

THE OLD STONE HOUSE.

## MY FARM IN SWITZERLAND.

**J**UNE 10.—Went out to the farm—a stiff walk of several miles.

Wondered all the way out why my American friends do not do as M— does, why they do not stop trying to get rich, and why they do not study economy and contentment more.

I have read somewhere that America is twenty-eight hundred millions of dollars poorer than it was five short years ago, and that millions and millions of American capital is invested provisionally only. Why do not hundreds of these men, who have saved wrecks from their fortunes, or who have got a little money, by much risk and hard work, stop?

Why do not they do what M— does? I presume most of them think they can not afford it—can not stop on twenty thousand dollars. M— did, and lives well, and risks nothing.

I am going to note down, here and there, *how* he does it, only to convince myself that a man who has twenty thousand dollars has enough.

M— was a sort of a city man—bought and sold silks; but markets cutting up

all sorts of capers, he stopped silk, and bought a farm—scarcely a farm either—only ten acres; but that is two acres above the average-sized farm in the canton. Four acres of M—'s farm are in grapes, three acres in grass and fruit trees, and the rest in garden ground. The whole cost him fifteen thousand dollars, with a big stone house included. This was cheap, but the house, though very big, is a little out of style, and was thrown in, as it were. M— made some changes, at small expense, and the house looks half as fine now as a castle. He rented the upper floors for a time, and that almost paid for the alterations.

He has, besides his farm and its equipments, five thousand dollars in bonds of the state. Interest is low, but the principal is secure. This difference in interest is usually, I believe, an insurance on security. As grape land here is valued at one thousand six hundred dollars an acre, and is reckoned to produce twenty per cent. on the investment, M—'s grapes alone will bring him, next October, one thousand two hundred dollars cash. In-

terest on bonds will add two hundred and fifty dollars to it.

I call M——'s farm *my farm* so often, I believe half my American friends who visit me in town really think I am in the business, and imagine they see the hay seeds in my hair.

June 15.—The first grass cutting is over. It is a moist climate here, and grass grows early. Some of the neighbors cut grass on May-day. There are four mowings a year. Now has commenced that awful nuisance about Swiss farming, the *fertilizing*. Such outrageous and constant smells crossing every field and garden, and penetrating every house, never were conceived outside of Switzerland. The manure is put on in liquid form, and everybody passing within a mile holds his nose and stops breathing. On this one subject the Swiss are crazy. On all others they pass. It is humiliating to see women compelled to carry the liquid manure to the fields in great wooden vessels on their backs.

The pear-trees are in full blossom, and the meadows are full of them. Growing the orchards in grass is not thought detrimental, and M—— does just as his neighbors do in almost everything. He is not much of a farmer himself, but he employs a man who *is*, pays fifteen dollars a month, with board, and hires additional help here and there as is needed. He must pay these additional hands fifty cents a day, and give them two bottles of wine each and a little bread for lunch every morning at nine and afternoon at four. They board at home. When he hires a woman, he pays her thirty cents a day and board.

M—— keeps two cows, and they work at the wagon enough to pay for keeping them, even if he had to buy the feed, which he now raises. It seems impossible that the milk and butter should be quite so good when the cows work, but the farmers all say, "*Es macht nichts.*"

The evening milk is skimmed and mixed with the unskimmed morning's milk, and is sold at four cents a litre. The evening cream is made into butter, and M—— sells about a hundred dollars' worth of milk and butter in the year. He feeds these cows on grass and yellow beets, which he grows himself, and a little bran.

Like his neighbors, he keeps his cows most of the time chained up in low, unventilated stone stalls, where the heat in summer is fearful. The only reason for this

eternal roasting of the cows that I hear is that it saves food. It may be. It seems inhuman treatment, however.

Milk peddlers, with their dog-carts, call at the farm-houses every morning, and whenever M—— wishes to he can dispose of a part of his mixed skimmed and unskimmed milk.

June 20.—The blossoms are going, and the vineyards are full of men and women digging up the ground with great hoes with prongs like pitchforks. There could be no greater scandal here than weeds in a vineyard. There are no fences usually, and so there is no getting out of order of that kind. The stone walls encircling some of the little farms and vineyards last centuries without repair.

