A UNIQUE MUSHROOM HOUSE.

G. C. DAVIES.

As announced in last week's issue I was recently called to Grand Rapids to aid if I could in controlling some mushroom pests at that place. Mr. Apted, who is having the trouble, is a hustler in business and some time ago he conceived the idea of utilizing one of their mammoth old caves, from which the plaster has been mined, for mushroom growing. Consent of the stock company was obtained under certain restrictions, and Mr. Apted commenced over a year ago to try his skill. Up to a month or two ago prospects were very flattering. A seventeen acre cave would give him possibilities of supplying all Michigan and an occasional treat for Chicago besides. The temperature, too, does not vary summer or winter and is just right to the degree for raising mushrooms the year round. These are two of the most essential conditions at the start and success seemed imminent, when, all unexpectantly, there came this mighty scourge of little mice, too small to be detected individually by the unaided eye, but in legions sufficient to injure or destroy every mushroom before it is old enough for market. Most of the mushrooms are being destroyed while in the young or pin-point stage. In some beds where the mushrooms were not very plentiful, the mice would gather in large mass nestlings, awaiting the arrival of pin-points through the crust. In the larger stoles that had escaped at first the mice were burying themselves in groups here and there over the cap.

Such was the condition of affairs on my arrival. Whether we will win the day or yield to this little invader remains for the future to decide. The cave is very dry, and in such an atmosphere the mice thrive and breeds rapidly. If we could create a humid atmosphere like the forest in fighting the red spiders, the question would be decided, but the stock company say that must not be, even though the mushroom industry has to be given up, as it will not the supports and slumfold the plaster rock above. Mr. Apted has already tried all the remedies that Grand Rapids people have suggested to him, which is no small number, with only negative results. We shall try several more remedies this week which are no small number, with only negative results. We shall try several more remedies this week which are no small number, with only negative results.

THE BANANA.

Mr. Apted began over a year ago to try his skill. The banana is one of the aristocrats of the vegetable kingdom, and while it has long been the principal farinaceous food of the people of nearly all tropical and semi-tropical countries, it is only within recent years that its fruit has been used to any extent by people of colder climates. Though really herbs, bananas assume all the appearance of trees. Their stems, consisting of the shalloviest leaves of the stalks of the large palm like leaves, are soft, spongy and destitute of wooden structure, yet some species attain a height of twenty-five feet. The plant is propagated for making fresh plantations, the flowers spring in great spikes from the center of the crown of leaves and are arranged in whorl-like clusters along the spike, the female flower occupying the base of the spike and the male the apex. The average weight of a bunch is about 25 lbs., but they are often known to exceed 70 or 80 lbs. In the greenhouse two years ago, the dwarf banana, M. Cavendishii, matured a bunch of fruit that weighed 65 lbs. The productive power of the banana is prodigious. On an acre of land it was estimated by Humboldt that it would produce 44 times as much weight as the potato, and 130 times as much as wheat.

The banana is in many other ways useful to man. The stem yields a juice that is used as an astringent and its spongy pith, when pounded and boiled, forms a nutritious food of a sturdy character. All parts of the plant abound in fibre that is adapted to the manufacture of cordage and paper though it has never been utilized to any great extent.

The top of the stem is boiled and eaten as a vegetable and the leaves are used in packing and for many domest­ic purposes.

Greenhouse.

NARROW ESCAPE FROM BROWNING.

One day during the recent cold snap Mr. Steele, who has for several years been an employed on the horticultur­al department, having occasion to cross the river into the college woods east of No. 7, went across on the ice. This was in the morning. After working in the woods all day he returned just at dark, took a light pole in his hands and started to recross the ice. But during the night the ice had frozen and the current, which is here very swift, had cut the ice away underneath only till a thin shell remained, and when near the middle of the stream Mr. Steele suddenly found himself plunged arm-pit deep into the swift, cold current. He called repeatedly for help, but being nearly half a mile from the nearest house, could make no one hear. He then began breaking his way to shore but here a new danger presented. Every time he attempted to break the ice ahead of him his feet would be lifted from the bottom and he was in imminent danger of being swept under the ice. Thanks to the pole which he had kept in his hands, he was able to brace himself against the current and slowly break the ice from in front until he got to where the water was shallower when he made more rapid progress. After being in the water about half an hour he at last reached the shore and then rapidly made his way to his home about half a mile distant, where a good fire and dry clothing soon restored his normal temperature.

