle of the table; and so on. Then turning to player No. 2 he held out his cards face downwards. No. 2 took out one card from No. 1's hand and proceeded to compare it with the cards he was holding. Say it was the knave of diamonds and No. 2 had already got the knave of clubs, he would throw out both. If he had not a card to match the drawn card, he added the latter to his hand. And so it went round and round the circle, the luckier players throwing out duplicates till one player with one card remained. That one was termed as "Old Maid" or "Old Bachelor" as the case might be.

There were always gamblers who "gambled for money," but these were amongst the miners and were looked down upon, even by their own class. The games above-mentioned were of an innocent but comic character, and the only fault the present writer saw in them was that they took up time that might have been more usefully employed.

MUSIC AT SUMMERSIDE

The good people of Summerside are to be congratulated on their decision to devote time and effort to promote a love of music. It is to be hoped that other centres will follow their lead. I believe it was William Byrd, the English composer (1540-1623) who wrote that "music is such a pleasant thing, oh that all men would learn to sing; and whatever we may think of his rhyme, there can only be one opinion of his reason. Music is a pleasant and innocent pastime, and we learn on the authority of a great dramatist, that the "man who hath no music in his soul" is no fit company for any of us! Music is cooperative and disciplinary for all must work together to produce harmony, yet all must obey the one conductor. It is good for body and mind. With all these manifold advantages, the surprising thing is that a practical people should have relegated it to the background for so long a period. Summerside is leading the way!

STORING DAHLIAS

As I write this the dahlias in the garden are still making a fine display, but the time is fast approaching when they must go into winter quarters. The proper storing of the tubers has baffled most amateur gardeners at first, and not a few professionals at times. The Canadian Horticulture and Home Magazine has a timely article upon the proper procedure, from the pen of a noted grower, Mr. James D. Black of Montreal. It is a Mr. Black advises growers to cut

the dahlias down, just above the ground, after the first killing frost. If the dahlias were planted right originally, the mother-roots will be six inches below the surface of the ground. These roots should be lifted very carefully, avoiding all injury to the tuber-like divisions. Now comes a very important operation—the "curing" of the clumps. This is effected by holding them in a well-aired place for ten days to two weeks, at a temperature of 70 degrees F., or as near it as the gardener can get. Lastly the clumps are put into a permanent storage, covering them with earth, sand, peat moss, or whatever has been found satisfactory in the past. The temperature of the place of storage should range between 34 and 40 degrees.

It is good policy to inspect the stored dahlias during the winter, and if any shrivelling or drying is detected, to sprinkle the covering material with water. This year, for the first time, I have had a couple of stunted dahlias plants. The leaves did not grow properly, just shrivelled and fell off leaving the plant "under bare poles" to use a term beloved of ancient mariners. As the plants presented no outward signs of a fungoid character, I am inclined to think they were attacked by some virus disease.

"INCENSE"

The same magazine contains an ad. of Gladiolus "Incense." At last the fragrant gladiolus has arrived and its scent is like that of roses, according to the sworn affidavits of leading American gladiolus growers. The honor of raising the new gladiolus goes to a lady, Mrs. Anna L. Miller. There is a Canadian agent but he does not state the price of the corms! The flower is said to be "begonia-rose in color with a yellow throat."

A while ago, in these Notes, the writer surmised that a gladiolus, bearing a name so suggestive of the perfume of a G. tritris, would one day be forthcoming; and pointed out that tritris was a wild species with a rather small flower, yellow in color and spotted inside and out with chestnut.

A WITZ CHAIR

The writer has an armchair which, a friend informs him, is a Witz (or Witz) chair. Such chairs (he said) were formerly made somewhere in the eastern part of the Island and the craftsman's name was Witz. Can any reader supply information regarding this industry, the correct name of the craftsman the date when he did his best work, and any other interesting facts concerning the Witz furniture?

DEHYDRATED PEAS

The long spell of dry weather was very hard upon the garden peas this year. They literally dried up, "root and branch," for the soil was like sand for six inches down at least. The consequence was that I garnered some pounds of dried peas, the best of which will be sold for seed. (The variety is "Ryder's Universal," a wrinkled pea of a large size, and very productive.) The rest will find their way into the saucepan after the old fashion. At one time, in the Old Country, it was possible to buy a carton containing about half a pint of dehydrated (or dried) peas, a lump of cube sugar, and a small packet of baking soda. The baking soda was about a level teaspoonful. The soda was put into a quart of cold water, along with the peas, and allowed to stand overnight. By this morning, aided by the penetrating power of the soda, the peas had regained their original shape and texture. Towards dinner time the peas were drained off, and put on to cook in hot water, the cube of sugar and a teaspoonful of salt being added. If boiled for about an hour, the peas would go to table as tasty as those fresh from the garden. If they were over-cooked they became "pease-pudding," and lost color. With the great advance of canning which has come about, I suppose this old method will not be that much to the younger generation of Britons.

