

until the bag reached its destination, and no one had any notion where the theft was committed. But a petrologist was shown the rocks, and he said at once that there was only one place in the United States where such rocks were found. He told where the place was, and a detective going there—it was only 450 miles away—found two Chinamen at work in an isolated spot, where, it was subsequently remembered, the robbed train had stopped for water. He promptly charged them with the crime, and they were so taken by surprise that they confessed it. So much for rock.

ACCORDING to an official report on the prospects of the wheat crops in the Punjab, the spring harvest is likely to prove anything but a good one. At the end of January it was estimated that the area under cultivation was less by five per cent than it had been the year before, the actual decrease being put at as much as 343,500 acres. On lands irrigated by the great canals of Upper India the crops promised well, but where the cultivators only depend on the winter rains, a long continued drouth has had the worst effect. The Allahabad *Pioneer* states that the position is much the same in the northwest provinces. In the Meerut and Kohilkund division the wheat harvest is expected to be 40 per cent below a full average crop.

THAT was a peculiar recommendation which the Home Secretary made to the Queen in the case of the two young men who were sentenced to death at Crewe for the premeditated murder of their father. Their guilt was beyond question, but it was pleaded in extenuation that their father was a brute, and that they killed him to save their mother from his cruelty. Hence half the adult population of England rose as one man, and petitioned that they be reprieved. In forwarding these petitions to the Queen at Aix-les-Bains, the Home Secretary recommended that one of them be hanged and the other reprieved. This, considering that they were equally guilty, and that they conspired to kill their father, strikes the English public as so monstrous that the Home Secretary is denounced as a "barbarian," and may be forced to resign his office.

TEXAS is expending about \$3,000,000 annually on her public schools, and half a million more on the State university, agricultural college and schools for the deaf and dumb and blind. The school fund is growing from the sale of public lands and other sources at the rate of more than \$1,000,000 yearly. To the income from the school fund is added the proceeds of local taxes levied for this purpose. The State has a school population of some half a million, about one-fourth colored. Normal schools for both white and colored pupils are supported by the State, and there are some 3000 colored teachers employed in the public schools. Texas does very much better so far as length of term and salaries of teachers go than the other

southern States. Teachers there earn \$45 per month on an average, which is above the average for the whole country,—they teach about six months in the year. The number of teachers employed is annually increasing, and the expenditures on account of schools will be \$500,000 larger this year than last.

APRONS IN PARIS.

Would you believe, for instance, that Paris wears eighteen different styles of aprons, and never by any chance mixes these aprons up? Ah! I thought not. You might be in Paris many weeks, skimming the usual sightseers' ground, and come away in ignorance of a fact of which even residents of years are surprised to learn. The working classes, you think, are a picturesque element in the gay throngs frequenting the public squares and gardens, but, beyond noting the general neatness of their attire and the fact that so many wear aprons, any particularity or uniformity about the article escapes the tourist's observation. And yet the butcherboy would as soon be guilty of appropriating the style of apron his comrade, the green grocer's apprentice, ties about his waist, as he would of decking himself in the belaced and embroidered *tablier* crossing the generous proportions of a Champs Elysees nurse.

No, indeed; from the dimmest era now lost in obscurity, the Paris butcher-boy has worn a uniform betokening the trade of which he is invariably a cheerful ornament. The apron he wears is a most curious affair, and he himself must be regarded as the aristocrat of the apron wearers, for he sports no less than three aprons at once. Two of these aprons are apparently superfluous, as they are rolled up and fastened at each side; the third is worn in front and held in place across the breast by a string made into a peculiar knot at the back. Whenever you see this odd knot you may be assured a butcher's apprentice has tied it. The method requires as delicate manipulation as does the successful arrangement of the white neck-tie, and our gallant butcher-boy takes as much pains with its construction as any swell dressing for a ball. Its tying is a profound secret, and no matter what inducement you offer he won't disclose it—you must become a butcherboy to find it out. With his fresh white aprons, ruddy complexion and closely cropped hair—for never by any chance does he wear a hat during the functions of his office—the butcherboy is by no means an unappetizing object. Undoubtedly when he marries or takes Marie out for a Sunday, he dons a hat and throws the apron aside; but to speak of a butcherboy's hat at any other time would be like speaking of the orchestra at the Theatre Francais. It does not exist.

The Paris baker of world-wide fame sends out his bread, not in baskets and wagons, as is the custom in America, but by a woman who wears the longest apron on record.

As will be observed, its extraordinary length is for a reason. When it is dropped down, this apron trails on the ground in front of her, and its utility is as evident as its simplicity is beautiful to the unaccustomed eye. The ends of this apron she ties together, forming a sock in which the bread is carried. There is a waist fitting over the shoulders so that her load, by no means a light one, weighs upon the shoulders and does not pull altogether on the hips. Who invented this novel *panier au pain* is not known, but it must have been some genius who could not afford a donkey cart, and desired to economize space.

The small breakfast rolls—how good they are!—the long and the short loaves, the sticks of bread so slender that they are called "*flutes*," and are only crust to be broken up in soups, are brought in this amazing apron. Mr. Henry Bacon, the artist, tells me, that when he was in the Beaux Arts studying under Cabanel, there was a pupil there whose father was a baker, and a fine baker at that. The young fellow was tall and thin, and they at once christened him in the school "*Flute-au-soupe*," and to this day, when they meet together to chat and dine, he is called by his thoroughly Parisian nickname.

This sturdy woman who carries bread is not one of the aristocrats in aprons. She is a sort of patient pack-horse going her rounds sometimes and too heavily loaded to relish gossiping with customers on her route. She seldom sees her clients, as she leans her loaves against the door, rings and departs. It is not a ring which penetrates to the ears of the sleepy master or mistress of the apartment; on the contrary, it is only a gentle tinkle, forsooth, for having called so early, before anybody is awake.

These broad aprons which are often the property of the baker, are always made of dark blue linen. As they cost twenty-five francs, or five dollars apiece, a poor working woman is not expected to supply them any more than she is expected to furnish the baker's shop. In Paris, breadstuffs receive a certain worship not accorded the staff of life in less economical lands, and bread-making has consequently reached the acme of perfection among a people who look upon flour with reverence, and its productions with intimate affection. That its transportation should be originally conducted is not surprising. A loaf carried about in an apron is no more singular than to see it tucked, unwrapped, under a buyer's arm, or used as a cushion for the cold sidewalk by the urchin who pauses to watch a top spin on his way home from the baker's shop. As the loaves have a hard and slippery surface, their integrity is preserved under adverse circumstances, and when more delicate substances must surely be rendered unfit for human consumption. Let fastidious people take comfort in that thought. But unless one rises very early, the baker's woman will remain an invisible factor in the distribution of our daily bread.—*Wide Awake*.