AGRICULTURAL TOPICS.

A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR OUR RURAL READERS.

Shiftless Farming—Care of the Stallion—A Home-Made Ditcher—Stock Suggestions—An Egg Machine—Valuable Suggestions for the Dairy—The Sheep Fold.

THE FARM.

Shiftless Farming.

WE have always claimed that, indirectly, poor preparation of the soil before putting in a crop was a loss, but the following, relating to the wheat pest in Kansas, taken from the *Kansas Farmer*, puts poor preparation of soil in a new light. The *Farmer* says:

"Secretary Mohler, of the State Board of Agriculture, and Chancellor Snow, of the State University, after making a thorough investigation of the reported damage done to the wheat fields by a new pest, says that all fields in which the seed wheat was drilled in last fall after proper preparation of the soil by plowing or by previous thorough cultivation of corn in 1890, were found to be in prime condition. No bugs of any kind are present in these fields, and there is no indication of weakening of the wheat plant in any way.

"But fields in which the wheat was put in upon stubble ground or upon poorly cultivated corn land of 1890, are in a damaged condition. Unfortunately, more than half the fields visited in a drive of ten miles south of Russell are of this character. The wheat plants do not well cover the ground, and in many places are turning yellow.

"In some of these damaged fields the plants are infested by a small green bug. This insect is not the 'grain aphis' nor the 'oat louse,' as has been reported in some of the newspapers, but a true hemipterous bug, rather smaller than the chinch bug, and not previously known as attacking wheat.

"It appears, after all, that the primary cause is entirely due to improper preparation of the soil, and therefore not very complimentary to our fellow farmers."

A Home-Made Ditcher.

Take two pieces of 2 by 12-inch lumber 12 feet long (10 feet will do very well, however). Bevel or miter one end of each piece so as to fit together nicely when the hindmost ends are about four feet apart. Nail them together in the form of a V (see engraving). Near the bottom, and about a foot from the ends of this frame, secure a brace of 2 by 4-inch scantling, set edge up and well nailed. Put another brace about midway of the frame, and also near the bottom or lower edge. These braces prevent the pressure of the dirt from breaking the frame. Nail some wide plank across the top for the driver to stand on, and also to lay additional weight upon if necessary. The weight of this ditcher

A HOME-MADE DITCHER.

can be made to correspond with the strength of your team. Either two, four or even six horses can be worked to it, and the weight can be increased or diminished accordingly.

Plow the ground well where you want your ditch, just as you would if a scraper was to be used. Follow the plows with the ditcher, alternately, until your ditch is of proper depth. For shallow, open ditches this device does the work more rapidly, a good deal, than you can do it with scrapers.—*Farm and Fireside.*

Care of the Stallion.

"Rest and fat are the greatest enemies of the horse," is a saying of the Arabs, and if every stallion owner would embody its truth in his practice there would be little need to write anything further on this subject. Its observance would be potent to improve the horse in health, strength, virility, endurance and longevity, and by "holding up the glass to nature" correct the irrational treatment and abnormal conditions under which he is often reared. Not that the conditions surrounding the horse in a state of nature should be wholly imitated, for they do not all tend to his improvement in the qualities adapted to man's use.

But it is worthy of note that the wild horse is tough, sound and healthy, and making due allowance for the influence of natural selection or the survival of the fittest, when we observe that he is seldom in a state of rest, that he lives unconfined in the open air, upon natural food, we may reasonably connect these as cause and effect, and safely consider exercise, pure air and simple diet the fundamental conditions upon which to build up, by skill in breeding and training, the highest and most perfect equine type.—*Breeders' Gazette.*

Rural and Stockman Suggestions.

Give the hogs a chance to get at rock salt. Put it in the pasture. They like it.

"A good many farm horses are injured and some are ruined by improper feeding," says an exchange. We should say so.

Horses ought not to be allowed to eat too much hay. It is too bulky. Many a horse is injured by eating too much hay.

Animals sometimes are affected with insanity. We have seen horses that we had no doubt were as "crazy as bed bugs."

A stallion or bull may be ever so gentle, as long as we have known him, and yet it is always wise to keep an eye on the animal.

If the breeding animal—sow or boar—does not prove a success, a pedigree as long as the moral law will not atone for the failure.

If we persist in feeding musty hay to horses we ought to be under no necessity of asking what causes the heaves when they appear.