"THE BEAUTY OF BRITAIN"

Through the kindness of a friend I have had the pleasure of reading a book with the above title: its secondary caption being "A Pictorial Survey." It is unique in this respect, that the author is responsible for the whole book. Great Britain being divided into well-marked districts, and each region is described by some prominent resident. Mr. J. B. Priestley, of "Good Companions" fame, supplies the introduction and those writers who follow, maintain the same high standard. The illustrations (109 in all) go far to uphold Mr. Priestley's opening sentence that "We live on one of the most beautiful islands in the world."

For those whose forbears came from Devon, Cornwall, and the Severn Valley, this book will have a great interest with its photographs of inland villages and seaport towns, and coast scenes (in alternating contracts of mildness, ruggedness, and grandeur.) A view of Dartmoor, South Devon, with a gigantic storm-cloud hovering over it, is a "Turner" in black and white. "The Chalk Country," and "the South Country" are really part of one great whole extending from Wiltshire and Berkshire right along to Kent and taking in all the south coast. Increasingly cheaper and swifter transport (complains one author) "has turned our coast into a fun fair, peopled by a motley

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS

CONNECTED WITH

Silver Fox Farming



One week from Monday is November 4th and that will be classification day for the Silver Fox Show which will be held at the Exhibition Building, Charlottetown, during the week. Tuesday evening will be Banquet Night, Wednesday evening the big hockey match between the Bruins and Canadians, and the show will conclude Friday afternoon. With the Borden-Summer-side-Charlottetown Highway about completed there should be a great number of visitors to see the top notch foxes that will be on display.

B. Graham Rogers of Summerside, has an excellent article in the October Canadian Silver Fox and Fur entitled "Improving the Silver Fox in which he points out the value and necessity of accurate records which can only be obtained through registration. The blood lines of some good strains have been lost, states Mr. Rogers, through the abandoning of registration.

The Alexander Room in the King Edward Hotel has been secured by the Ontario Fur Farmers Association for their next show. The date is December 17-18-19. There will be ample space in the room for the proper display of exhibits and the staging of any other activities the show committee may decide to undertake. As was done last year the pelts will be consigned to a fur auction but this year they will be protected by reserves set by a qualified valuator.

Regional Directors will constitute the nucleus of an entry committee. Each Director is expected to report on the display entries from his territory. These reports will be tabulated by the Exhibition manager. When the entries close on December 10th, if all display entries have not been received the Regional Directors will be asked to communicate at once with the non-entering ranches.

The prize list will be produced by Donovan, Limited, into whose charge has been placed the selling of the advertisements. A very attractive list will be distributed and every fur farmer in Ontario will receive a copy. Everything points to a successful show with a splendid entry list.

We note where our old friend Arthur M. Doyle of Winnipeg, formerly of this province, was a candidate in the recent elections. Speaking of him Fur of Canada says: "Born in Prince Edward Island Mr. Doyle possesses the native fluency which with the name of Doyle proclaims his Irish ancestry. This quality together with his interest in and knowledge of fox farms, has invariably resulted in placing him in the chair when foxmen have gathered." Mr. Doyle is still connected with the All-Star Ranch as General Manager.

During the twelve months which ended June 30th, 1934, a total of 6,063,391 fur skins were marketed in Canada, a considerably greater number than the two previous years. The largest producer of furs was the Province of Ontario with Labrador second. The largest producer of revenue was silver fox furs. The total value of the Canadian fur crop for the year 1934 was \$12,122,000.

For the next few weeks fur breeders will be on the lookout for that elusive thing called "primeness." The question as to when a fur animal is prime is not easily

through, which even the most charitable could not call a fair sample of the English people. To meet the real England and the true English you must journey inland." This chalk area gives a fine pasturage for sheep, as old Drayton knew, when he wrote in his Polyolbion: "The sheep our Wold doth breed (The simplest though it seem) shall our description need, And shepherd-like, the Muse thus of that kind doth speak.

"That kind" was the Cotswold sheep, a variety which, in the Middle Ages, brought prosperity and wealth to all the southland valleys, but has lost ground in modern times to other breeds. Picture No. 44. Winter in Surrey, is a delightful English snow scene, everything covered with an even white coat.