Some of the vineyards near my farm are eight hundred years old. It seems impossible. The great beam, made of a whole oak-tree, in M——'s wine-press bears the date of the sixteenth century. How many grapes that old beam has pressed into wine in its centuries!

The big house is as old as the wine-press. It has a vaulted cellar twenty-five feet high, and rows of wine-casks stand there thirty feet in circumference. The best rooms in the house are wainscoted in old oak. This was a monks' cloister once.

What merry old times they had in these oaken rooms, with the big wine-press in the barn!

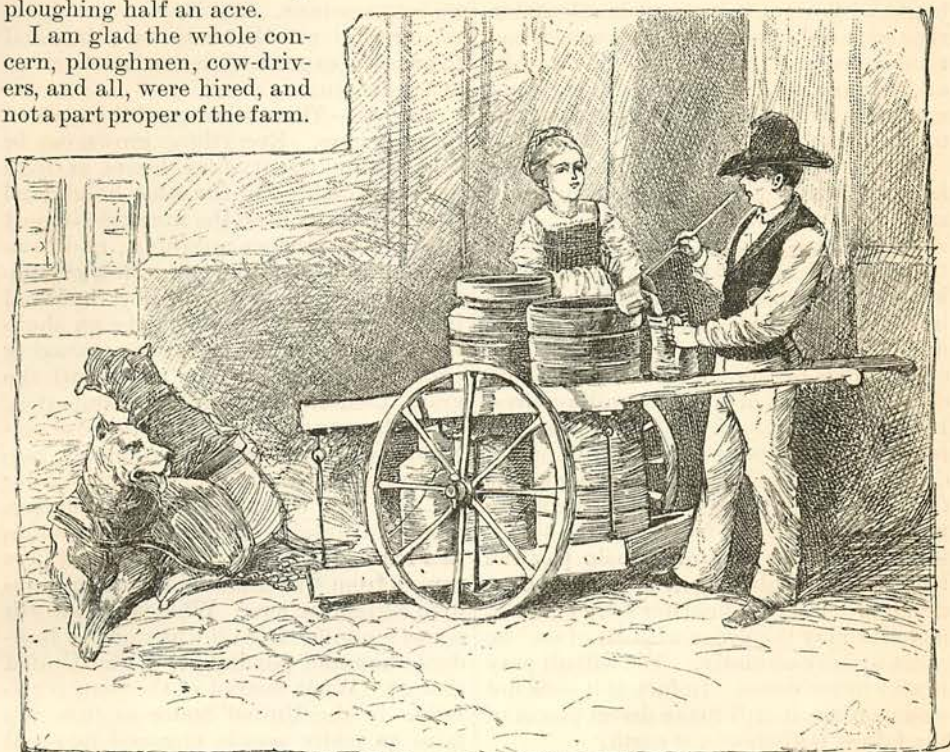
The stone walls of the house are five feet thick. It would cost a fortune to build such a house now. My friend got it for a song, as it were.

June 30.—I have wondered if there are such awkward ways of doing things outside of Egypt as are practiced here. The farming implements would be laughable if they were not monstrous. Tubal-Cain certainly made better-formed scythes than are used here. The axes are simply long sharp wedges with a hole near the top, and a short, straight stick in the hole for a handle. Hay forks are big and awkward, and twice as heavy as our stable forks. Grain is oftener threshed with the old-fashioned flail than otherwise. I wonder they do not tramp it out with oxen. It would be a *slower* process, and how to be slow is made a special study here. The ploughs are the climax of agricultural monstrosities. They are great cumbersome things, made almost wholly of wood, with the beam mounted on two wooden wheels big enough for coal carts.

My friend used just such a plough yesterday on our farm. I half deny ownership now, when I think of it. It was pulled by six cows. Two men were driving the cows, and two men were holding the plough up. I followed and looked on. They were half a day ploughing half an acre.

I am glad the whole concern, ploughmen, cow-drivers, and all, were hired, and not a part proper of the farm.

and cultivation, such as is bestowed only on hot-houses in America, is common here to every farm. Not one foot of ground is left uncared for. It may take a good deal of time, with such slow hands, to do it, but it is done. Not a chip, not a straw, is



THE MILKMAN.

I sat on a stone wall for half an hour and reflected whether it were possible Americans could not make small special farming profitable, with their soil and complete implements for farming, in the face of the fact that these people not only make a living, but save money, on a poor soil, and with the old-fashioned tools of Egypt to work it.