If we would all resist the temptation of overstocking when the prices for this or that class of animals is high, what a great blessing it would be to all of us.

All kinds of live stock breeding require patience and intelligence. Stupid men or impatient men do not achieve the best success in breeding animals.

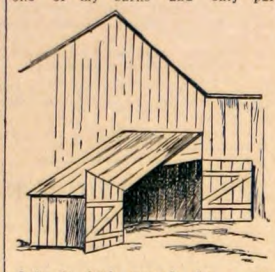
What is the first element of the model hog? asks a correspondent. The first element is constitutional vigor. Of course somebody will say: "Well, then the razorback has the first element." He has. That is the only element he possesses, but he has that.

The hog has made the farmer a great deal of money in the years gone, and it will yet make a good deal. But swine breeding and feeding requires a good knowledge of hog nature, which comprises a vast deal more than the belief that a hog is simply a hog with all that the term implies. — *Western Rural.*

THE POULTRY-YARD.

An Egg Machine.

Fowls are not a specialty on my farm. I seldom keep over thirty or forty and a mixed lot at that, but I have eggs the year round in abundance, even when they bring 45c a dozen. My success I attribute to two causes: First, I never shut them up, having my garden well away from the barns and the front and side yard for flowers well picketed, and second, the "egg machine" is what does the rest. The fowls being always in a healthy, natural condition, the result of freedom, they only need food and protection from the inclemencies of the weather to do well. Green and animal food they find in abundance during eight months of the year and the remainder of the time I furnish it to them as I do grain the year around. The protection or egg machine is merely a tight shed with doors on the south side so it can be entirely or partly opened. It is 10x20 feet, attached to the west side of one of my barns and only part



of it is high enough for a man to stand erect in. During snows and cold rains the doors are kept closed. All wet and snow are thus excluded. During cold, raw winds and the prevalence of warm rains I instruct the boys to throw open both doors and brace them back. Here the hens can sing and wallow in the dust. The sun can pour in its rays and the winds do not ruffle the plumage and tempers of my pets and like a gently-handled cow they reward me. I have found glass altogether unnecessary and do not believe it to be needed any more than a stove. Sometimes a cart, wagon or mowing-machine finds temporary shelter here, but I make it a rule to give the fowls the sole ownership. Sweepings from the adjacent barn floor are thrown in occasionally and the dust is so deep that the whole grain fed mornings has to be sought for vigorously until nearly noon, and the exercise is, I don't doubt, a factor in the production of eggs. Once yearly the floor (earth) is hoed over and all the accumulations taken to the corn field. Here is where I get another profit. The droppings are in fine shape for use in the drill or planter, never being matted together. The dust does not only keep the hen manure disintegrated, but also absorbs the ammonia which in most hen-houses goes to waste. Properly saved and used no manure is better or goes further.—*A. C. West, in Farm and Home.*

Cater to the Public.

When poultry is raised for market, the poultryman can learn much in a short time by inspecting the market stalls. The object should be to learn just what the buyers demand, and then aim to supply them. It will be found that all markets are not alike, and that a close observation on the different markets, and also on the demands of the consumers, as well as the seasons when certain kinds of poultry are preferred, will give the farmer or poultryman an advantage which will enable him to secure not only better prices, but how to breed for the best results in selling poultry. It is the buyer who is to be satisfied, as he fixes the price according to the quality and his desires. If yellow legs on poultry are preferred in certain markets, and the buyers are willing to pay something extra for such, it is to the interest of the farmer to raise fowls with yellow legs. The best breed for his purpose is that which he finds will give the buyers the greatest satisfaction, and in so regulating his breeding he is not liable to err.

THE DAIRY.

Valuable Suggestions from the Report of the New York Dairy Conference.

Every ton of milk sold and taken from the farm takes with it $2.67 in plant food, and every ton of cheese removes $21 worth, while a ton of butter only robs it of about 26 cents worth. Every cow giving forty pounds of milk a day carries in her udder from the pasture to the stable, when she goes there to be milked, 5 cents worth of these elements, if she is milked twice a day. In a herd of twenty cows it amounts to a dollar per day. This loss must be replaced, if the fertility of the soil is maintained, or ruin in time to the farm will result.

