

“THE NATION’S GARDENER.”

The American nation is like a vast garden; it occupies a large extent of land; it has had a vast deal of work expended on it, and it requires still an untold amount of labor to develop its resources. “The nation’s gardener” has no easy post to fill, requiring to know, as he does, that all the land is being utilized and economized. He may well have the consideration and sympathy of every class and of every person for whom he is engaged to cater and to care; and one cannot be surprised if his mind is troubled at times by “haze,” and if he longs for an easier life, for a freer, lighter air. It is a responsible and serious thing merely to have to “appoint” the under-gardeners and secure their fidelity to duty and persevering diligence. President Grant told his friend, Charles Dudley Warner, that his was the first garden he had been in where the talk was not of “appointments.” When Warner offered him a cigar, he declined, saying he “didn’t like a weed in a garden.” What a deal of hoeing President Hayes will have to do before he gets all the weeds out of the national garden. It appears that he and Mrs. Hayes are much willing, even somewhat desirous to go hoeing and weed out all the whisky-drinkers from the nation. This is undoubtedly a mighty and perplexing task. If the whisky drinkers gave their time to improve the garden, what an immense deal of irrigation might be carried on this dry year, and many meals might be supplied to hungry, vacuous stomachs. What a hungry void is felt this year, as men are sighing for next season, as Dickens said the waiters did at the seaside hotels in the winter, “looking out of the windows for next season.” President Hayes is of the same mind as Warner, who says he “doesn’t like to be seen in a garden with the dead-beets.” Even those the President designs to utilize. It seems to us that all the under-gardeners may engage themselves from time to time hoeing up the “weeds” and preparing the ground for new and nutritive productions. Much space is required for the young shoots to be planted, and the rising generation undoubtedly deserves a fair chance for planting and developing. President Hayes cares greatly that the young be carefully nurtured, educated and started in life. Warner tells us he would like to have a part of the “Ten Commandments” in large letters in his garden and some traps also. Thieves troubled him, and he could well sympathize with President Hayes in his irrepresible desire to banish from or convert all thieves in the national garden. It is to be hoped that the President will be able to refresh himself during these hot summer days with fruits out of his garden. It should be the care of every individual voter to send to the national Congress such men as will be able to relieve the hands and the mind and the nerves of the President. Warner tells us “by your fruits you will know who your friends are, and we must hope the ripe things the President has to give away will go to true friends and lovers of their country.”—Charles Bernick in Royal Press.

A WARNING.—He who champions the cause of the workman, falls far short of his duty if he fails to warn him against one terrible, common enemy, the liquor saloon. If you are not a temperance man, there is all the more reason why you should look this subject fair in the face. The saloon is not an industrial concern. It neither feeds nor clothes you. It adds neither to your comforts nor enjoyments. It is a trap placed upon nearly every corner, to catch your money without giving a profitable return. It absorbs a portion of your earnings, and leaves you none the better for it, but very likely much the worse in morals, health, pocket and self-respect. You know that this is so if you stop to think. The seeds of numberless evils and none whatever of good to mankind grow in those hot-beds of corruption. We beg our friends, the workmen, to avoid liquor saloons. If you can find no other society nor place of resort, you are indeed unfortunate; but better none than such as thus lowers your manhood and your purse.—*Cal. Agriculturist.*

FASHIONABLE DINNER.—There can be little doubt that the very late dinner hour patronized by modern society is highly unnatural, undesirable, and pernicious. The fatigues undergone by fashionable folks during the day do not tend to whet appetite—rather they serve to blunt it, cravings—besides, the stomach of such is unfitted from properly fulfilling its functions. Of course tempting viands are presented on the dining-table, prepared by practised and skillful cooks, while the pleasures of love, friendship, and social converse become added as incentives. All the more dangerous, we should say. It is possible to cloy the stomach, and yet derive no benefit therefrom, but contrariwise. Better be in the condition of the Cambridge students of yore, and “diet upon fasting every day” than cause the human system to receive more than it can digest. “I restrained myself,” observes Bacon, “no so regular a diet as to eat flesh but once a day, and a little at a time, without salt or vinegar.”

ELECTRIC PLANT.—The *Gazette Horticulte de Neuchâtel* publishes some information respecting a plant of the family of *Phytolacca*, which grows in that country and which possesses electro-magnetic properties. When a branch is cut off, the hand holding it experiences an electric sensation similar to that from a Ruhmkorff battery, and the electrical influence of the plant has been observed several paces from the plant by the deviation of the needle of a small compass. When the compass was placed by the experimenter close to the plants, the needle turned completely round. The soil is said by the *Moniteur Industriel* to contain no trace of iron or other magnetic metal, so that the property is inherent in the plant itself. The intensity of the phenomenon varies with the hour of the day—at night it is almost nil, and most intense during the two midday hours or in a wind; during rain it was weak. No birds or insects have been seen to rest upon the *Phytolacca electrica*.

THE POPPY AND THE BEE.