I am certain the whole secret lies in economy; in the saving of a hundred little things that shall outbalance even the waste of these awkward implements and these slow methods. There will not a blade of grass be seen among the vines here, nor a weed on the farm. There will not be a twig of wood left to rot, or a potato undug. A gentleman's private garden could not be cleaner or better kept than is the whole farm in Switzerland,

wasted. "We put this little thing and that little thing together," said my friend, "and at the end of the year it makes a good deal." One can not afford waste or bad farming on land at five or six or ten hundred dollars an acre and more.

1st July.—The weather is getting warm. We want to go out on the lake-side somewhere. M— offers me a floor of his wainscoted rooms at forty dollars a month. Why should we not go? The furniture in the rooms is not the latest Paris pattern, but, like the house, it is old and strong. We will go out, and then the farm will seem mine more than ever.

What idyllic farming this is—setting the work aside; *that* the hands must do, if my friend does not. The ten acres are beautifully situated. Four acres of vines slope down toward a beautiful lake; be-

low this a strip of meadow washed by the blue water. Back of the house, and above it, more vines; and farther up, a dark forest of pines. To the right, in the distance, a white city; to the left, the snow-capped Glernisch Alps. The house is surrounded by beautiful shrubs, shade trees, and banks of flowers. In front is a long terrace with an awning of broad-armed castanea-trees, and to the left of this a white and narrow road, lined with evergreens, mountain-ash, and acacia-trees, curves up to the house.

Here it is that my friend lives, and farms, and has given up planning to be rich.

July 10.—We are snugly settled on "my farm." I am still anxious to see if M— really does make more than a bare living on his farm. He tells me of some neighbors who have done well at it, and of hundreds of Frenchmen who wouldn't change that sort of life to be millionaires. I don't wonder. If my friend can just pay expenses, live well, and keep out of debt, he ought to be happy in a home like this. Just now there is not much coming in, and I notice my friend wishes his interest were sent to him to help pay the hands. He is thinking about the *phylloxera*, too. "If that monster were to come, it would play the deuce with all of us," he exclaims, occasionally. We will all pray it may never come. In fact, if it does not stop coming, it will make desert places of the fairest regions of the earth.

The bank had to be drawn on to meet the taxes. The farm is valued at fifteen thousand dollars, and the taxes amount to two hundred dollars. The worms ate up the cabbage—a thousand heads, worth from five to ten cents each; and one of the cows got crippled, and had to be killed. It will cost one hundred and twenty-five dollars to replace her. Many little items of income that my friend had counted on have already disappeared in fine dust. The season was wet, and many things failed. The big onion bed, however, has been sold, and will bring one hundred dollars, and the potatoes that my friend can spare are estimated at another hundred dollars. If apples and pears only turn out well—but they will not.

My friend works at pruning and other light farm duty about half the time, just enough for healthful exercise, and to enable him to keep track of things. His hired hands would do better were he to

work more; but then he would be a common farm hand himself, and that he will not. He promises the gardener a cask of wine extra to push things a little, and they are pushed.

Farming out here is not so wonderfully different from living in town. We lack no conveniences. The little steamer passes our station a dozen times a day, and the donkey express, with the dwarf driver, every evening.

July 20.—There is one good thing about farming here. Everything grown can be sold within twenty-four hours, at high price, for cash. On the other hand, land is so dreadfully dear, the investment must be large to produce anything; and competition is lively here too. In a population of two hundred and fifty thousand in the canton, there are thirty-six thousand holders of little farms averaging eight acres apiece. As nearly all the grain used in the country is imported, these thousands of little farms are devoted almost exclusively to producing garden vegetables, wine, and fruit. After all, has the Swiss or the Frenchman much advantage over the American in this managing small places? Land here ranges from five hundred to sixteen hundred dollars an acre. What is land worth six to ten miles from towns under a hundred thousand population in the United States? What district of the same population in the United States as this contains as many people engaged in small farming? It is not a question of acres, but of cultivation, and of amounts produced—of pounds, and bushels, and hundredweights.

