

"Biggest on Record."

BY GEORGE DOLLAR.

I.



OL. TAPLEY, who lives in Spencerberg, Missouri, has the longest beard on record. It measures 10ft. 8in. in length, and reaches to the ground, where it lies extended in a snake-like curl. The owner of this remarkable hirsute curiosity is a wealthy farmer and prominent citizen of Missouri, born in 1831. Thirty-five years ago he let his beard begin to grow, and as he comes of a long-lived family and enjoys splendid health, the beard promises to reach a length of 20ft. In fact, when the photo. shown herewith was taken on August 31st, 1896, the beard was but 9ft. 2in. in length.

Where does Mr. Tapley keep his beard? Inside his shirt bosom, of course, but carefully rolled up in a silk bag, from which he extracts it when surrounded by admirers. He dresses it with the best of oils, and combs it with a specially-made wooden comb. It is related that on a certain occasion, in Chicago, Mr. Tapley took his beard out to show to some small boys on the street, when he was immediately surrounded by a throng that blocked the traffic and necessitated the police.

A dime museum proprietor now offered Mr. Tapley an enormous salary to enter his exhibit as a star attraction, but the long-bearded man was too good a citizen and too

well-to-do to accept such an offer, and his life is now spent in quiet at Spencerberg.

Regarding the genuineness of the beard, we ourselves possess excellent proof, but on this point Mr. Tapley himself writes: "There would be no use in trying to palm off anything that was not genuine here, as

I am known by almost every man, woman, and child in the neighbourhood, and as I am now living within one mile of the place where I was born."

It is the intention of this short series of articles thus to illustrate some of the more remarkable oddities in the world, which may fairly claim the title under which we write. We shall spurn nothing which is well known, provided it is bigger than something else of the same kind. We shall, in short, have a little of everything, and the variety of stuff will probably amaze our readers as much as it amazed us when we first began to handle the material.

Let us then jump at once from whiskers to primroses. We have at the top of the next page an illustration of a curious bunch containing over seventy primroses all on one stem, which, according to Mr. Thomas W.

Collins, of Bugbrooke, grew on an ordinary single red primrose in the garden of Miss Frost of that place. Until we hear of something larger than this beautiful bunch of lavish blooms we shall make bold to class it amongst the largest things yet known.



THE LONGEST BEARD ON RECORD.
From a Photograph.



From a] THE LARGEST BUNCH OF PRIMROSES. [Photograph.

Nearly everyone who goes to Jersey brings home a walking-stick made of the dried stalks of Jersey cabbages; and those who live far away from Jersey, and have never been to it, will take it with a grain of salt that cabbages *do* grow up in the air. But here is a picture for proof. Some of the vegetables grow to the amazing height of 10ft., and the figure in the foreground of our illustration gives an approximate idea



From a] THE TALLEST CABBAGES. [Photograph.

of the comparative sizes of a man and a Jersey cabbage. The man does not eat the cabbage. It is, in simple language of the primers, eaten by animals; and although it has nothing to do with the subject, we might add that these cabbages cannot be made to grow at Guernsey.

In dealing with these vegetable record growths we must not forget that soil and climate have much to do with the subject. Therefore it would not be unusual

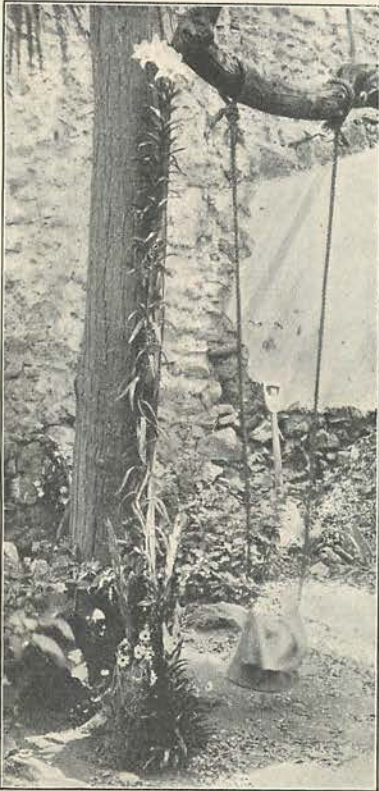


From a] THE TALLEST SUNFLOWER. [Photograph.