In packing butter, some dairymen sprinkle a thin layer of salt between each layer of butter, and pack the butter very closely. Butter should be washed in water at 50 degrees, and worked at about 55 degrees. The granules can then be washed when very small. It is almost impossible to make butter of uniform quality from milk set in open pans, owing to atmospheric changes. In cold setting these changes are not met with.

Milk often sours in less than twelve hours when set in shallow pans, unless the cellar is below 60 degrees in temperature. To warm cream, set the can containing it in a can of warm water, and stir the cream during the process. Cool cream in the same manner. Set the can containing it into a can of cold water, but you may pour cold water into the cream. Do not put ice in cream, but substitute ice water. One cannot tell how much ice to put in, because he will have to wait till the ice melts before he can determine the result. Too much ice may reduce the temperature too low, when one would have to warm the cream again.

Churn in twenty-five to thirty minutes if possible. Milk containing large butter globules produces cream that will churn quicker than that containing small globules. Select the cows for a special purpose. A man starting a cotton factory does not purchase machinery for manufacturing woolen goods. If you expect butter from cows secure butter-producing cows, not beefy ones.

Nervous excitement will cause the cow to withhold her milk. Rough treatment of cows produces nervous excitement, which arrests the natural process of nature. Fright interrupts the normal condition, causing a shrinkage in the flow of milk.

Wet weather causes a decrease in the quantity of butter, because the pasture food of the cows is less nutritious. The quality of the cow's food affects the quality of her milk and butter. Cows require more shelter now than they did years ago, because they are more delicate than they were, as a rule better bred, and finer in constitutional structure.

Salting cream will not prevent it from becoming butter. Butter that is colored will not keep as well as that which is uncolored. Time developes chemical changes in the color, which is a foreign substance. The quicker cream can be ripened uniformly the better the butter will be. There are two or three kinds of white caps in butter. One is dried cream, another is caseine. Cream should be churned at a higher degree of temperature in winter than in summer, since it is more viscous. A pan that is half filled with milk will give better results in cream than one filled. Fill a pan half full of milk, then add another third of cold water. Set the cream at 98 degrees, or as near as you can get it, and have the water as cold as possible. More and quicker cream will result.

The strippings are the richest part of the milk, because they are the milk last secreted, and have taken up some solids that were absorbed in the udder from the milk which has been first drawn.

Oftentimes the cause of streaks in butter is the unequal distribution of salt in it. Reworking it after it has stood awhile, after being once worked, will also cause streaks.

Frost injures butter. Butter that has been frozen soon gets off flavor when exposed to a warmer temperature. Butter kept but a short time in cold storage soon spoils after exposing it in a warmer temperature. Keep your milk, cream and butter away from severe cold and frost.

It is not desirable to mix cream a little sour with sweet cream in butter-making. You will lose all the sweet cream you put in. It will all go off in the buttermilk. Never mix sweet and sour cream just before churning. Hold the first skimming at a low temperature until the second is added, then ripen evenly.

Cream and milk can be churned together, but it takes longer, and the butter will not come evenly. It is a costly method and should not be practiced. If cream is churned before the proper time it will not be of perfect flavor, and more time will be required to churn the cream.

THE SHEEP FOLD.

From the *Western Rural* we compile the following:

Look carefully after the ewes and the lambs. The one should be kept in good health and the other well protected.

Sheep cannot pull stumps nor eat stones, but they can do about everything else that it is necessary to do to clean up a piece of land.

We see it stated that a dog was sold recently for $6,000 and yet it is likely that the animal would kill a sheep as quickly as any other dog would.

The slowest movement forward in mutton connected with sheep husbandry is in securing it protection from the ravages of dogs. It is a shame that it is so.

Climate has much to do with the quality of wool. The North is an ideal place for wool production so far as climate is concerned. Wool and apples grow best in a cold climate.

The time may come when growing wool of itself will never again pay, but we do not believe that, producing both wool and good mutton will ever fail to pay.

The better management of sheep during the last few years has resulted in much less disease among flocks. Moore green food in winter and better shelter have been the chief improvements.

Will too much corn scour lambs? I say it will not, if properly fed, says a writer in *National Stockman*. I will give my experience of five years' feeding. I feed my lambs from the time I wean them, commencing with bran, one gill per day, and gradually increasing, mixing in oats; so by the time I stable them I feed one pint per day, oats and bran. Then I begin mixing in corn, and by the first of February I feed all corn, one and a half pints per day. I still increase, and by the first of March I feed one quart. With plenty of good clover hay and good clean water they will be ready for market by the first of April.