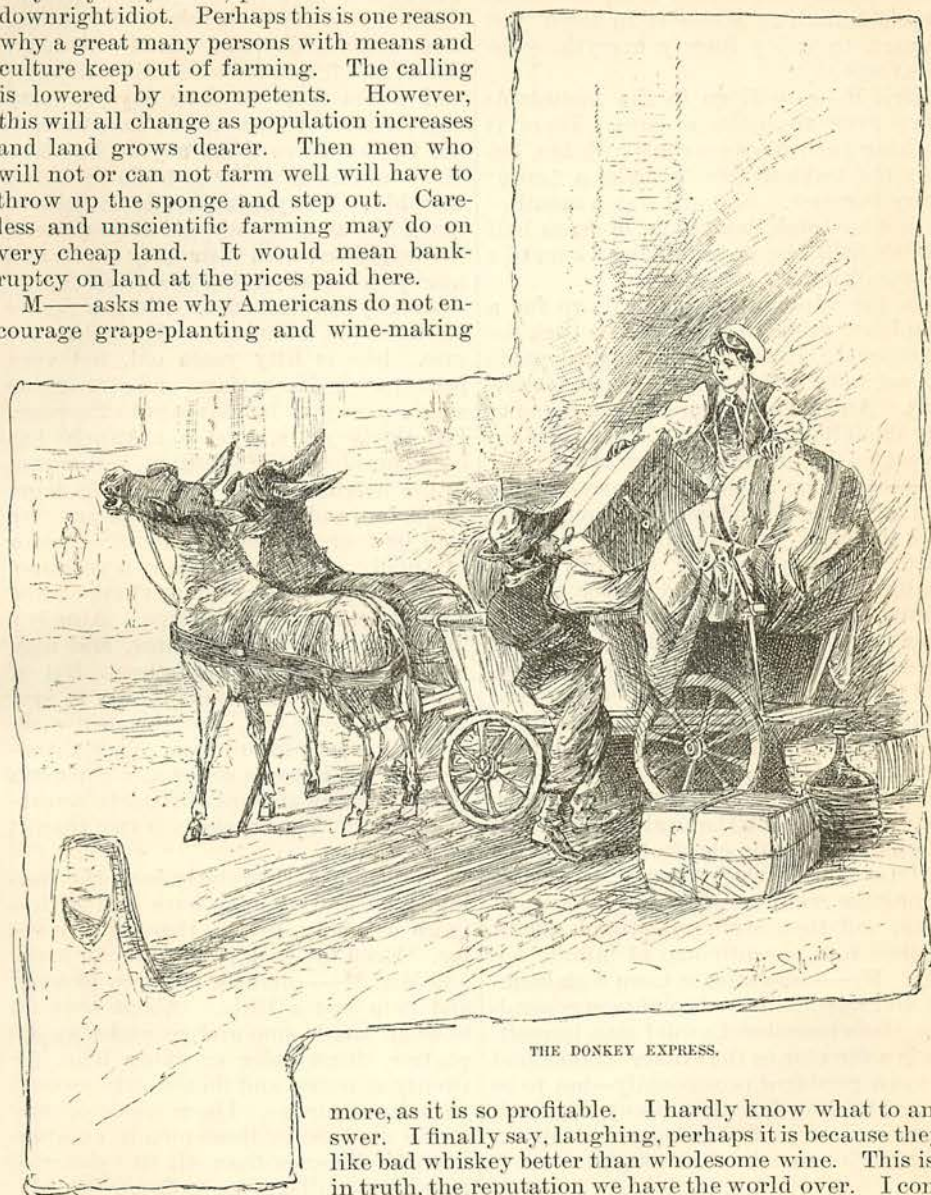
One question, anyway, is settled here, viz., it pays better to cultivate tiny little farms *well* than to *half-cultivate* hundreds of broad acres. Suppose that our American farmers were to *sell* one-half their land, and *cultivate* the rest?

I wonder why the American agricultural colleges are not better supported? Every American thinks himself capable of farming. "Don't need to know anything to farm in America." This sentiment lowers the calling with them. In Europe, farming is a science. Farmers know the chemistry of things, and the philosophy of some things too.