to find sunflowers growing in the Canary Islands to a height of 10ft. or 12ft. The sunflower shown in the illustration above, sent by Miss J. de Forssmann, of Arguijon, Puerto Cruz, Teneriffe, Canary Isles, was but four months old when cut down in the middle of August last, and measured 12ft. 7in. in height. When photographed it had one hundred and twenty-three single flowers, with brown centres, all in

bloom. Two feet from the ground the stem measured 6in. in circumference. No cause is known for its abnormal growth, as it was self-sown, like many others.

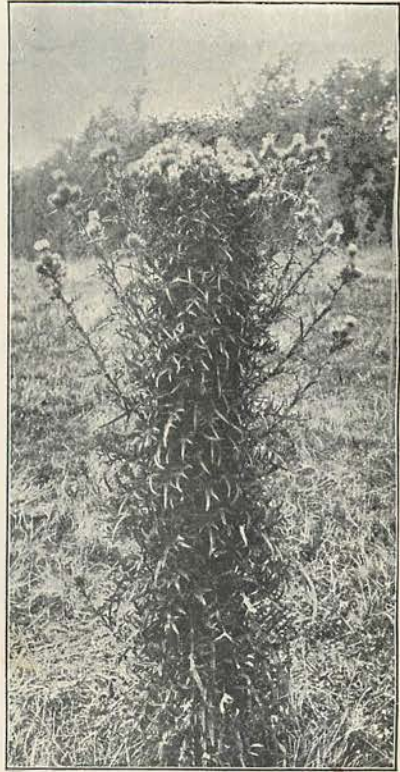
On this page we have the biggest lily and the biggest thistle yet photographed. The first of these, photographed by E. L. Jackson, of Oakbank, St. Helena, grew at Oakbank.



From a] THE TALLEST ST. JOHN'S LILY. [Photograph.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to photograph it where it grew, as it was blocked by a hedge of jasmine and camellia. It was taken out and tied to a banana tree, by which change the height of this beautiful plant is more easily to be seen. It stood over 8ft. above ground, the usual height of these St. John's lilies being from 2½ft. to 3ft.

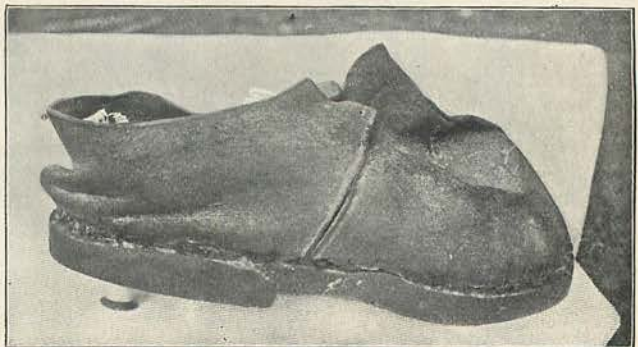
About this size, also, is the ordinary thistle. But here is one 5ft. in height, which, on account of its unusual growth, was secured by the Ipswich Scientific Society, and presented to the Ipswich Museum. It was



From a Photo. by] THE TALLEST THISTLE. [Wm. Vick, Ipswich.

photographed by Mr. William Vick, of London Road, Ipswich, and consists of a number of stems all from one root, fasciated in one stem 7in. broad and about 1in. thick. It had twenty-two flower heads, and, as Mr. Vick writes, "a head somewhat like the common cockscomb of our gardens." It is on account of the absence of any standard of measurement in the photo. that we are particular in this case, as in others, to give the exact measurements.

