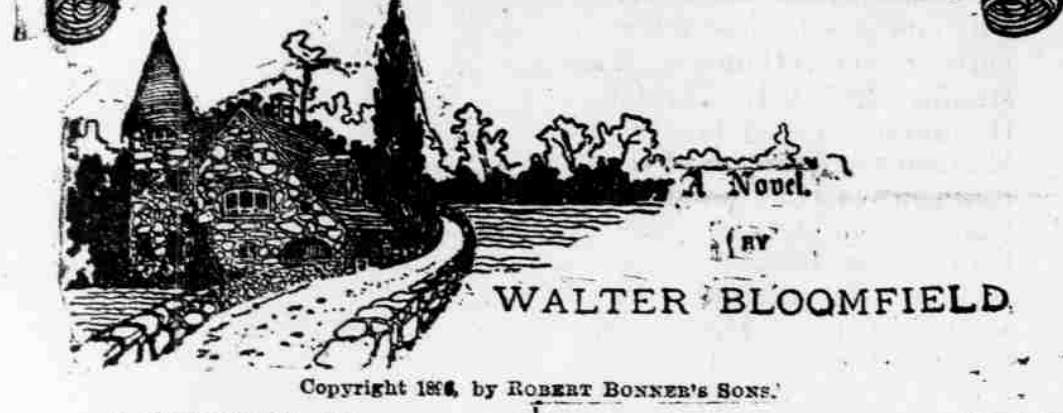


Holdenhurst Hall



WALTER BLOOMFIELD

CHAPTER VI.
Continued.

Luncheon over, I sought to create a diversion by reminding my uncle of his engagement to examine the Holdenhurst deeds. He seemed very pleased with my attention to his wishes, and at once followed me into the library, my father and the other two guests adjourning to the drawing-room. It was then I learned that uncle Sam had been in the library with my father in the morning, and had looked through some of the deeds. He spent the whole of the afternoon in completing his examination of them, talking to me on various subjects meanwhile, and amusing me greatly with his blunt candor and his unsparring criticism of village communities in England. His strictures upon the Rev. Mr. Fuller were no less amusing than severe, and my sides ached so much from continued laughter that I was much relieved when at last he rose and said:

"There, my boy; I have done. Replace them carefully where you took them from, until I send your father a safe, and a letter to contain them. They are very interesting and ought to be carefully preserved if only for their historical interest. By-and-bye, your father told me just now that he has invited yet another person to dine here this evening—the Vicar of Holdenhurst Minor. You know him, of course?"

I replied that I knew him very well indeed.

"I would rather be at war with twenty brokers for a year," continued uncle Sam, "than talk with a parson for an hour. In a small company it is impossible to ignore an individual member of it, and I could never listen to anything from a parson without replying to it—except in church; and I have often been tempted to do so there. I am afraid I shocked your father somewhat at luncheon; though, goodness knows, I said nothing either untrue or unreasonable. I speak as I think, and hope always to do so. However, I intend to be as reserved as my nature will permit at dinner to-day."

This declaration was a distinct relief to me, though in no case should I have much feared a meeting between my uncle and the Rev. Evan Price.

The Vicar of Holdenhurst Minor was a youthful bachelor, and enjoyed an income of £90 a year. There being no vicarage in the parish, the reverend gentleman lodged with a farmer, whose two daughters made it the chief business of their lives to please him. In fact, the competition among the female community of Holdenhurst Minor and thereabouts for the smiles of the Rev. Evan Price was very keen, a condition of affairs to which the reverend gentleman owed many substantial benefits. Probably no man in England was better provided with slippers than the Rev. Evan Price; and there was a rumor that his name was recorded in the last will and testament of at least one wealthy old maid. The smallness of his income was balanced by his popularity, which was based upon his fine athletic appearance, his affable manner, his skill as a cricketer, and the brevity of his sermons. He had a great many friends and no enemies, and on less than a hundred a year, contrived to live better than many another man with an income ten times as large.

CHAPTER VII.
CONSTANCE MARSH.

The visit of my uncle and aunt to Holdenhurst was soon ended. Uncle Sam tried hard to induce my father and me to accompany him to London for a few weeks, but father would not consent to such an arrangement. Several farms on the estate had been for a long time without tenants, and we were working them ourselves by the aid of a steward. The first week of April had now arrived, and my father did not feel himself justified in leaving the place. He agreed, however, that I should go to London with my uncle and aunt and remain their guest for three weeks, it being further arranged that on the termination of my stay in town I was to take my father's place at Holdenhurst, while he, in his turn, visited his brother, that our interests in Suffolk might not be left entirely to the care of dependents.