M— tells me his greatest pleasure is to study farm books evenings; says he never read a book on drainage, bee-culture, apple-growing, crop rotation, ferti-

lizing, vine-culture, etc., that did not repay him its price a hundredfold. I find there are fewer of these books in Europe than in America. They are *studied* here, however. There, they are not: they are only *bought*. That is the difference. Scientific and practical farming are combined here. There, science is laughed at. Anybody may farm, provided he is not a downright idiot. Perhaps this is one reason why a great many persons with means and culture keep out of farming. The calling is lowered by incompetents. However, this will all change as population increases and land grows dearer. Then men who will not or can not farm well will have to throw up the sponge and step out. Careless and unscientific farming may do on very cheap land. It would mean bankruptcy on land at the prices paid here.

M— asks me why Americans do not encourage grape-planting and wine-making



THE DONKEY EXPRESS.

more, as it is so profitable. I hardly know what to answer. I finally say, laughing, perhaps it is because they like bad whiskey better than wholesome wine. This is, in truth, the reputation we have the world over. I continue to explain to M— that probably the real reason

is to be found in the fact that drunkenness has alarmed Americans, and that the radical reformers and prohibitionists refuse to see any difference between pure wines in moderation and extravagant use of alcohol. They want to "go to the root," they say, and probably will by their zeal defeat their own wishes. M— laughed very heartily when I told him that in some towns of the United States it was neither lawful nor respectable to drink beer on the Sabbath-day, or any other day. Maintaining this to be a sober fact, injured my character for veracity with my friend, I am afraid.

M— keeps one good horse, and a little closed carriage that contains seats for four, and can be opened out like a barouche for fair weather. It is very convenient. The whole family drove into town to the circus last night. M— is in town just enough to enjoy hugely everything he sees there.

Mrs. M— will go to the mountains next week to make a cure. There is nothing particularly wrong with her, but it is the fashion here to make a "cure" every summer. She will stay a month.

Her husband, though out-of-doors half his life, will also go and make a cure of a couple of weeks.

In the winter, too, they will go for a couple of weeks to Paris, but be back for Christmas. It would be an unpardonable sin not to be with one's family on Christmas. And then they must be at home to pay the bills on New-Year. All bills are presented during the last week of the year. M— tells me he does not have half the anxieties now he had when he bought and sold silk, and yet does not work half as hard. He sleeps better, and has better health. Formerly a bad rumor on the Bourse kept him awake till midnight. Now he sleeps sweetly while his vines are growing. He has few risks. If the vines, and the bees, and the onions, and apples, and grass, *all* fail, he still has his *farm* safe. That can not fail, or burn up, or run away, or be stolen.

I find he works more than I thought he did. He is up with the swallows, and that is what makes his cheeks so red. Two half-days in the week, though, he spends among the reading-rooms and libraries in town, and then strangers would almost suppose him a gentleman of infinite leisure. M— associates in town with bankers and merchants and solid men generally. He is considered a solid man himself. He is a director in the village schools, and is town president occasionally—not to be in public life, but that occupying such posts is a duty of the competent citizen here. They must not be sought.

M— has a boy ten, and a girl eleven years old. They both attend the higher schools in town, and go in every morning on the steamer. The boy wants to be a teacher of chemistry, he says, and he may be it. The girl—her destiny is probably to get married. Both are bright, comfortably dressed little people. It costs M—