He who has sent in the next photograph, Mr. William P. Skelton, of *The Lakes Herald*,

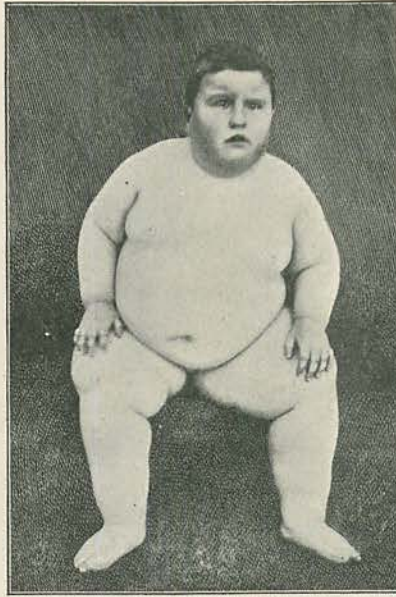


From a Photo. by]

THE BIGGEST SHOE. [Frank Robinson, Bournemouth.

Windermere, says: "It is not on record whether Wordsworth in his boyhood at ancient Hawkshead ever made this clog the subject of a sonnet—it is worth it!" We might disagree with this verdict, but not with the probability that the famous clog of Hawkshead is the biggest shoe on record. It is now on view at an old-fashioned hostelry, "The Brown Cow," and used to be worn by a mole-catcher named John Waterson, of Outgate, near Windermere Lake. Waterson lived to a great age, and had a most remarkable foot. The clog measures 20in. in length, over 8in. wide at the bottom, 16in. from welt to welt across the front, 22in. around the back, from tab to tab, and the length of the heel 7in. One would suppose that any living man would be able to get his foot into such an inclosure, but suppositions cannot always be trusted. It was not before Mr. Waterson had cut the boot down in front, and inserted laceholes to make it wider, that he was able to put his foot in it.

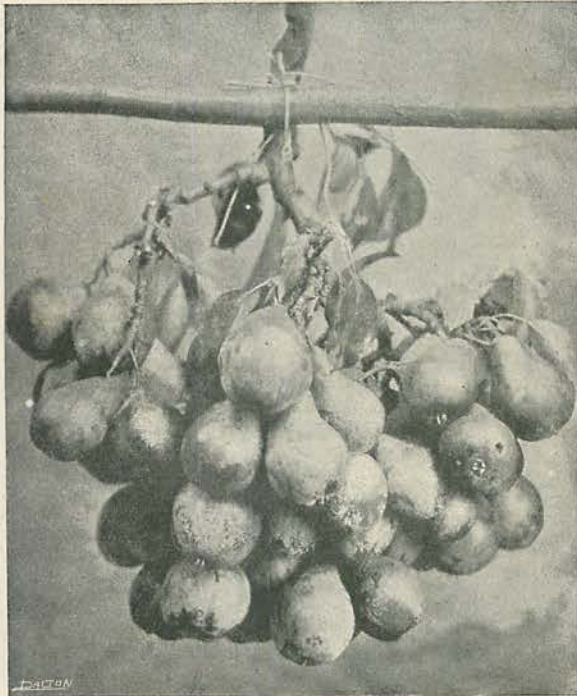
Ipswich, by the way, contains not only the biggest thistle, but the biggest boy on record—at least, the biggest boy for his years. He is the son of Mr. Arthur Partridge, a farm-



THE LARGEST BOY.
From a Photo. by John Gooderham & Son, Ipswich.

bailiff, of Washbrook, and his measurements were lately taken by about twenty doctors, who examined him in the Ipswich Hospital. Master Partridge is over six years and eight months of age, and his net weight at the age of six and a half years was 9st. 3lb. (129lb.). He measures 3ft. 10in. around the chest, 42in. round the body, around the calf of leg 17in., and round the thigh 27in. To a certain extent he might be considered abnormal, but he is both healthy and intelligent, and has rarely needed the services of a doctor.