A wild bee, which had flown far without having breakfasted, at length entered a garden, the first he had seen. “What a paradise!” he cried. The first thing that attracted his attention was a full-blown poppy; but, accustomed only to mint, wild thyme and such like fare, he approached the gaudy beauty with diffidence. “A little pollen, please,” he at length ventured to say, in the humblest manner. “Be off! be off!” was the ill-natured reply. The poor bee was almost fainting with hunger and fatigue, and asked leave to rest himself. “Be off!” returned the haughty flower; “I don’t encourage idle vagrants like you. Stay at home, and you will not have to complain of being tired; sit upon your own stalk, and you won’t have to support yourself by begging. Be off.” Did the silly poppy imagine that butterflies, bees and such-like creatures, were nothing else than wandering blossoms? However this may be, it was overheard one day talking to itself after this fashion: “What is a flower born for, I should like to know, but to see and be seen and admired! These pansies, with all their pretensions, are such a set of flatterers so low-born and ill-bred. With the gardener, the great judge of plants and the arbiter of their fortunes, the pansies were especial favorites; and he took great pains and no small pleasure in rearing them.

DISINFECTANTS.

The commission appointed by the Academy of Medicine of St. Petersburg, to study the effect of the different antiseptic substances and disinfectants so-called, came to the following conclusions, which are printed in the *Annales de Genie Civil*:
1. Carbolic acid is most efficacious in preventing the formation of ammonia, and the development of inferior organisms by the decomposition of organic matter; it is, in consequence, the best antiseptic.
2. Oil of vitriol, the salts of zinc, and charcoal are the most active for neutralizing the foul odors originating from putrid matter.
3. The powders of Prof. Kittary, together with the hypochlorites which they possess in common with other carbonated disinfectants, attracted attention by reason of their isolating the phenol and the quick-lime which enter into their composition. These absorb moisture, as well as the gases which are formed by decomposition.
4. Chloride of lime and permanganate of potassa act promptly in destroying the inferior organisms found in putrid liquids.
5. These disinfectants retard, in a measure, the development of putrefaction in organic matter, but their influence is but momentary. As regards the purification of apartments, their influence is but feeble, if not totally ineffectual, by reason of the small degree of concentration

TREATMENT FOR LEAD AND MERCURY POISONINGS.

Our workers in lead and quicksilver will be interested in the following, from *France*: To a Belgian professor, M. Melsens, the Paris Academy of Sciences awarded, last April, the prize of £100 founded by M. Anquet-de-Montyon to encourage the invention of processes for diminishing the risks of unwholesome trades. This prize was decreed to M. Melsens for his method of curing and preventing lead and mercurial poisoning. The report of the committee appointed to examine into M. Melsens’ process is as follows:
Thirty years ago Prof. Melsens pointed out iodide of potassium as a means for successfully combating the ill effects of lead or mercury on the human body. Experiments undertaken in conjunction with Prof. Guillot confirmed the results first obtained by M. Melsens, who has since for a long period been pursuing his investigations and experiments.

Considering saturnine or mercurial affections as being due to the presence of metal in the organs which are the seats of those affections, M. Melsens administers graduated doses of iodide of potassium. The noxious metals are, by the action of this drug, carried away in the urine in the form of double soluble iodides. M. Melsens also advises the use of the iodide of potassium as a preventive in cases where men are exposed to the effects of lead-dust or mercurial emanations.
Numerous experiments in the course of 30 years have proved the practical value of this system of treatment. Workmen affected with lead paralysis have been cured; others, who were unable to follow their calling from their liability to saturnine colic, have been enabled to take it up again, fortified by a regimen of which a dose of iodide of potassium formed part. The result of the observations made at Brussels and Lille, and the letters and certificates sent to the Academy, leave no doubt on the point.

With regard to mercurial affections the observation made by M. Melsens in person have been confirmed by those made at the mercury mines at Idria. The workmen engaged in the manipulation of mercury and mercurial products at the Idria mines have been made the subject of various methods of treatment, curative or preventive, and the good effects of the iodide are no longer doubted of.

At a special hospital in Vienna, ample occasion has been furnished to watch the action of the iodide in freeing the body from the presence of fixed mercury and preventing its fixation. It has been found that in presence of the drug the symptoms characteristic of the mercury are removed or diminished, or prevented from declaring themselves.
The action of the iodide of potassium, according to M. Melsens’ idea, is a purely chemical one. It consists in determining the metal rendered insoluble by the formation of some albuminous compound to take on a soluble form by the creation of a double iodide, removable *per viam urinariam*. Whether this is the case or whether its action consists in determining destruction the evacuation of the morbid tissues containing the fixed metal, it is not the part of the committee to determine. It is sufficient that the author of this process has fully succeeded in diminishing the danger of certain mining and manufacturing operations.

RED-HEADED WOOD-PECKER.