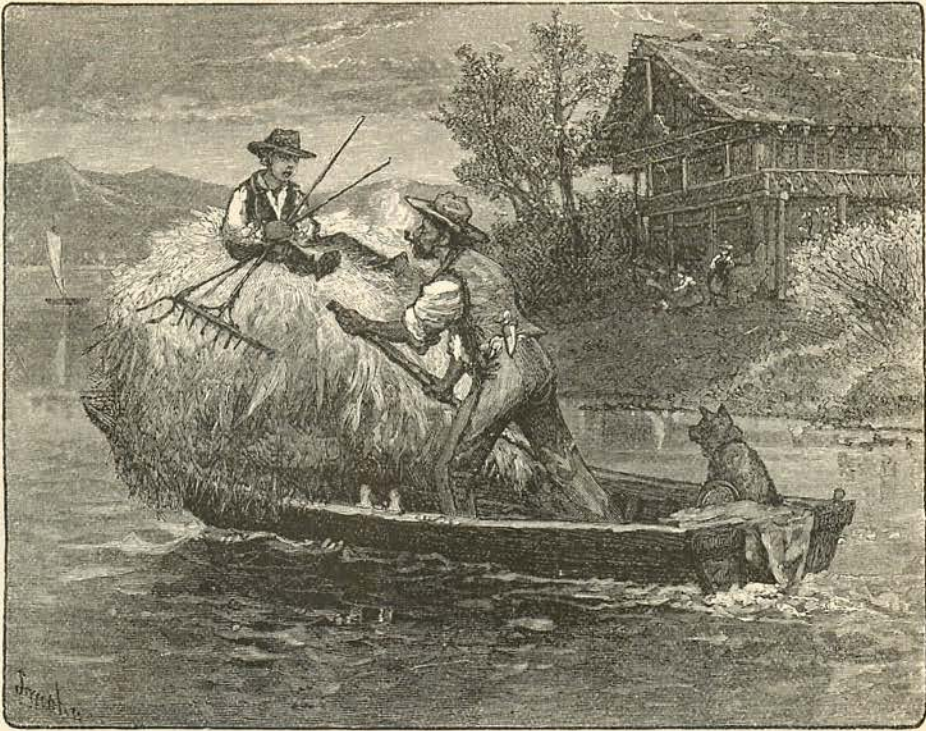
for their clothing and schooling about two hundred dollars per year.

Mrs. M— keeps a stout maid-of-all-work at one dollar per week, and has a seamstress come to the house twice or thrice a year for a fortnight, paying her forty cents a day and board. Annely, the *Waschfrau*, comes monthly usually, and works three or four days, at forty cents a day. It is a custom here to wash but two or three times a year, but Mrs. M— evades it so far as to do the thing monthly. The yards then do not look so much like an army hospital as do those of the neighbors, with their forty sheets and ninety shirts whitening the whole farm.

Annely is a character. She is a raging Methodist, in a land where Methodists are rare. She is fifty years old, not very pretty, works like a slave, and gives every single penny of her savings to the poor. For thirty years, good old Annely has been considered the saintliest, best person in the neighborhood. She can do more work, too, and do it better, than any two men or four women I know of. Honor to Annely. Many and many a year ago, when Annely was a young village belle, it may be, the tempter came. Annely's little baby is a big boy now, and may never ask who was his father. But of his mother—ah! it's enough only to say, "I am Annely's boy," and the good wishes of everybody follow him. Is it a wonder that good people sometimes slip extra francs into the amount of Annely's washing wages? The world is better than it seems.

*August 10.*—Everybody is at the hay-ing, men and women, boys and girls—twice as many, too, as there is any use for. Even the cook is out, rake in hand, and Mrs. M— and the children look on, and help just a little. About once an hour all hands stop and go under an apple-tree, drink cider or cheap wine for twenty minutes, and then slowly proceed with the windrows. I have seen more hay put in the barn by three men in an afternoon in America than all this dozen of picnickers will get in to-day. It's fun, nevertheless. The only wonder is, how it pays to devote so much time and cider and wine and coarse bread to the few small wagon-loads they will harvest. Hay is very dear, however.

Of wheat, there is almost none—only just patches enough of it to make the green fields picturesque. Switzerland



IN HAYING-TIME.

imports nearly all of her breadstuffs, and so there is no wheat harvest, except as the men and women cut the little patches mentioned with hand-sickles.

M— was telling me to-day that, with all the slow way of doing things, grass-growing is very profitable, and that there can be more money made with grass, with dairies, with pear-growing, and even with vegetables, than with grapes. He prefers grapes, however, as he thinks it a "nicer" kind of farming. Besides, if he can not sell his wine this year, it is all the better and the dearer next. It bears better interest by keeping than his five per cent. bonds do.

Saw them bringing some hay over the lake in boats. It was a pretty scene, just in the twilight. Everything about farm life on the Continent seems picturesque. They seem to study novel ways of doing things, and almost every hut, or house, or barn, or bridge, seems built with an eye to pretty effect. In America this is usually left out of the undertaking entirely. A correspondent of a Berlin paper wrote once from Cincinnati: "When you have seen one town in America, you have seen all; one farm, all farms; one village, all

villages. They are just alike. Only the people differ, and they very little."

*October 1.*—The last grass is being mown, and the pears are being taken from the trees. It is the fourth mowing.