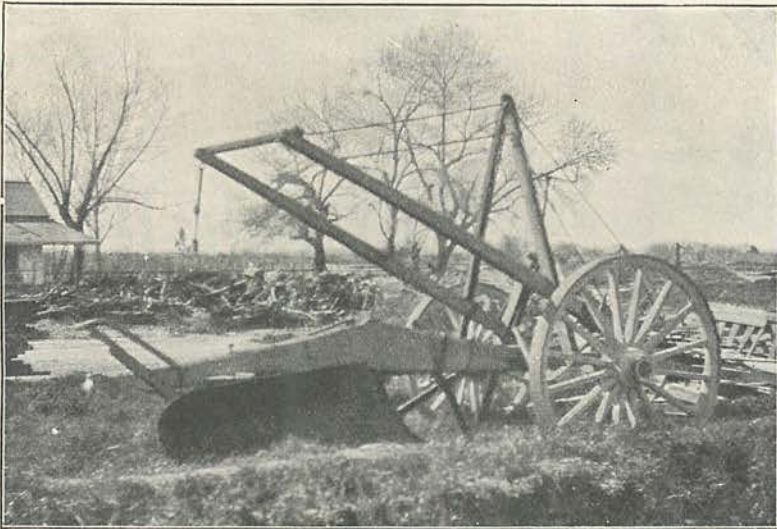
The enormous bunch of pears shown in the accompanying illustration was grown at Gaddesden Place, Herts, by T. F. Halsey, Esq., M.P. There were over a hundred pears on the bunch, which was



THE LARGEST BUNCH OF PEARS.
From a Photo. by J. Dunn, Hemel Hempstead.

photographed after a few of the pears had dropped off. Hundreds who saw this on exhibition were of the opinion that it was the largest bunch ever grown. But as we have no statistics from California and other fruit-growing countries on which to base an opinion, we dare only to say that it is the biggest bunch on record in England.

The everyday farmer will be astonished at the largest single-furrow plough in the world, which we illustrate



From a]

THE BIGGEST PLOUGH.

[Photograph.

herewith, and will wonder what the giant was ever created for. According to Mr. W. R. Mason, of Bakersfield, Kern Co., California, who sent in the photograph, the plough cuts a furrow 4ft. wide, and was originally built for the purpose of making irrigation canals. It was, however, found to be too unwieldy for the purpose, as it took eighty teams of oxen to draw it. Those who are curious to see this Californian folly will find it in the possession of the Kern County Land Company. It certainly deserves a place in our lively category of immensities.

We now approach a more "meaty" subject — Nature's bovine noblemen, or the finest yoke of mammoth-matched oxen in the world. We are indebted for the photograph to Mrs. E. N. Holt, of Orlando, Florida. The oxen are owned

by a resident of Buckland, Mass., who with just pride has exhibited them at numerous agricultural shows and state fairs in the United States and Canada, and the manner in which these Titans have walked off with first prizes is wonderful indeed. They are like elephants in size, their actual weight at the age of eight years

being 7,300lb., 17 hands high, 10ft. in girth, 15ft. in length, and 15ft. 11in. from tip to tip. They are unequalled for size, quality, mating, and beauty. They have a record for hauling on the ground on a drag a dead weight of 11,061lb. Had this mammoth pair been put in front of the Kern County plough, it is not unlikely that the irrigation canals would have been cut and the largest plough in the world saved from destruction and decay.



From a]

THE LARGEST TEAM OF OXEN.

[Photograph.

"Biggest on Record."

By GEORGE DOLLAR.

II.



From a Photo. by]

THE BIGGEST BOOK ON RECORD.

[G. W. Fox, Sioux Falls, S.D.



BOOK that weighs 175lb. is not intended for use in a circulating library. It is, rather, intended for exhibition, and is never handled by the body public unless some Sampson in the throng is anxious to try his strength. It happened this way in Sioux Falls.