The red-headed wood-pecker, shown in our illustration, is well-known throughout the United States. They prepare their nests in the large limbs of trees, adding no material to the cavity which they smooth out for the purpose. Sometimes several perforations are found in the same tree; but living trees are seldom occupied by them. The same tree is employed for years in succession by a pair of these birds. The eggs, usually six in number, are white, marked at the largest end with reddish spots, in which last particular they differ from all others of the genus.

THE FRENCH POT-AU-FEU.—The *pot-au-feu* is the most important feature of the cuisine of the common people of France, and is remarkable for its economy and its nutritive value. The following recipe is interesting as coming from Careme, one of the most celebrated of French cooks: The good housewife puts her meat into an earthen pot, and pours cold water on it, in the proportion of two quarts to three pounds of the beef. She sets it at the side of the fire. The pot grows gradually hot, and as the water heats it dilates the muscular fibers of the flesh by dissolving the gelatinous matter which covers them, and allows the albumen to detach itself easily and rise to the surface of the water in light foam or scum, while the savory juice of the meat dissolving little by little, adds flavor to the broth. By this simple proceeding of slow cooking, the housewife obtains a savory and nourishing broth, and tender boiled meat with a good flavor. But by placing the *pot-au-feu* on too hot a fire it boils too soon; the albumen coagulates and the fiber hardens; the sad result is that you have only a hard piece of boiled meat and a broth without flavor or goodness. A little fresh water poured into the pot at intervals, helps the scum to rise more abundantly.

A NEW RULE CONCERNING PARDONS.—Few people have the hard-heartedness to withhold their signatures from a petition for a pardon, particularly when it is presented by influential persons, who at the same time make plausible excuses for some unfortunate condemned man. They often sign against their convictions of right, but as there has been no publicity given to their names, they avoid public responsibility for the act. Governor Cullom, of Illinois, well aware of the “dodge” practiced in many cases, is determined not to be misled. He has, therefore, adopted the rule of publishing the names of all signers to these petitions before exercising clemency, so that those who might be inclined afterwards to assert that they signed from a misapprehension of the facts, will have opportunity to make explanations. It is observed that since this rule went into operation, the applications for pardon are not near so numerous as formerly, nor the list of signatures attached so lengthy by one-half.



THE RED HEADED WOOD-PECKER.

It so happened that he passed just as the poppy was exchanging her last “Be off!” and scornfully shaking her glowing petals after the retreating bee.

Looking angrily at the flower, he said: “What is sweeter than honey? and how should we have honey without bees? and how should bees live if all the flowers were as vain and empty-headed as you!”

So saying, he picked it up by the root and threw it over the garden wall.

The bee cheerfully resumed its flight and soon alighted in the midst of a pot of mignonette, where it was regaled with the sweetest nectar.

A MOTHER’S SACRIFICE.—I do not think the community knows how really good and self-sacrificing the majority of our public school-teachers are. How, in winter, they gather clothing and shoes for many of the poorer pupils. How often they feed and help them, and visit them in sickness, at their homes. Often but poorly paid themselves, they share the little that they have with those so much worse off. After all, how touchingly sad are the struggles of the poor for education! What sacrifices a destitute widow will make to send her little ones to school! One day a woman who worked for me came without her shoes. I asked her where they were. She told me that “Johnny had none to go to school in, and as she did not like to have him go barefooted, she gave him hers.” Oh, boys, will you ever realize what women have done for you? How, at every step, you have been nourished on their tears, on their life! How, from the cradle to the grave, woman has been your best dependence, your most faithful friend! Think of it, and uncover your heads with reverence, even when the oldest, the poorest and ugliest of the sex pass by.—*Philadelphia Sunday Times.*

of their elements, and are also little employed on account of their influence on the health of the occupants.

6. For buildings not inhabited, chlorine and nitrous acid are the best disinfectants that can be employed.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE.—To a quart of flour (enough for two cakes) put three heaping spoonfuls of baking powder (Taylor’s). Sift together thoroughly and rub in one ounce of butter. Wet with a pint of sweet milk, using a spoon. The mixture will be somewhat softer than common pie-crust. Do not try to mold or roll out the dough. Spread it on tin plates by patting with the hand. It should be about an inch in thickness. Bake slowly at first till the cakes have had time to rise; then increase the heat, and expect them to be done within twenty-five minutes. Split the cake hot from the oven; spread the halves with butter (liberally if good), and cover them with the fruit previously sweetened. Place one on the other (the upper half is reversed of course), or each on a plate by itself. It is a good rule to sugar your strawberries before you begin to make your cake, and if they are large, or not ripe, it is best to cut them in two, or smash them a little. Don’t calculate for these cakes standing on the stove hearth a minute. They should be served like griddle-cakes—no time lost between the oven and the table. Observe these rules and you will have a dish as dainty as Isaac Walton’s baked fish, of which he said, “It is too good for any but very honest people.” When strawberries are gone, red raspberries (Clark’s or Philadelphia) are very nice in their place. White currants are also very much liked as a substitute, and peach shortcake is hardly surpassed by the straw itself, if the peaches are first-rate. These fruits should be prepared by sweetening an hour or two before wanted.