M— has some seventy-five pear-trees crowded into his little farm, and a few apples. He will have about what apples the family can use, but none to sell. Both apples and pears have done poorly. Still, he will make the pears into cider, and will sell it before Christmas for about two hundred dollars. The grass under the trees is good, and he will have to buy little or no hay for his horse and two cows this winter.

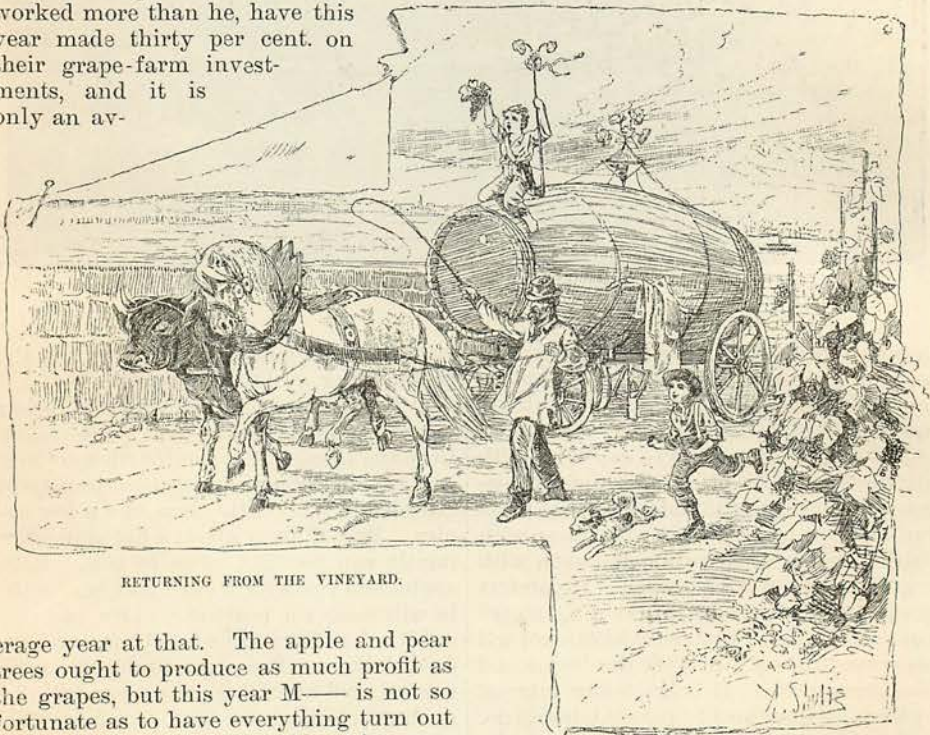
*October 10.*—A half-dozen neighbors are on the farm, and the grape-cutting has commenced. There is any amount of sport on the occasion. As soon as the cutting is done, there will be a party and a dance in the barn. We are invited to take part, and shall certainly do so. Some of the peasants will come masked, and there will be no sleeping that night within a mile of "my farm." A few grapes have been cut by neighbors already, and the wagons go by with the queer long

casks on top filled with new wine. The bung-holes of the casks are filled with bouquets of roses—a gift to Bacchus. I saw one wine wagon with a nearly naked little boy astride the cask, a Bacchus himself, with coal-black eyes and laughing locks.

M— now calculates on the profits of the year's farming. His four acres of grapes have produced twenty saum each of decent Swiss wine; value by spring will be fifteen dollars and twenty-five cents per saum, or about one thousand two hundred and twenty dollars, equalling twenty per cent. on the investment, counting the grape land to be worth one thousand six hundred dollars per acre. Some of M—'s neighbors, who have worked more than he, have this year made thirty per cent. on their grape-farm investments, and it is only an av-

EXPENSES.	
Taxes .....	\$200
Servant .....	60
Gardener .....	180
Extra help—washer-woman, seamstress, and extra hand occasionally .....	100
Schooling and clothing of the two children ..	200
Charity .....	50
Excursions .....	100
Clothing of two persons .....	200
Groceries .....	50
Meat and bread .....	200
Books, amusements, etc. ....	50
Total expenses .....	<u>\$1390</u>
Total income .....	\$2070
Total expenses .....	1390
Difference .....	<u>\$680</u>

The clear profit on M—'s investment



RETURNING FROM THE VINEYARD.