The liberality of uncle Sam astonished everybody with whom he came into contact during his stay in Suffolk, and it would exceed the limits of this chapter to recite his benefactions, but it is essential to the purpose of these memoirs to refer to a few of the more remarkable.

In addition to clearing off the large mortgage upon the Holdenhurst estate he paid to the credit of my father's banking account no less a sum than £5000, "for present use," as he said. He advocated the laying waste of every farm in both the Holdenhursts and converting the entire estate into a large park. "That done," said he, "and the hall thoroughly repaired and partly refurbished, the place will be worth living in for six or eight weeks in each year."

To the first of these proposals my

to acquire more than a smattering of Latin, Greek and French, insufficient to enable me to read with interest a book in any of those languages. English I had mastered fairly well, and developed some facility in its composition; while for music it was acknowledged that I had more than ordinary ability. I was painfully conscious that my mental equipment was a very poor one, and wondered whether my uncle would keep much company during his stay in England, what sort of people his friends were, and in what manner they would regard a young gentleman of such slender attainments as mine.

Both my uncle and aunt endeavored to make me talk, but they were not very successful in their efforts, and little more was said before our carriage passed rapidly through Northgate street, Bury St. Edmund's, and dashed into the station yard there.

Uncle Sam was the first to alight. "See to your aunt and the luggage there, Ernest," he said, and then ran up the stairs three steps at a time.

"He is always like this when we start on a journey," observed aunt Gertrude, as I assisted her out of the carriage. "We have ten or twelve minutes to spare, and during that time he will despatch at least that number of telegrams. I have never known him to content himself so long without business as during his stay at your house."

The luggage had been labeled and put into the brake, my aunt and I were comfortably ensconced in opposite corners of the first-class compartment which had been specially reserved for us, and the train began to move out of the station before uncle Sam emerged from the telegraph office. But he was equal to the occasion. Jumping lightly into the carriage he shut the door with a slam, and seated himself as far from us as possible. Begging his wife to entertain me as well as she could, he produced a large pocketbook and pencil, and at once became engrossed in some study, nor did he again open his lips until we reached London.

The changeable weather—exhilarating sunshine alternating with gloomy clouds from which descended heavy showers of rain—interested my aunt, who for my edification compared the climates of England and North America as our train sped through the low-lying Essex meadows. Like most Americans who visit England she was uncomfortably affected by the chilly dampness of our climate, and visibly shivered, though she was enveloped in a thick wool rug. Though our acquaintance had been so brief, I had developed a very real regard for my youthful American aunt, whose kindly consideration and uniform gentleness excited my admiration. As I scrutinized her delicate features I noted their wistful expression, and experienced a feeling akin to pity for her—for I instinctively felt there could exist no bond of sympathy between this gentle lady and her husband.

No other part of England is so depressing as the horrid region between Romford and Liverpool street through which the Great Eastern Railway Company conveys its London-bound victims. Between those places the senses of sight, hearing and smell are grossly outraged, and when the unfortunate traveler finds himself once more on terra firma he staggers like one awakened from a nightmare, his limbs stiffened by the close packing, and his mind and stomach disgusted by the abominations he has seen and sniffed.

It was with great relief we alighted from the train. A splendid carriage awaited us, into which we at once entered, our luggage being piled upon a cab which was to follow. Dark clouds had gathered in all around, and the rain descended in torrents as we drove westward out of the city. At a few minutes past 5 p. m.—nearly four hours after we left Holdenhurst Hall—our carriage turned out of the main road into De Vere Gardens, Kensington, and drew up in front of my uncle's house there.

It was a large house, furnished as luxuriously as possible, illuminated throughout by electricity, though here and there was an oil lamp which shed a subdued light on the objects around. Everything in the place seemed absolutely new—as I have no doubt it was—and the best of its kind obtainable, the evidences of wealth on every hand contrasting strongly with my comfortable but unpretentious home in Suffolk.

The footman had just closed the door after admitting us, and I was devoutly hoping that I might neither see nor be seen by my aunt's sister before I had had an opportunity of making myself tolerably presentable—which could certainly not be the case with any one immediately after a seventy-five mile journey on the Great Eastern Railway—when the young lady of whom I was thinking tripped lightly down the stairs, and throwing her arms around my aunt, embraced her in a manner which drove me wild with envy. The next minute, however, Miss Marsh was herself seized by uncle Sam, who held her gently but with an iron grip while he gave her more kisses than I had presentence of mind to count. When at length he desisted, he pointed at me, saying, "There, Connie, my pet; I have brought you home the husband I promised you. What do you think of him? Looks innocent, don't he, Con?" Then, turning to his wife, "Suffolk boys make the best husbands in the world, eh, Gertrude?"