It is not unusual when twins arrive, says a writer, that the first one born has had the advantage of a superior start in the struggle for existence which it asserts after birth. If the ewe has an abundance of milk there is enough for both; but if not it won't do any harm to assist the weaker one to get its share and give it a very little new cow's milk and as much sweetened water. Do this for a few days and, in the meantime, gradually increase the ewe's food so as to induce a good milk flow. For such ewes warm bran slop will not come amiss. Remember that success in any avocation comes from attention to details.

Instead of taking the weak lamb take the strongest one, and if you have a ewe that has lost her lamb give it to her, says a writer in the *National Stockman*. But you must tie her in a small stall and get it to suck. Sometimes a lamb will not suck a strange ewe, but in a few days (by keeping them together) they get the same smell, as sheep tell their lambs by their smell. Do not let the mother be near the lamb, so she can hear it, or it will not suck the other. If a ewe loses her lamb, I milk her twice a day until another has twins, then make her take one of them. In a few days let them out together in a lot with a rope around the ewe's neck to drag, so that if she tries to run from her lamb she tramps on the rope and it stops her, and the lamb can suck. If the farmers' wives would look after the young stock they could save many dollars. Women are better adapted to taking care of the young than men, as a woman has more patience. I often take weak lambs that the ewe has not enough milk for and let them suckle a cow. But do not let them have too much. Should you have to raise one by hand, teach it to drink the same as a calf. Feed about four times a day, always giving new milk.

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS RULE

RAIN USED BY DR. TALMAGE AS A COMMON ILLUSTRATION.

God Is Infinity in Infinitesimals as Much as in Things Infinitely Great, in Our Everyday Sorrows as in the World's Creation.

Dr. Talmage's sermon last Sunday was from the text, "Hath the rain a father?" Job xxxviii, 28.

This book of Job has been the subject of unbounded theological wrangle. Men have made it the ring in which to display their ecclesiastical pugilism. Some say that the Book of Job is a true history; others, that it is an allegory; others, that it is an epic poem; others, that it is a drama. Some say that Job lived eighteen hundred years before Christ; others say that he never lived at all. Some say that the author of this book was Job; others, David; others, Solomon. The discussion has landed some in blank infidelity. Now I have no trouble with the books of Job or Revelation—the two most mysterious books in the Bible—because of a rule I adopted some years ago.

I wade down into a Scripture passage as long as I can touch bottom, and when I cannot, then I wade out. I used to wade in until it was over my head, and then I got drowned. I study a passage of Scripture so long as it is a comfort and help to my soul; but when it becomes a perplexity and a spiritual upturning, I quit. In other words, we ought to wade in up to our heart, but never wade in until it is over our head. No man should ever expect to swim across this great ocean of divine truth. I go down into that ocean as I go down into the Atlantic Ocean at East Hampton, Long Island, just far enough to bathe, then I come out. I never had any idea that with my weak hand and foot I could strike my way clear over to Liverpool.

I suppose you understand your family genealogy. You know something about your parents, your grandparents, your great-grandparents. Perhaps you know where they were born or where they died. Have you ever studied the parentage of the shower? "Hath the rain a father?" This question is not asked by a poetaster or a scientist, but by the Head of the Universe. To humble and to save Job God asks him fourteen questions; about the world's architecture, about the refractions of the sun's rays, about the tides, about the snow crystal, about the lightnings, and then he arraigns him with the interrogation of the text, "Hath the rain a father?"

With the scientific wonders of the rain I have nothing to do. A minister gets through with that kind of sermons within the first three years, and if he has piety enough he gets through with it in the first three months. A sermon has come to me to mean one word of four letters, "help!" You all know that the rain is not an orphan. You know that it is not cast out of the gates of Heaven a foundling. You would answer the question of my text in the affirmative. Safely housed during the storm you hear the rain beating against the window pane, and you find it searching all the crevices of the window sill.

It first comes down in solitary drops, pattering the dust, and then it deluges the fields and angers the mountain torrents, and makes the traveler implore shelter. You know that the rain is not an accident of the world's economy. You know it was born of the cloud. You know it was rocked in the cradle of the wind. You know it was sung to sleep by the storm. You know that it is a flying evangel from Heaven to earth. You know it is the gospel of the weather. You know that God is its Father.

