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FANTASTIC GARDENS.

Perfect Pinhead Roses and Tiny Sunflowers in Japan.

No people in the world are greater lovers of nature than the people of Nippon.

Hundreds of Japanese, even among the poorer classes, have as much space as is possible devoted to gardens, in which are often found various forms of dwarf trees and shrubs which are perfect from root to branch and leaf. Trees that will under ordinary conditions reach a height of from thirty to fifty feet are kept down to but two to four feet.

The wealthy, who, of course, can afford the space, are great for dwarfing many kinds of vegetation. Minute lakes, tiny creeks and rivulets, with miniature waterfalls, surrounded by all that nature provides, are seen in the more expensive gardens.

Another fad among the Japanese is the fantastic in nature.

Many trees and shrubs and, in fact, all types of plants that can be trimmed and trained to represent some form of animal life are so treated that they form great beasts, huge dragons and reptiles.

It seems to give the Japanese gardener great pleasure if he can cause a tree or vine to grow in some curious or uncommon way. He loves to see what he can make it do that is odd. Upright growths in trees are trained to droop like willows, and weeping branches of the willow and other drooping forms are trained to grow directly opposite to that which nature has provided.

Gardens containing no more than from five to ten square feet of ground are often filled with a variety of fine plants, and these are kept so small they do not crowd each other.

A rose garden in one of the private estates in Japan has over thirty thirty varieties, and none of the bushes is more than five inches in height. The flowers range from the size of a pinhead to the head of a tack. The color and fragrance are both there, however, and the bushes are filled with thorns, but so small they scarcely penetrate the hand.

Sunflowers no larger than a penny, growing on thrifty stalks eight inches in height, are another novelty.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Substitute Wedding Rings.

"These," said a pawnbroker, opening a drawer, "are pawnbrokers' brass rings. There are a couple of hundred of them here, but they'll last me only about a month. I hand out one gratis to every poor woman who has to pawn her wedding ring. They resemble wedding rings, you see, and with their help a wife can pledge her gold circlet without the knowledge of her friends. I've studied the pawnbroker's business in England, Germany and France, and in those countries, too, it is the customary thing for the progressive dealer to keep a supply of brass rings on hand for free distribution among needy wives."—Washington Post.

A Question of Time.

Not far from the Brooklyn bridge is a newsstand over which an exceedingly alert woman presides. She does a thriving trade, and her tongue is a rapid worker. On a recent Wednesday evening a passenger halted, noticing a fresh issue of a weekly publication that was not usually on sale until the following day. He purchased a copy, remarking at the same time upon its early appearance.

"Oh, yes," ejaculated the live wire news woman. "You see, it generally comes tomorrow, but tonight it came today."

The purchaser passed on with a dazed expression.—New York Globe.

Too Weighty.

"It seems to me," said Batersby, "that we are knocking nearly all the romance and imagination out of life when we commercialize marriage, for that's about what we are doing. I like the good old way of courting, the way that was the class thing when knights were bold. I like the idea of galloping across the drawbridge and snatching up the girl of my heart and putting her on the saddle before me and galloping away like mad. Wouldn't that suit you?"

"No, it wouldn't," replied the other man. "The girl of my heart weighs 300 pounds."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Willing to Go Halfway.

"Mr. Boreleigh was here this afternoon, James, and he says now that you have your motor he'd like to have you run over and see him some time," said Mrs. Blithers.

"Well, if he calls again," said Blithers, "just tell him that I'll be glad to run over him at any time, but I don't care particularly about seeing him."—Harper's Weekly.

HIS LITTLE EXPERIMENT.

The Amateur Hypnotist Had a Very Clever Subject.

"Now, Maud," said Edgar, with a complacent smile, "I am ready to make that little experiment. I am sure I can bring you under the hypnotic influence if you will agree not to resist. Just put your mind in a passive condition. Try to think of nothing at all. Fix your eye on that light now and don't forget to keep your mind a blank. I will count sixty seconds by my watch."

The girl followed directions literally, says the London Tit-Bits. In twenty seconds her eyes blinked; in forty they closed.

"Ah, I knew I would succeed!" exclaimed Edgar, highly elated. "Now, Maud, I command you to tell me the secrets of your heart. Whom do you love? Tell me, I command you."

A momentary expression of resistance crossed the girl's face; then she spoke in a monotone:

"I love Edgar Popham, and"—
"Yes, yes!" cried Edgar, trembling with delight. "Go on. Tell me all the secrets of your heart."

"I love Edgar Popham," continued the girl in the same tone, "and I would love him more if he were not so stingy. I want to go to the theater twice a week, and he takes me only once in three months. I want diamond rings, and he gives me rings with cheap stones in them. When I go out with him and get hungry he never thinks of oysters. When I"—
"Enough!" cried the young man. "Awake! I command you."

And he fled without waiting to see the result of his command.

As the front door slammed the young girl opened her eyes, smiled sweetly and said:

"I hope I did not spring too much on him at once. Perhaps I should have let the diamond rings and the oysters go till another time."

How Carnegie Got Library Idea.

Dr. Andrew Carnegie told an audience at Liverpool that he had "taken to library forming because his father did it before him." William Carnegie's efforts at library founding were, an Edinburgh contemporary points out, extremely modest as compared with the work of his distinguished son. In 1808 Mr. Carnegie's father was a journeyman weaver in Dunfermline. He and two other drivers of the shuttle met and agreed to convey the books they had in their respective homes to one house. The combined libraries figured out only twenty volumes. The pioneers were joined by other weavers, and they agreed to tax themselves to the extent of a few pence per month and from this fund purchase new books. The little institution ultimately blossomed into the Dunfermline Tradesmen's library.—Westminster Gazette.

Largest of Flowers.

The largest of all the flowers of the world is said to be the rafflesia, a native of Sumatra, so called after Sir Stamford Raffles. This immense plant, says the Scientific American, is composed of five round petals of a brickish color, each measuring a foot across. These are covered with numerous irregular yellowish white swellings. The petals surround a cup nearly a foot wide, the margin of which bears the stamens. The cup of the rafflesia is filled with a fleshy disk, the upper surface of which is covered with projections like miniature cows' horns. The cup, when free from its contents, will hold about twelve pints. The flower weighs about fifteen pounds and is very thick, the petals being three-quarters of an inch.

As a Precaution.

An amusing story is told of the old journalist Frederic Guest Tomlin.

One day he found his office locked and the office boy missing. When the boy appeared Tomlin reproved him for oversleeping, a charge which the boy tearfully refuted.

"It's this way, sir," he said. "My uncle was hung at the Old Bailey this morning, and, although we weren't on speaking terms with him, I thought, as one of the family, I ought to be there."

"Quite right," said Tomlin. "Never neglect your family duties, but when another of your relations is to be hanged please to leave the office key under the mat."—London Chronicle.

Highly Colored.

"Wasn't that elopement story a highly colored one?"

"I should say it was. The father was purple with rage, the girl red with apprehension, her thumb green with envy, the minister white with fear, the fellow showed a distinct yellow streak, while the whole wedding party were blue at the outcome."—Baltimore American.

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