erage year at that. The apple and pear trees ought to produce as much profit as the grapes, but this year M— is not so fortunate as to have everything turn out well. He keeps books, and here is an extract from the last page:

INCOME.	
Onions .....	\$100
Pears .....	200
Grapes .....	1220
Milk sold .....	100
Honey .....	100
Potatoes .....	100
Interest on bonds—\$5000—at 5 per cent. ....	250
Rent of rooms to me, \$140, not estimated.	
Total income .....	<u>\$2070</u>

of \$20,000, then, is \$680 in cash, plus all the expenses of a family of four persons. These expenses were, deducting the items that came of working the farm (say \$400), \$990. Add this to the \$680 clear gain, and the earnings of the \$20,000 may be set down at \$1670, or nearly thirteen per cent.

M— says he never did much better than this when in business, when the risks and the anxieties were unspeakably



greater. As to the health, and pleasure, and all that, to be obtained in the two callings, I am sure nobody would ever think of comparing them.

I am glad I kept this diary. I have now convinced myself of what I had oft-

en been told, viz., that a man who has as nice a little sum of money as twenty thousand dollars saved can be happier and safer in the world, working a bit of land, than by remaining in the risky whirlpool of what is called "business."

## ART-EMBROIDERY.

"This bright art  
Did zealous Europe learn of pagan hands,  
While she assay'd with rage of holy war  
To desolate their fields; but old the skill:  
Long were the Phrygians' pict'ring looms renowned;  
Tyre also, wealthy seat of art, excell'd,  
And elder Sidon, in the historic web."—DYER.

**E**MBROIDERY, though properly considered a comparatively unimportant sister art of painting, is, perhaps, the oldest of the fine arts. Its origin is various in various nations, and it is one of the few arts practiced, more or less imperfectly, by all savage tribes, from time immemorial, in one form or other, according to the materials available, and the religions and customs obtaining. At various periods of the world's history, and in many localities, embroidery has reached great perfection, and has been made "the vehicle of higher powers than its own" for all uses, from mere personal adornment to the expression of religious thought. Technically speaking, the palm must be awarded to the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindoos, the Persians, and the Turks; and as far as Europe is concerned, the practice of embroidery is coeval with the first intercourse with these nations, especially the Persians and Turks, though it is difficult to determine how great an influence the Egyptians exercised in this respect over the Greeks and Romans, and also from what source the Egyptian embroideries were derived. However, the modern interest in embroidery is not archæological, and this glance at that phase of the subject is sufficient.

The present revival of interest in embroidery seems likely to be more permanent than any that has preceded it, because it is now something more than a passing fashion in dress, as was the case in England in 1846, when London alone employed two thousand pair of hands in decorating every conceivable article of dress worn by ladies of fashion. Now it is her own handiwork, the hours of patient stitching, the choice of materials and col-

ors, and the realization of an artistic thought, that the lady of fashion is proud of, not, as formerly, the money that these cost. She has now a real appreciation of the beauty of her India shawl, with its seven hundred stitches to the square inch, and other features that make her treasures of old lace so valuable. The mere filling in of worsted-work is superseded by an occupation that requires thought, knowledge, taste, and skill; the promised slippers or sofa cushion are no longer so much to be dreaded, and even the afghan, chair back, and chauffe-pied are assuming artistic importance—things that can not only be tolerated for the sake of association, but which we can conscientiously admire, and be thankful for. Of course many things are embroidered which should be perfectly plain, if, indeed, as in the case of a valance for a mantel, they should exist at all; but this lack of discrimination is incident to all beginnings, and we may feel certain that the enthusiasm which has carried the mantel valance to completion will lead to a degree of acquirement that will acknowledge its incongruity, and by that time the heat and soot of the fire will have rendered it unsightly enough to be consigned to the attic, among the useless accumulations of the past.

If anything permanent and valuable is to result from the present enthusiasm for art-needlework, it will be the achievement of those who are obliged to find a market for their labors. These will soon discover that while a knowledge of the South Kensington crewel-work is essential, it is a small beginning, that all methods and all materials are available, and that if the effect aimed at can not be realized by known processes, invention must supply the means. The finest modern embroideries I have seen were executed by ladies who had received no special instruction, but who were endowed with the rare quality of mind which accepts the value of precedent as a basis for in-