When the largest book in the world—the one shown in the illustration with which we open this article—was exhibited in that city, just after the Chicago Exposition of 1893 had been closed, there were plenty of people anxious to try their powers. It was a "visitors' register," prepared by the South Dakota section of the World's Columbian Exposition, and contained so far as was possible all the names of all the visitors to all parts of that section which the

active Dakotans were able to gather together. It really looked as if one 175lb. book would contain the complete set of names, but it was found necessary to have two, and these, bound in luxurious form by Messrs. Brown and Saenger, of Sioux Falls, attracted great attention. In our illustration we may note

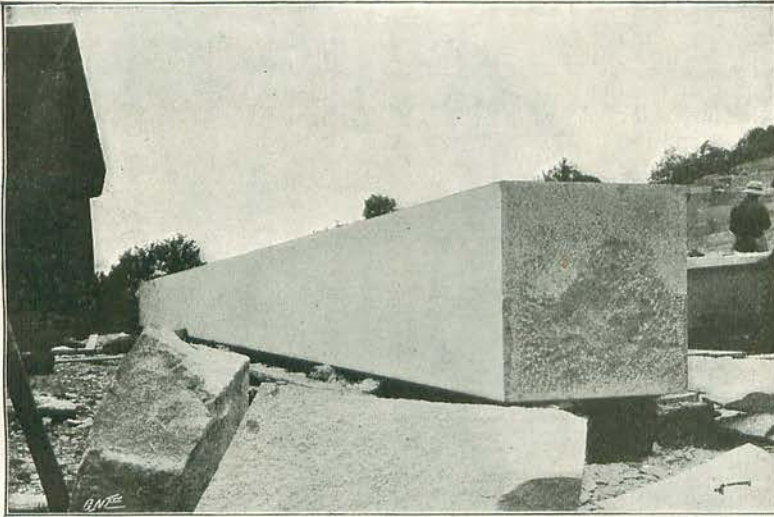
a copy of Webster's dictionary standing beside these giant books. Some idea of their size may be gained from the fact that the cover of Webster's is over 1ft. in height, and nearly 5in. in width.

The biggest hat on record was never intended for human wear. Both Nature and Fashion would rebel at such a thought. It was made by Messrs. Hucklesby and Co., of Luton, for some smart people in Newcastle, Australia, who wished it for advertising purposes. It



THE BIGGEST STRAW HAT.

From a Photo. by S. Glendening, Luton.



From a

THE BIGGEST GRAVESTONE.

[Photograph.

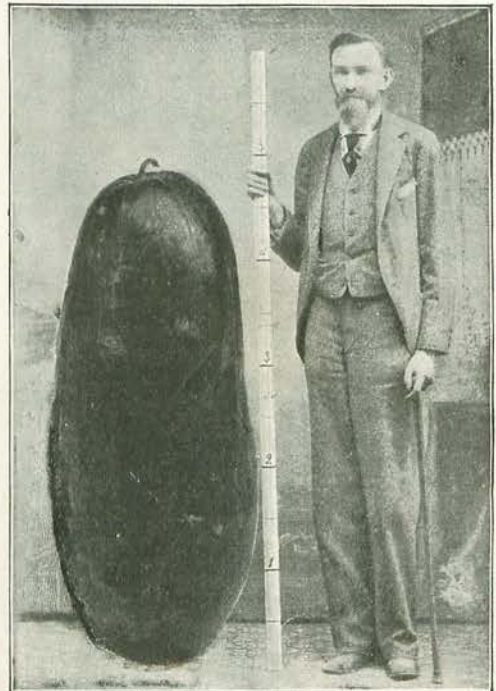
was made of so-called "Jumbo plait" an inch wide. Across the brim it measured 6ft. 6in., and in its construction no fewer than 180yds. of plait were used. "The work of ironing, or blocking," so we are informed by Mr. L. Glendening, of 45, Lea Road, Luton, "could only be accomplished by three men. It has a crown about 12in. high." When this unique specimen of the hatter's art was ready for shipment some months ago, a special case 7ft. square and 2ft. deep had to be made. Probably at the present time the people of Newcastle are enjoying this novelty in headgear, and there is little doubt that the expenses of its manufacture will be quickly recovered in advertising, even if Australia, through no fault of its own, never produces a man big enough to wear it.