To be continued.

"I am glad," said Willie's mamma proudly, "to hear that my little boy does not apologize rather than fight."

"Sure," replied Willie. "The other fellow was a good deal bigger than me."

AGRICULTURAL.

Good Orchard Treatment.

In central New York there is a fourteen-year-old orchard that has always been managed on an exceedingly sensible and profitable plan. The branches are trained to the spreading habit which opens the tree to the air and sun. For about eight years the orchard was plowed and planted to crops, which require thorough cultivation like corn, beans and potatoes. Then it was seeded down with alfalfa and inoculated. This developed a very thick sod which is cut three times a year for hay. This hay is fed to stock and then the manure is all hauled back again and spread around the trees. Under this system the orchard has made a very remarkable growth.

Manure For Clover Lands.

Considerable has been written in this department in favor of spreading the manure on the farm during the winter as fast as it is made, provided the weather will permit. Undoubtedly this method of disposing of the manure for the benefit of the crop applies to any soil that is reasonably level, but its good effects are more noticeable on clay lands than elsewhere in the experience of the writer. On every open day during the winter the manure is carried from the barn and put on the clover until such fields have received all needed.

The result is that the clover gets an early start and when it is to be plowed under for the corn crop, we follow clover with corn in the plan of rotation, it is two feet high and all that it has gained from the manure is turned back to the soil for the benefit of the succeeding crop. This is sensible argument, is it not? Try it and see how much greater profit is made from the manure supply.

Good Pruning.

Luther Burbank, writing in Rural New Yorker, says that every experienced nurseryman trims all the small side roots off his nursery stock before planting. This is a universal custom, and in my experiments I have found that seedlings and very young trees should always be treated in this way under all circumstances. A young seedling tree which has had its roots cut off to within a few inches of the collar, and the top almost wholly removed, will in all cases make a far better grower than the one planted with all its roots, even if the top should be removed. Of course, it is necessary to remove the top in proportion to the amount of roots removed, and strange as it may seem, it is especially necessary to prune the roots short when they are to be planted on land that has little moisture near the surface. For trees having many side roots divide their forces in starting in all directions. Instead of making a good, substantial main taproot, which the closely pruned seedling will always proceed to do. Though of universal application, these facts are especially applicable to dry climates like California and Texas.

A One Horse Drag.

At this season of the year, when many farmers put in some time in repairing and overhauling farm machines and conveniences and in figuring on new ones, it will be worth while to consider the following from Orange Judge Farmer:

Of the many tools introduced for pulverizing the soil none is cheaper and less used than the drag. Some farmers term it "block," "lever" or "cloud masher." Its use can begin with a two or three horse size immediately after breaking, when it levels the land, so tooth or disk harrow can do most

due to water absorbed from the air by the soil, just as happens with quicklime or salt. If the room is closed and water boiled on the stove until the room is filled with vapor, the soil in the pot may gain an increase in weight. This is called the hygroscopic moisture of the soil, deriving its name from having come from a vaporous condition in the air, where its amount can only be measured by means of an instrument known as a hygroscope. This hygroscopic moisture enters into the very fibre of the soil particles, rather than attaching itself merely to their surfaces as does capillary moisture. If a fine spray is now thrown on the soil in the pot the tiny drops would be eagerly seized by the small particles of soil, for while the soil cannot gather and condense more of the vapor of water from the air, and associate it with its own particles, it at once shows a strong attraction for water in the liquid form. The water and the surface particles seem to desire the closest touch with each other, and as water is a mobile fluid, it spreads out over the surfaces of the minute soil particles, enters into the pores within the particles and fills the capillary spaces between them.

A hard rain packs the ground, the moisture, however, going into the ground that has been loosened instead of flowing away. Water will evaporate from the ground during warm, dry days, and as the moisture from the surface is lost that from below rises by capillary attraction to take its place. Millions of small tubes are formed, through which the water is drawn upward, and to prevent the loss the tubes should be broken off or sealed at the top. This is done when the surface soil is stirred to the depth of an inch, the dry earth serving as a blanket to keep the moisture in the soil. If a shower comes and again dampens the surface the stirring of the soil should be repeated.—Philadelphia Record.

Baked Bluefish.