THE MONEY VALUE OF MARL.


DEAR SIR—I send you herewith a sample of shell marl. What do you think of it to use as a fertilizer?

Yours truly,

W. F. C.
as local speakers, but the state furnishes no lady speak­ers, and women's work as we know it in Michigan is entirely wanting. On the whole, however, the Ohio system is a great success in the work, as about one third among the people is very marked, and the number of independent institutes is continually increasing. Ohio probably has more well developed institute workers than has any other state.

The Indiana system is not greatly different from that in logan in Ohio. The state appropriation is a lump sum of $500 per year. There is an institute in each of ninety-two counties, and about twenty-five or thirty independent meetings. Out of this $500 there go $25 to the institute societies for local expenses. The state expenses are paid out of the remainder, thus making a system which is intensely economical. The American System is peculiarly the system of the hands of Prof. Latta, with the title of Superintendent of Institutes. The general arrangements, as I said, are about as in the Ohio system. The meetings of the local societies are under the management of the Superintendent, although the superintendent endeavors to direct the selection of topics so as to concentrate somewhat upon special topics. A number of them suggest to the state being Mrs. Meredith, who is well known to many Michigan people. I think the work of making the institutions popular in Indiana must have been a much greater task than in Ohio, as I judge that the conservative character of the people inclined them to prejudices against the institute work; but the result has been so large as to make the prejudice done away with and the work is very popular. The meetings are certainly well attended.

The Wisconsin system is different from either of the others. The state is strongly centralised, the state running the meetings entirely. There are no local societies, the places of meetings being determined upon by the Superintendent in consultation with the immediate direction of the Superintendent, who makes out the schedules of dates and meetings, and assigns to each meeting a considerable amount of literature. These programs are made out at the office of the Superintendent and sent to each institute. He also undertakes to advertise the meetings in the local newspapers, which are distributed by the local people. In addition to the conductor and his assistant, there is usually a specialist who concerns himself with the work of agriculture. Each of these will stay but one day in a place; the others remain through the meeting, the same as do the speakers in Indiana and Ohio. The conductors preside at all sessions.

There are many good features in the Wisconsin system. Institute work is there organised better than in any other state I know. One feature is the very close supervision given the work. In Superintendent McKerrow the State has almost an ideal head of its institute work. There is also a great deal of good material on many good features. The conductors are all well trained for their work and succeed in keeping the meet­ings lively, and especially in eliciting pointed questions. The programs of the Wisconsin state are well known features of well established merit. The speakers are all practical and successful farmers, but many of them do not always appear to be so well known outside of the State as are many of the workers in Indiana, and especially those in Ohio. There is a good variety of topics on the programs, and rapid questioning of speak­ers is a feature to be most highly commended. On the other hand, it strikes me that the system is somewhat expensive, as $1,000 to hold but 105 two day meetings and 10 one day meetings. Still, the publicity of the bulletin makes quite an extra expense. I would hardly want to call the system extravagant, but perhaps one might be somewhat expensive. It is a heavy expense. Perhaps the strongest objection to the Wiscon­sin plan is the lack of local speakers and control; at least the work of the institutes is very much in the hands of Indiana. The state appropriation is $12,000 per year. The state appropriation is $12,000 per year. The state appropriation is $12,000 per year.

The oil is obtained from the leaves of the plant, so that one ton of oil may produce the growth of the plant, or 8800 pecks of oil. It does away with weeds and does away with weeds.

As soon as it is ready to harvest sect a hot, dry, hot; the bacteria in the hot air will bring the growth to a close.

The first year's crop must be mowed with a scythe and raked by hand; the second year's crop may be har­vested with a mowing machine and raked with a horse reel.

I am not in favor of letting a crop stand the third year, as the yield is small and the grade of oil inferior.

The growth is replanted the best rent for land, and does away with weeds.