The "richest man in the United States"—such being the title usually given by the newspapers to Mr. John D. Rockefeller—recently decided to erect a simple and effective monument in one of the Cleveland cemeteries. It is so simple that there is not a mark of any kind upon its surface to destroy its chaste outline, and it is so effective by virtue of its weight and height that it will undoubtedly become one of the great attractions of the city. Made of the largest block of granite ever quarried in America, costing over fifty thousand dollars, at Barre, Vermont, where it was shipped to Cleveland, and ten thousand dollars extra for transportation and erection in Lake View Cemetery, it is undoubtedly a remarkable piece of work. The bottom base, so called, is 14ft. square and 3ft. high, and the total

height of the monolith 65ft. 6in. The length and weight were so great that cars of extraordinary strength were specially built for the transportation of the huge block of stone to Cleveland, and it was predicted by many that bridges and road-beds would be strained and perhaps crushed by it. The monument, however, arrived safely at its journey's end. Several attempts

were made, it is said, to blow out a section large enough for the shaft, and several hundred tons of material were destroyed before the final block was secured. The accompanying photograph shows the monument after it was trimmed and polished for transport.

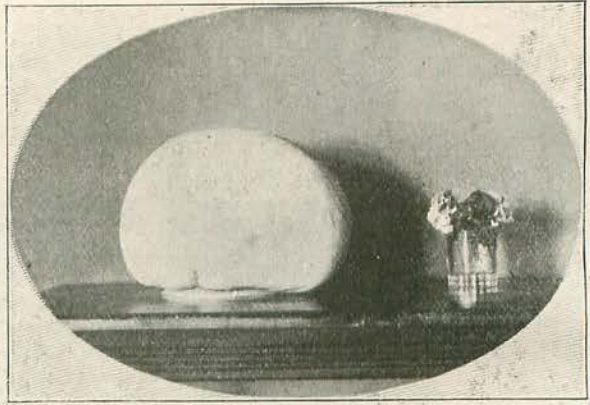
We now jump gracefully from monuments to water-melons, and are indebted to Mr.



THE BIGGEST WATER-MELON.

From a Photo. by J. E. Orr, Rocky Ford, Col.

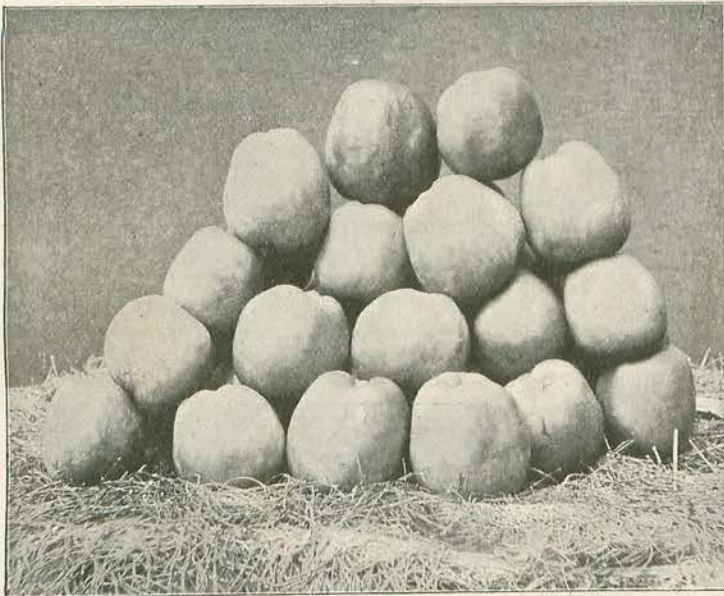
D. W. Barkley, editor of *The Rocky Ford (Col.) Enterprise* for the accompanying photograph of a mammoth water-melon, shipped in 1898 to London. Colorado is famous for its melons and cantaloupes, and the melons grown at Rocky Ford are known throughout the United States for size and superior excellence. Whatever may have been their knowledge before, it did not take the London fruit porters long to find out about this little place when its monster melon arrived. The 350lb. which it was estimated to contain



THE BIGGEST MUSHROOM.
From a Photo. by Dr. F. R. Steirly,
Minneapolis, Minn.

accompanying mushroom, however, may be judged from the size of the small glass of pansies which may be seen beside it. Mr. Harry P. Rawson, of 2,120 Girard Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn., informs us that it was found on the shore bordering a small lake in Minneapolis. The photograph was taken by Dr. F. R. Steirly.