Middle England comes next, and then the narrative works back to Wales, "where there is nothing to remind the stranger of the Welsh people except the sound of their language and the look of their place-names." In Scotland and Ireland there are characteristic "buildings, costume, musical instruments, dishes, drinks, sweetmeats and tourists' souvenirs." The Welsh, we are reminded, "never had the publicity of the Irish or the Scotch." Well, never mind that, the brave little race is coming into its own as is plain to be seen.

From Wales up through the Lake District is a very natural step towards Scotland, but why out into Northumberland and Durham, two most romantic counties, with a page apiece? Not even a picture of Durham Cathedral, admittedly the most perfect specimen of Norman architecture in the Kingdom! And west of Newcastle, looking down the old Roman road into the valley of the Tyne, did not the painter Martin tamper the glorious scene to canvas as "The Plains of Heaven?" The North-East of England suffers from lack of publicity too! "The Beauty of Britain" is from Balfour's Pilgrims' Library.

answered for the reason that a pelt may be apparently prime on the outside and yet be far from prime in its leather. The point then, is, it better to pelt when the fur is at its most attractive stage or to let that go by as to make sure the leather is O.K.

The writer like all other ranchers in this province, has that put up to him as he views the foxes at the ranch day by day. I know it is very early in the season to pelt, but some of the best prices we received the season of 1933 were for pelts taken off the latter part of October. The foxes had been very generously fed and being adults had arrived at maturity so pronounced that we did not dare to take a chance on leaving them until even mid-November.

Looking over some hundred or two adults last Monday and Tuesday we found quite a few that seemed O.K. in fur. They looked as though they would retrograde rather than improve, so we decided to pelt them next week. They will have an advantage if the past proves correct, of being placed on the December auction where fresh skins should meet with a fair demand.

Don Stewart of Summerside was warmly greeted by several fox ranching friends on a short visit which he paid to Charlottetown and vicinity last Tuesday. Don is a mighty good judge of a silver fox.

Late last fall we referred to a method used by a western U. S. A. rancher to kill his pelts. The foxes were placed in a box in which an opening had been cut for the exhaust pipe of a motor car to pass in. The engine was started and in a few minutes they were dead. The inventor claims it is a humane method and probably it is. Other methods are the use of cyanide of potassium, gas, which is extremely dangerous to humans—and the hypodermic injection of strychnine.

The writer was the inventor of the last named method which consists of the injection by means of a veterinary's hypodermic syringe of about one-half teaspoonful or two C. of two per cent solution of strychnine hydrochloride just back of the left shoulder of the animal. If done properly death is a matter of seconds. The solution of strychnine sold in drug stores is British Pharmacopoeia strength—one per cent—it is better to use a two per cent solution. The cost is practically the same.

Writing on pelting, Hamilton Tobin of Vinton, Iowa, says: "It is considered that it is not entirely practical to remove the pelt immediately after the kill. Many hold the belief that unless the animal heat is permitted to leave the body the fur will deteriorate or even "slip" from the leather. It has been demonstrated time and again that this theory is fallacious. However, it is generally agreed that for best results a cooling time of two or three hours should be allowed in moderate temperatures. The carcasses should not be permitted to freeze before skinning. After a two hour cooling period the body is still sufficiently flexible to be easily workable."

Mr. Tobin then goes on to discuss the various details of pelting a fox, practically all of which is familiar in this province.

Governor P. Ashley Cooper of the Hudson's Bay Company discussing the future of fur farming said in brief: "As the oldest fur auction company we feel it is our duty to know all there is to know about furs and the fur trade. That is why we make every effort to keep up with the times and when possible a step ahead of the trend in the fur industry. We have established fur farms in Canada, not just for the sake of raising pelts, but to keep ourselves informed on fur farming and the results obtained from the breeding of fur bearing animals in captivity."

We have established reservations in Canada where we afford protection to the wild life on these areas with the intention of building up the supply of animals, such as beaver and muskrats. In times we hope to be able to restore depleted areas as well as obtain further supplies of skins for the market. We do these things because we feel it is our duty to do them. The Hudson's Bay Company was built up on the fur business and I feel it will always be in the fur business. We therefore endeavor to keep looking ahead and planning for the future."

In an interesting article on fisher, C. R. Partic of Lantier, Quebec, says in part: "Fisher is our largest marten. They are becoming very scarce in the wild and their pelts are much in demand. In fact the prices paid for them in recent years have been as high, if not higher, than the best silver foxes. Only 240 were offered in the January sale at Montreal. The smaller and medium size pelts from female and young fishers fetched higher prices than the sometimes very large adult males.