Clean, wash and dry the fish; mix half pint bread crumbs with two tablespoonfuls melted butter, add half teaspoonful salt, a speck of pepper, and stuff the fish; then put it in a baking pan; baste with melted butter and add half cupful boiling water; dust the fish thickly and bake in a quick oven for three-quarters of an hour, basting several times; serve with tomato sauce and potato balls.

Asparagus Soup.

Boil two bunches fresh, tender asparagus in water with one slice of onion and one tablespoonful salt thirty minutes; throw away the onion; remove the asparagus and cut off the tender part and pound to a paste with a little water; add to it a lump of butter rolled in flour and one-half teaspoonful sugar; mix over the fire until it melts; now add all to the boiling water in which the asparagus was cooked; then beat the yolk of an egg in half a pint of cream or milk and add to soup; season with salt and pepper, and as soon as it comes to boiling point strain and serve; cut one stalk of asparagus in thin slices and add the last thing.

Chop Suet.

Bone a small chicken and cut the meat into half-inch strips; peel and slice an onion; soak a dozen mushrooms in cold water a few minutes, then drain; cut up a stalk of celery and six Chinese potatoes, washing them well first; prepare the rice by putting a cupful into boiling salted water, and when the grains are soft drain the water off and set the saucepan in the oven to dry the rice; cook the chicken in a big spoonful of hot butter well done, but not dry; add the sliced onion and fry to a nice brown; add the mushrooms and a small cupful of Chinese sauce (this sauce takes the place of salt); add a cup of boiling water and cook fifteen minutes; stir in the celery and cook ten minutes; add the potatoes and cook three minutes longer; rub a spoonful of flour smooth in a little cold water and add to chicken; boil up once well and serve with the hot rice.

HINTS FOR THE HOUSEKEEPER.

Cut-steel buttons and buckles may be polished with powdered pumice stone slightly moistened and applied with a soft brush or cloth.

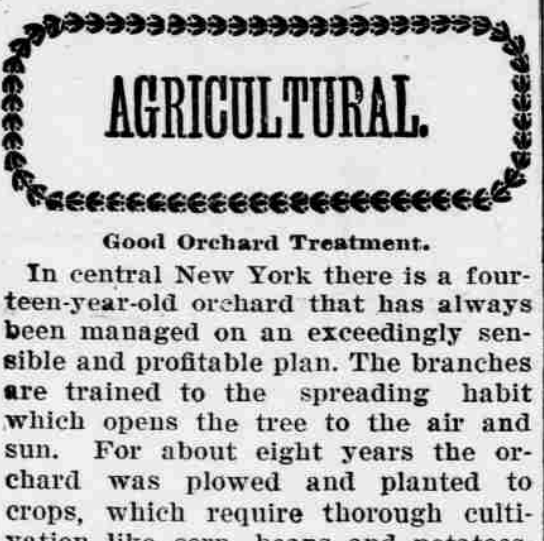
To blacken tan leather boots and shoes, rub every part of the boots well with a juicy potato cut in thick slices, and when dry, clean in the usual way with blacking, taking care to put the blacking well on.

To fill cracks in plaster, mix plaster of paris with vinegar instead of water and it will not "set" for twenty or thirty minutes. Push it into the cracks and smooth off evenly with a table knife.—What to Eat.

Milk can be sterilized at home. Absolutely clean bottles are necessary. Soak them in soda and hot water before using, and seal just before the milk is put into them. The milk should be perfectly fresh. Fill the bottles, cork them tight with anti-septic cotton, lay them in cold water, seal slowly to the boiling point, boil for an hour and let them cool in the water. Do not uncork until the milk is to be used.

Boston baked beans are now served as a salad. The quantity of oil to be used depends on the quantity of pork used in cooking the beans, and for sedentary people it is well to omit the pork. In this case three or four tablespoonfuls of oil may be used for a pint of beans. Stir into it half a teaspoonful of paprika, a few drops of onion juice and two tablespoonfuls of vinegar. Mix this through the beans and turn them onto the serving dish. Cover and let them stand half an hour in a cool place. The salad may be garnished with pickles and slices of your cucumber pickles, and a teaspoonful of finely cut chives may be added if desired.