As for the next picture, we do not for a minute pretend to say that these apples are each in themselves the biggest on record. But



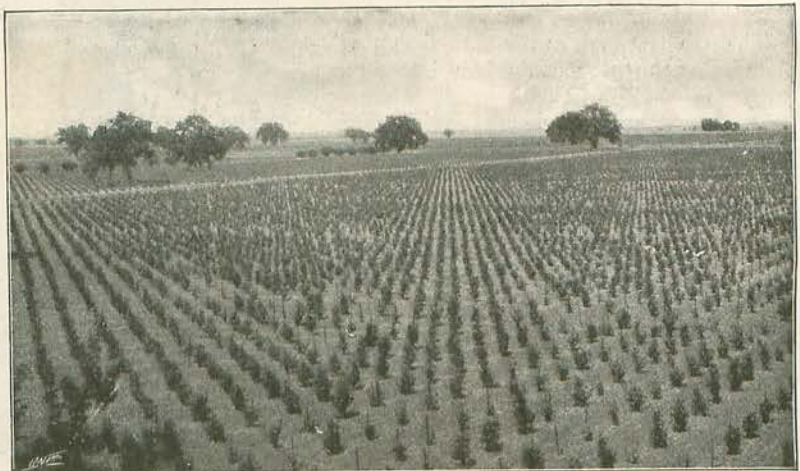
From a Photo. by

THE BIGGEST APPLES.

[E. S. Chase, Eureka, Cal.]

didn't scare the porters a bit, and the way they tried to lug it lovingly around was a sight to be seen.

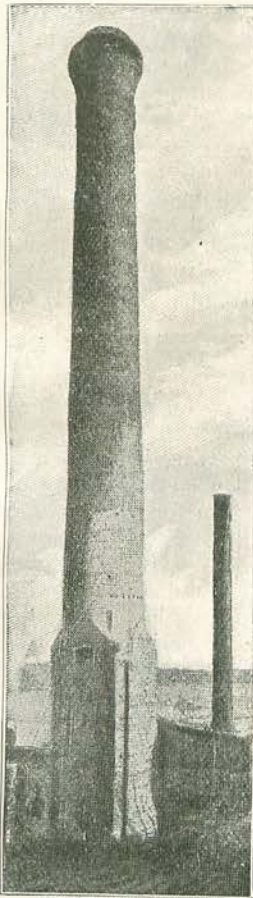
In talking of mushrooms, it is hardly fair to give weight as a guarantee of bigness. Mushrooms are such flimsy things that they might be as big as an umbrella without weighing much. The size of the



From a Photo. by

THE BIGGEST VINEYARD.

[Taber, San Francisco.]



THE BIGGEST CHIMNEY.
From a Photograph.

the thirty-five apples, weighing, as they did, 60lb., are undoubtedly the biggest lot of big apples ever collected. They are one of the products of the Eel River district of Humboldt County, California, where apples seem almost as big as toy balloons.

While we are on California, it might be well to mention the biggest vineyard in the world, illustrated at bottom of previous page. It belonged to the late Senator Leland Stanford, and lies in the heart of the Sacramento Valley, about 200 miles north of San Francisco. The wine and brandy production of this farm of 59,000 acres is so great that Uncle Sam has put a bonded warehouse upon it

Gangs of men and boys, numbering over 1,000 at the height of the season, are employed in collecting the juicy crop, which they put in boxes holding 50lb. each. Over 12,000 of these boxes are constantly ready for use, and as the labourers go from vine to vine, they put the bad grapes in one box and the good ones in another. The enormous size of the place ought to make one shudder at the thought of all the work necessary to reap the harvest.