If this be true, then, how wicked is our murmuring about climatic changes. The first eleven Sabbaths after I entered the ministery it stormed. Through the week it was clear weather, but on the Sabbaths the old country meeting house looked like Noah's ark before it landed. A few drenched people sat before a drenched pastor, but most of the farmers stayed at home and thanked God that what was bad for the church was good for the crops. I committed a good deal of sin in those days in denouncing the weather. Ministers of the Gospel sometimes fret about stormy Sabbaths or hot Sabbaths or inclement Sabbaths. They forgot the fact that the same God who ordained the Sabbath and sent forth his ministers to announce salvation, also ordained the weather. "Hath the rain a father?"

Merchants, also, with their stores filled with new goods, and their clerks hanging idly around the counters, commit the same transgression. There have been seasons when the whole spring and fall trade has been ruined by protracted wet weather. The merchants then examined the "weather probabilities" with more interest than they read their Bibles. They watched for a patch of blue sky. They went complaining to the store and came complaining home again. In all that season of wet feet and dripping garments and impassable streets they never once asked the question, "Hath the rain a father.'

So agriculturists commit this sin. There is nothing more annoying than to have planted corn rot in the ground because of too much moisture, or hay all ready for the mow dashed of a shower, or wheat almost ready for the sickle spoiled with the rust. How hard it is to bear the agricultural disappointments. God has infinite resources, but I do not think he has capacity to make weather to please all the farmers. Sometimes it is too hot, or it is too cold; it is too wet, or it is too dry; it is too early, or it is too late. They forget that the God who promised seed time and harvest, summer and winter, cold and heat, also ordained all the climatic changes. There is one question that ought to be written on every barn, on every fence, on every haystack, on every farmhouse. "Hath the rain a father?"

If we only knew what a vast enterprise it is to provide appropriate weather for this world we would not be so critical of the Lord. Isaac Watts, at 10 years of age, complained that he did not like the hymns that were sung in the English chapel. "Well," said his father, "Isaac, instead of your complaining about the hymns go and make hymns that are better." And he did go and make hymns that were better. Now, I say to you, if you do not like the weather, get up a weather company, and have a president, and secretary, and a treasurer, and a board of directors, and ten million dollars of stock, and then provide weather that will suit all of us. There is a man who has a weak head, and he cannot stand the glare of the sun. You must have a cloud always hovering over him.

I like sunshine; I can not live without plenty of sunlight, so you must always have enough light for me. The one is going to Southhampton, and the other is coming to New York. Provide weather that, while it is abaft for one ship, it is a head wind for the other. There is a farm that is dried up for the lack of rain, and here is a pleasure party going out for a field excursion. Provide weather that will suit the dry farm and the pleasure excursion. No, sirs, I will not take one dollar of stock in your weather company. There is only one Being in the universe who knows enough to provide the right kind of weather for this world. "Hath the rain a father?"

My text also suggests God's minute supervisal. You see the divine Sonship in every drop of rain. The jewels of the shower are not flung away by a spendthrift who knows not how many he throws or where they fall. They are all shining princes of Heaven. They all have an eternal lineage. They are all the children of a king. "Hath the rain a father?" Well, then, I say if God takes notice of every minute rain drop He will take notice of the most insignificant affair of my life. It is the astronomical view of things that bothers me.

We look up into the night heavens and we say, "Worlds! worlds!" and how insignificant we feel! We stand at the foot of Mount Washington or Mont Blanc, and we feel that we are only insects, and then we say to ourselves, "Though the world is so large the sun is one million four hundred thousand times larger." "Oh!" we say, "it is no use; if God wheels that great machinery through immensity He will not take the trouble to look down at me!" Infidel conclusion. Saturn, Mercury, and Jupiter are no more rounded and weighed and swung by the hand of God than are the globules on a lilac bush the morning after a shower.

God is no more in magnitudes than He is in minutiæ. If He has scales to weigh the mountains He has balances delicate enough to weigh the infinitesimal. You can no more see Him through the telescope than you can see Him through the microscope; no more when you look up than when you look down. Are not the hairs of your head all numbered? And if Himalaya has a God, "Hath not the rain a father?"

I take this doctrine of a particular Providence, and I thrust it into the very midst of your everyday life. If God fathers a raindrop, is there anything so insignificant in your affairs that God will not father that? When Druyse, the gunsmith, invented the needle gun, which decided the battle of Sadowa, was it a mere accident? When a farmer's boy showed Blucher a short cut by which he could bring his army up soon enough to decide Waterloo for England, was it a mere accident?