The soil must be plowed in the fall, so as to save time and keep from spoiling.

The soil is then drawn to the distillery and placed in tubs 5 feet high and 5 feet wide.

After mowing leave on the ground until the leaves are well wilted. The oil is obtained from the leaves of the plant, so that one ton of oil may produce the growth of the plant, or 8800 pecks of oil. It does away with weeds and does away with weeds.

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L. W. Watkins, Manchester, Chairman,
W. E. Milliken, Grand Rapids,
T. L. Hankinson, Agricultural College.
Committee on Bird Migration and Field Work.

AT THE COLLEGE.

Hon. C. J. Monroe visited college last Thursday.

Mrs. Baker returned to her home in Chicago last Friday.

Mrs. Wescott has been suffering with an attack of tonsillitis.

S. W. Risner, with '97, Lyons, Mich., was a visitor at the College last Saturday.

Last Thursday Mrs. H. L. Bachtel of Flint, called on her brother, Mr. M. L. Deo.

Norman and Bland Edwards have been kept out of school for some time by whooping-cough.

Scott J. Redfern, '97, returned to College last Friday. He has just closed his four months' school.

Already nearly 300 teachers have applied to Prof. Taft for the certificate examination.

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Dr. Grange was called to the aid of a sick person in the city last Saturday.

At the last meeting of the directors of the Michigan Inter-Collegiate Athletic Association, which was held in Jackson, Kalamazoo College was admitted as the associate member of the association.

The Ashcroft Mfg. Company of New York have extended their contract for the delivery of the new instrument from the statement that it is equal in accuracy to the best of the leading mechanical papers of the country, and said to be "just what is wanted," is paralleled in many respects by the M. A. C. courses.

The Crosby Steam Gage and Valve Company of Boston, Mass., recently presented each member of the senior class in the mechanical course with a copy of the book issued by the company on the steam engine indicator. The Ashcroft Mfg. Company of New York have presented the same copies with copies of their descriptive book.

The Raccoon would go on with a strange feeling of incompleteness if it did not have at least one birth or wedding to report from the College each week. This week it is a wedding. Harry F. Gladden, '95, assisted in the engagement of Mr. W. H. Baker, '95, to Miss Florence Gladden, '95, Makoma, Grand Traverse, Mich., on the 10th of this month.

Last Thursday evening the eighteen freshmen started out in squads of four and five to make calls on the newly married couples. The calls were a sur­prise to all but Mr. and Mrs. Brookes who in turn surprised the Racoon with various refreshments to all who came, except the first couple who left before they had come to a halt and the first hour limit had been previously passed.

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The annual yield of rice for the whole empire is about 1,750,000 bushels. Of this, about 500,000 bushels are exported to a considerable extent. Beans, peas, and barley are raised throughout the empire. Almost no rice is grown in the north, and almost no peas in the south.

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drawn from the canals and conducted" upon the fields that at the present time about one-third of the water of visible tributaries." This renewal of the stream into canals, not far below the stream will though streams may be drained dry by the diversion of where irrigation is practised it is often the case that, so soil and found its way back into the old channel. In

Silk and cotton are worn almost entirely. Milk is hardly
ries, currants, or strawberries growing in our country.

One of these large
country. We have such a variety that we are not with-

It is not yet like this country where the number of

The Japanese farmer keeps but little live stock. Hogs and sheep are not kept at all, and cattle only for pur-

The house of the Japanese farmer is not an elaborate

SEEPAGE WATERS.

5. That the longer a grain is in proportion to its

4. That mid-season varieties produce the largest

3. That bearded wheats tend to produce large grains

These ashes contain more than 25 per cent of inactive
These ashes show on analysis the following results:

IDENTIFYING WHEAT BY THE KERNEL.

THE M. A. C. RECORD.

WOOD ASHES.

THE M. A. C. RECORD.

POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

In the issue of March 10 brief mention was made of the feeding experiments that were being carried on in the poultry department. A number of the cattle, sheep, and horses are not kept at all, and cattle only for pur-

V. C. K.

These ashes show on analysis the following results:

Next Term Begins May 25

Work on April 6.

BEGUN

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