It is almost time to begin to think of moths, for the time to remember them is before the first one appears. With these pests prevention is not only better than cure, but it is absolutely essential. Moth balls, tar paper, the most expensive cedar chests, are useless after one wretched insect has found a lodging in a garment. Therefore, before the moths appear, take the necessary precautions. Beat and brush fur and woollens, not overlooking a single pocket or fold, and, when perfectly certain that not a moth or an egg is there, pack the garments away where moths cannot reach them. That is the whole secret. Furs should be sent to cold storage, which is safe and cheap. As a matter of precaution, it is well to reserve one closet, which line with tar paper, covering the cracks around the door and stuffing up the keyhole. Hang or lay away winter garments in here, and enjoy an additional feeling of security.



HOMEMADE ONE HORSE DRAG.

through work, and this same form does admirably preceding grain planting of all types. But it is the one horse style used immediately after the cultivator in growing crops where the nicety of work proves it one of the most profitable tools.

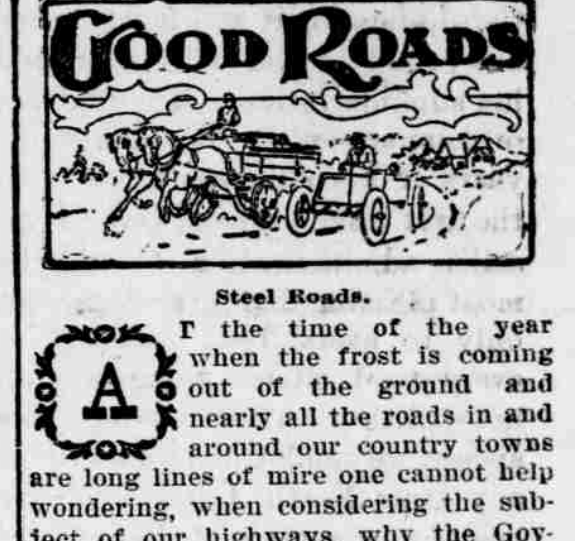
In early cultivation it gently kills the plants, doing away with an enormous amount of hand work, and leaves the surface in its natural level condition, insuring uniformity of depth of future cultivations. During dry periods it is invaluable. All other tools loosen the surface, while the block on previously well fined land packs and jars the earth to the depth cultivated, retarding evaporation without injuring root disruption. A one horse drag similar to that shown in the above cut can be made by any one at very small cost. It may be modified or improved to suit one's fancy.—Connecticut Farmer.

Moisture in the Soil.

The relations of oil and water to the soil may be better understood by some easily made experiments, which any one can undertake. If a pot, plain or any suitable vessel is filled with a certain weight (say, 100 pounds) of perfectly dry soil (dried in an oven), the heat of course, changes the soil moisture into vapor and drives it off into the air. If this dry soil is weighed several days later it will be found a few pounds heavier, the increase being



FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.



GOOD ROADS.

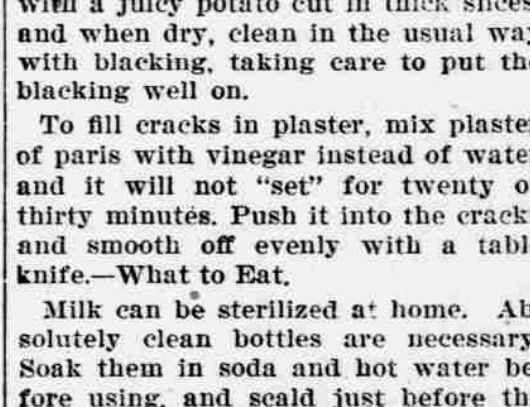
Steel Roads.
The time of the year when the frost is coming out of the ground and nearly all the roads in and around our country towns are long lines of mire one cannot help wondering, when considering the subject of our highways, why the Government is not quicker to respond to the appeals for aid in their improvement, and why it does not push the adoption of a system of roads that will last for long periods with but slight expenditure for repairs.

Nearly seven years ago the office of Road Inquiries of the Department of Agriculture conducted experiments with steel rails for use on country roads, and made arrangements with a large steel works for the rolling of suitable rails for this purpose. At that time the eight-inch rails for a mile of steel roadway weighing about 150 tons, could be purchased for about \$3500, and the price has not increased much since. A sample steel road two miles in length between Valencia and Grao, Spain, had then been in use for five years under exceedingly heavy traffic, and had shown splendid results; yet the United States did not, and has not as yet, profited by this experiment in an ordinarily unprofitable foreign country, and we have to possess save the short section in Murray street, New York, laid about a year and a half ago. As for the foreign example mentioned, during the time it has been in use, the annual cost of maintaining the roadbed has been \$380, against \$5470 yearly expended to keep the flint stone road which preceded it in repair. The average traffic over this road is 32000 vehicles per day. This example of a steel road and its lasting qualities is not the only one abroad, but it is the most notable.