We now show the largest smoke-stack or chimney in the world. Here are a few facts about it. It is connected with the new steam-power plant of the Metropolitan Street Railway Companies in New York City. It is 353ft. high. It contains 3,400,000 bricks. Its measurements are: Outside diameter, 80ft. above the ground, 38ft. 10in.; weight, 8,540 tons. On the top of the chimney rests a massive cast-iron cap made in forty segments, and large enough to house an entire family, or, if necessary, to be comfortably divided into four rooms. In our illustration below we may see a party of happy workmen, numbering perhaps twenty-five or thirty. These were photographed on top of the chimney, 340ft. above ground.

As engineers and other interested people from all parts of the United States have visited this new power house, a few additional facts regarding the chimney may be noted. Two distinct concentric shells form the chimney, the inner one being separated from the outer to allow the former to expand and lengthen under the action of hot gases. The structure is stiffened by ribs 2 1/4in. wide

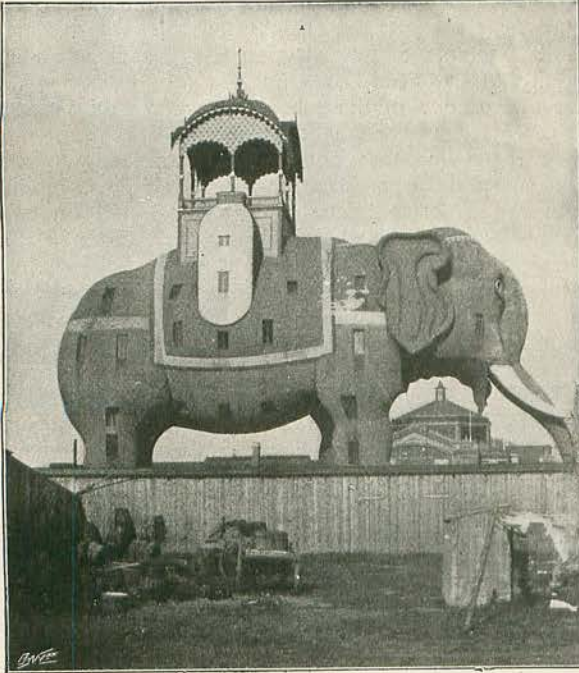
to collect his taxes, and this warehouse occupies more than two acres of space. The big vineyard embraces about six square miles of territory, laid off with great regularity into lots of uniform size and streets of regular width. One might, indeed, call it a city of grapes, as each block contains about 1,400 vines, or 680 vines to the acre. The grapes on this wonderful vineyard ripen in July, and the picking begins about the 1st of August.



From a

WORKMEN ON TOP OF THE BIGGEST CHIMNEY.

[Photograph.



From a]

THE BIGGEST ELEPHANT.

[Photograph.

at the base. It is said that the massive stack is in constant motion, and has, in fact, been constructed so that it has more or less elasticity, which, in a strong wind, gives the structure a perceptible and tremulous motion.

That remorseless enemy of mankind which reporters call a "devouring conflagration" ate up some years ago the last remnant of the biggest elephant on record. It was so big that people coming into New York Harbour could see it from afar. It loomed up on Coney Island just as it looms up in our illustration — majestic and commanding, albeit a little ungainly and unsymmetrical. The elephant's creator has slashed holes for windows

in its mighty sides, and hordes of people danced, ate, and made merry in its spacious interior. They have an elephant something like it in one of the famous pleasure resorts of Paris, but nothing so big as the old wooden elephant that associated itself for so many years with the delectable early history of "Coney." Its height was immense, as our illustration shows. They never saw fit to build another elephant after the aforesaid fire, so it could not have been a great commercial success. It deserves, however, in this article, to go on record as the biggest elephant of its kind.

So also the frog below, which tipped the balance at 92½ lb. Out in California there are many wonders of Nature, and this is not the first that has come to us from Long Valley. The frog may be seen by anyone who visits the home of Mr. J. P. Edwards, of that town, where it is chained in a pond in front of Mr. Edwards's country home. Naturalists have heard of

it, and have looked up their zoologies for a verification of this freak, arriving finally, as everybody does, at the conclusion that this 92½ lb. batrachian is a piece of stone. They were not deceived. It is a stone. But, for all that, the man who made it did a good piece of work.



From a]

THE BIGGEST FROG.

[Photograph.