Mating takes place within a week after the birth of the young, and the adult female fisher is pregnant all her life, with the exception of the seven or nine days after the birth of the young each year. A wild-caught female fisher here had three litters in three consecutive years, in all twelve

FORCING BULBS

The amateur gardener who is able to bring bulbs to flower in pots of earth has a far greater selection of material, and finer flowers are grown this way than in fiber or pebbles and water. All the forcing varieties of tulips, hyacinths, narcissus and the minor bulbs which are used by florists to produce pot plants may be forced by the amateur who has a sun parlor and is willing to be patient and careful.

In this operation, as with others, you do not grow flowers, you merely permit them to grow. Flowers are as eager to live as an animal; we have only to place them in an environment which makes it possible for them to thrive. The procedure with bulbs is well standardized.

The first step is to plant them in pots or the shallow pots called "pans." The soil should be what florists call good potting soil and since very little is needed. Place the bulb so that its point is half an inch below the surface.

Now it is necessary to allow the bulb to make roots; and for this purpose the pot must be placed in a dark and cool place, where it cannot freeze or dry out too much. A cold frame, where it can be covered with leaves, or a pit protected by a curb from surface drainage, where several pots may be stored, will do. The purpose is to reproduce as nearly as possible conditions under which bulbs form roots when planted in the ground. Freezing does not destroy hardy bulbs, but will delay growth and make them force less easily.

When placed in this storage the pot should be thoroughly soaked, and no further watering should be necessary. If stored in an outdoor cellar or close to the ground, the plants prevented from drying out excessively. Root action will follow and when top growth begins the pot may be brought indoors or kept in the storage place and so retarded until wanted.

After being brought indoors, the pot may be given all the light possible and kept in a temperature young, and she is due to have her next delivery towards the end of March next. The gestation period for the three litters were 345, 355 and 360 days respectively.

In the wild the fisher is one of the shyest animals and is rarely seen by man. The sick in the woods and trapper is bound to keep his eyes to the ground in those thickets where fisher are found or he will be sprawling every other step.

In captivity, however, even those recently captured become very tame and confiding, and the young born in the pen are regular little devils. One cannot do a thing in their pen without having them on one's back or wanting to help in a persistent sort of way; but if you want them to get out of the way all you have to do is to bring a box in fact, the whole ranch put in which can be closed and tell them

which averages 60 degrees until stems, leaves and flower buds are formed. This means keeping them out of overheated rooms, preferably on a sunporch, where windows may be opened for ventilation and coolness. Night temperatures should be lower than day. After buds are formed a temperature of 70 degrees will bring out the flowers, and if haste is needed a higher temperature will produce it.

Too high temperature will produce spindly growth and may prevent flowering. Air is as important as light. Success in forcing bulbs into flower in soil depends entirely on the points here enumerated and unless one is willing to pay strict attention to details it is better not to undertake it. But it can be seen from the dissonance that no skill is required; some knowledge of plants, plus patience and care, are all that are needed, and the reward is rich. To watch the flowers develop will teach many lessons which may be of value in the garden next year.

to get in and without hesitation they will do so. The reason is that they want to see what the box is like inside as soon as it is placed in the pen.

Until I became acquainted with fisher I had an idea they were the most bloodthirsty of our predatory animals. In this respect as well, they change their character completely in captivity. My place is alive with chickens, rabbits and nutria at large, and when a fox escapes there are always some casualties; yet I have had nine fisher escapes within the last four years, wild caught as well as pen born animals. All were recovered within a short time and not a chicken, rabbit or any other animal had been molested. The old mother fisher got out with her whole brood of three last year, but when she saw me coming with the feed pail she followed me into her pen like a dog. On the way one of my bantam roosters tried to bar her way but she took no notice of him and hopped around him to follow me.

Fall housecleaning. Even on ranches that have had a thorough cleaning up late last spring and then kept in a more or less sanitary condition during the summer, fall housecleaning within the next few weeks is advisable. When one considers the small extent of ground utilized by the average pair of foxes, or the space they are domiciled in if wood is flooded at that more epidemics are not prevented. The price of safety is continued care and cleanliness with the use of reliable disinfecting material from time to time.

The use of disinfectants on earth pens at this season of the year is not worth while, but the excreta and debris, including leaves, should all be removed. This will entail some extra labor cost, but the rancher will experience the satisfaction of knowing that his premises are safer and there is a probability of better foxes because of the extra effort made. All the dens and houses should also be cleaned if that is necessary, before the winter season. In fact, the whole ranch put in ship shape condition.

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