But aside from the economy of keeping it in repair, the greatest advantage that it offers is the reduction in power required to haul loads over it. Tests have shown that while it requires five times as much power to pull a given load on a loose gravel or dirt road as it does over good macadam, and ten times as much power to pull the same load through loose sand or mud, on steel rails only one-sixth as much power is needed as on macadam. This great reduction in power, and consequent diminishment of wear and tear on draft horses, is all the more valuable in that it is permanent and lasts throughout all seasons; so that the farmer is not obliged to figure on a greater loss of time and fatigue of his horses at one season of the year than at another. If self-propelled vehicles are considered, these need not be nearly so powerful as they would otherwise have to be, and they can be operated with great economy.

The importance of a special track for self-propelled vehicles was recognized in the early days of the locomotive. Such a track was built and improved until the steel railway track of to-day was finally developed. Now that the self-propelled vehicle has again come on the scene in the form of the automobile, it has drawn attention to the needs of good roads for all vehicular traffic, since the increase in power needed to pull a machine through the mire can no longer be "whipped out of a horse," but must be drawn from a large reserve, and, in the case of the electric automobile, can be accurately measured on every machine. Thus when it is brought directly to one's notice, and the total mileage of the machine is greatly reduced because of it, and the owner sees his expense account rapidly rising, and demands a better highway. This demand is soon to be fulfilled by private corporations, which have recognized it, and have devised systems of steel roads that can be built at no greater cost than a macadam road, and maintained at far less expense. It is to be hoped that the supervisors of roads in the various States will investigate the steel roads more thoroughly, and that trial sections may be built for the purpose of comparison with the best macadam roads.—Scientific American.

HALTER FOR UNRULY HOGS.



HALTER FOR UNRULY HOGS.

a ring in the long looped piece, and through this slip another rope also looped so as to come over his neck, as shown in the cut. This rope may be heavier than the first one, and if the animal is unruly and strong the end which is shown over the back of the hog extending to the hand of the one who is driving it, may be slipped over his rump and into the lower loop and tied, leaving the long loop in the driver's hands for better control. The illustrations show clearly how the contrivance is constructed.—Indianapolis News.

DAIRY WISDOM.

Results simply show what kind of a man is behind the cow—so look out. Give once or twice each week a few apples, potatoes or carrots to give variety. Watch the bowels and if they are constipated give a little more linseed meal.

COVS SHOULD BE FED AND MILKED AT THE SAME TIME EACH DAY AND IN THE SAME ORDER.

The food of heifers must be such that it will nourish all parts of the body. They may manage to live on hay, but they will be stunted in size and will never equal their dams, though the sire may be of a line of the best butter makers. Besides that, their constitutions will be weakened, and they will be subject to every epidemic that comes around.

Stretch a wire the whole length of the stable behind the cows. Attach a snap with a ring on this wire and hang the lantern in the snap. It can then be pushed along where the most light is needed. A similar wire should be placed in front of the cows. A lantern should never be placed on the floor. If accidentally overturned a disastrous fire is the inevitable result.

Too much stress cannot be put upon the manner in which cows are treated in the stables. A cow soon comes to like, or dislike, a person who cares for her, according to the way in which she is handled. For your cows, talk to them, calling them by name. They soon learn to come at call and to expect a pat or a gentle stroke. Good feed will be lost on a cow that is cruelly or carelessly treated. A difference of twenty-five per cent. in produce has often been known to take place between cows that were equally good. They were fed the same, but treated differently.

Danish Apartment Hotel.

In Copenhagen an apartment house has been opened containing twenty-five suites of four rooms each. There is only one kitchen and meals are sent up by the dumb waiters. The cost of a suite, with meals and care of the rooms, is about \$225 a person a year.

Good Roads Getting Into Politics.

The contest for nomination to Congress between Lieutenant Hobson, the hero of the attempt to bottle up Corporal's fleet at Santiago, and Representative Bankhead, of Alabama, has attracted wide attention. But it is not generally known that the question of National aid to road improvement was one of the leading issues in the campaign. Lieutenant Hobson strongly opposed the measure as undemocratic and unconstitutional, while he talked in favor of great appropriations for the navy. Mr. Bankhead, on the other hand, argued that to aid the States in improving their roads would be a better and wiser use of the National revenues. This argument took with the voters, and Mr. Bankhead won the nomination. The Pennsylvania State Republican Convention has declared in favor of the National aid proposition; also the Republican State convention in Tennessee.

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