When Lord Byron took a piece of money and tossed it up to decide whether or not he should be affianced to Miss Millbanks, was it a mere accident which side of the money was up and which was down? When the Christian army were besieged at Beziers, and a drunken drummer came in at midnight and rang the alarm bell, not knowing what he was doing, but waking up the host in time to fight their enemies that moment arriving, was it an accident?

When, in one of the Irish wars, a starving mother, flying with her starving child, sank down and fainted on the rocks in the night and her hand fell on a warm bottle of milk, did that just happen so? God is either in the affairs of men, or our religion is worth nothing at all, and you had better take it away from us; and instead of this Bible, which teaches the doctrine, give us a secular book, and let us, as the famous Mr. Fox, the member of Parliament, in his last hour, cried out, "Read me the eighth book of Virgil."

Oh, my friends, let us rouse up to an appreciation of the fact that all the affairs of our life are under a King's command and under a Father's watch. Alexander's war horse, Bucephalus, would allow anybody to mount him when he was unharnessed, but as soon as they put on that war horse Bucephalus the saddle and the trappings of the conquerer, he would allow no one but Alexander to touch him. And if a soulless horse could have so much pride in his owner, shall not we immortals exult in the fact that we are owned by a King? "Hath the rain a father?"

Again, my subject teaches me that God's dealings with us are inexplicable. That was the original force of my text. The rain was a great mystery to the ancients. They could not understand how the water should get into the cloud, and getting there, how it should be suspended, or falling, why it should come down in drops. Modern science comes along and says there are two portions of air of different temperature, and they are charged with moisture, and the one portion of air decreases in temperature so the water may no longer be held in vapor and it falls. And they tell us that some of the clouds that look to be only as large as a man's hand, and to be almost quiet in the heavens, are great mountains of mist 4,000 feet from base to top, and that they rush miles a minute.

But after all the brilliant experiments of Dr. James Hutton and Saussure and other scientists, there is an infinite mystery about the rain. There is an ocean of the unfathomable in every raindrop, and God said to-day as he said in the time of Job, "If you cannot understand one drop of rain, do not be surprised if my dealings with you are inexplicable." Why does that aged man, decrepit, beggared, vicious, sick of the world, and the world sick of him, live on, while here is a man in midlife, consecrated to God, hard working, useful in every respect, who dies?

Why does that old gossip, gadding along the street about everybody's business but her own, have such good health, while the Christian mother, with a flock of little ones about her whom she is preparing for usefulness and for Heaven—the mother who you think could not be spared an hour from that household—why does she lie down and die with a cancer? Why does that man, selfish to the core, go on adding fortune to fortune, consuming everything on himself, continue to prosper, while that man who has been giving 10 per cent. of all his income to God and the church goes into bankruptcy?

Before we make stark fools of ourselves let us stop pressing this everlasting "why." Let us worship where we cannot understand. Let a man take that one question, "Why?" and follow it far enough, and push it, and he will land in wretchedness and perdition. We want in our theology fewer interrogation marks and more exclamation points. Heaven is the place for explanation. Earth is the place for trust. If you cannot understand so minute a thing as a raindrop, how can you expect to understand God's dealings? "Hath the rain a father?"

Again, my text makes me think that the rain of tears is of divine origin. Great clouds of trouble sometimes hover over us. They are black, and they are gorged, and they are thunderous. They are more portentous than Salvator or Claude ever painted—clouds of poverty or persecution or bereavement. They hover over us, and get darker and blacker, and after a while a tear starts, and we think by an extra pressure of the eyelid to stop it. Others follow, and after a while there is a shower of tearful emotion. Yea, there is a rain of tears. "Hath that rain a father?"

"Oh," you say, "a tear is nothing but a drop of limpid fluid secreted by the lachrymal gland—is only a sign of weak eyes." Great mistake. It is one of the Lord's richest benedictions to the world. There are people in Blackwell's Island insane asylum, and at Unica, and at all the asylums of this land, who were demented by the fact that they could not cry at the right time. Said a maniac in one of our public institutions, under a Gospel sermon that started the tears: "Do you see that tear? That is the first I have wept for twelve years. I think it will help my brain."

There are a great many in the grave who could not stand any longer under the glacier of trouble. If that glacier had only melted into weeping they could have endured it. There have been times in your life when you would have given the world, if you had possessed it, for one tear. You could shriek, you could blaspheme, but you could not cry. Have you never seen a man holding the hand of a dead wife, who had been all the world to him? The temples livid with excitement, the eye dry and frantic, no moisture on the upper or lower lid. You saw there were bolts of anger in the cloud but no rain.

To your Christian comfort he said, "Don't talk to me about God; there is no God; or if there is I hate Him; don't talk to me about God; would He have left me and these motherless children?" But a few hours or days after, coming across some lead pencil that she owned in life, or some letters which she wrote when he was away from home, with an outcry that appeals there bursts the fountain of tears, and as the sunlight of God's consolation strikes that fountain of tears you find out that it is a tender hearted, merciful, pitful and all compassionate God who was the Father of that rain.

"Oh," you say, "it's absurd to think that God is going to watch over tears." No, my friends. There are three or four kinds of them that God counts, bottles and eternizes. First, there are all parental tears, and there are more of these than of any other kind, because the most of the race die in infancy, and that keeps parents mourning all around the world. They never get over it. They may live to shout and sing afterward, but there is always a corridor in the soul that is silent, though it once resounded.

Little children soon get over the loss of parents. They are easily diverted with a new toy. But where is the man who has come to thirty or forty or fifty years of age who can think of the old people without having all the fountains of his soul stirred up? You may have had to take care of her a good many years, but you never can forget how she used to take care of you. There have been many sea captains converted in our church and the peculiarity of them was that they were nearly all prayed ashore by their mothers, though the mothers went into the dust soon after they went to sea. Have you never heard an old man in delirium of some sickness call for his mother?

The fact is we get so used to calling for her the first ten years of our life we never get over it, and when she goes away from us it makes deep sorrow. You sometimes, perhaps, in days of trouble and darkness, when the world would say, "You ought to be able to take care of yourself," you wake up from your dreams finding yourself saying, "Oh, mother! mother." Have those tears no divine origin? Why, take all the warm hearts that ever beat in all lands and in all ages, and put them together, and their united throb would be weak compared with the throb of God's eternal sympathy. Yes, God also is Father of all that rain of repentance.

Did you ever see a rain of repentance? Do you know what it is that makes a man repent? I see people going around trying to repent. Do you know no man can repent until God helps him to repent? How do I know? By this passage, "Him hath God exalted to be a prince and a Saviour to give repentance." Oh! it is a tremendous hour when one wakes up and says: "I am a bad man; I have not sinned against the laws of the land, but I have wasted my life. God asked me for my services and I haven't given those services. Oh! my sins, God forgive me.

When that tear starts it thrills all Heaven. An angel cannot keep his eye off it, and the church of God assembles around, and there is a commingling of tears, and God is the Father of that rain. the Lord, long suffering, merciful and gracious. In a religious assemblage a man arose and said: "I have been a very wicked man; I broke my mother's heart; I became an infidel; but I have seen my evil way; and I have surrendered my heart to God. But it is a grief I never can get over that my parents should never have heard of my salvation. I don't know whether they are living or dead." While yet he was standing in the audience, a voice from the gallery said, "Oh, my son, my son!"

He looked up and he recognized her. It was his old mother. She had been praying for him for a great many years, and when at the foot of the cross the prodigal son and the praying mother embraced each other, there was a rain, a tremendous rain, of tears, and God was the Father of those tears. Oh, that God would break us down with a sense of our sin, and then lift us up with an appreciation of His mercy. Tears over our wasted life. Tears over a grieved spirit. Tears over an injured father. Oh, that God would move upon this audience with a great wave of religious emotion.

My friends, you have driven the Lord Jesus Christ, the king of the church, away from your heart; you have been maltreating Him all these years; but He comes back to-day. He stands in front of the gates of your soul. If you will only pray for His pardon, He will meet you with His gracious spirit and He will say: "Thy sins are thine iniquities I will remember no more. Open wide the gate; I will take the throne. My peace I give unto you." And then, all through the audience, from the young and from the old, there will be a rain of tears, and God will be the Father of that rain!

THE sale of beer in Berlin is regulated by law, and each glass has a mark upon the side showing the height below which there must be no froth, and your average German is very particular to see that the top of the beer and the bottom of the foam meet at that line.