

BULBS IN A BOWL

An Easy Way to Cultivate Miniature Floating Gardens.

A novel way of growing bulbs, such as crocuses, has been tried with good success. After securing the bulbs the next thing is to get one or two rather large corks. Through these holes are bored and the bulbs fitted into the openings in such a way that the under side, from which the roots spring, is near the lower part of the cork.

Now obtain a large shallow bowl and fill this with pure water. Float the corks, with the bulbs in place, on the surface and set the whole thing aside in a rather shady position for two or three weeks. At the end of this time it will be noticed that the roots are growing down into the water; therefore a place in a sunny window should be selected.

The upper shoots of the bulb will start to grow rapidly, and at this time it is a good plan to arrange a little moss to hide the upper surface of the corks, or, if preferred, however, grass or some other seed, such as cress, may be sown to provide a green covering.

There is nothing to do but to keep the bowl well supplied with water and change this now and again. Finally the flowers emerge, and then the effect is extremely pretty. The bulbs may be planted in this way any time up to early January, though naturally the sooner they are started the earlier they will bloom.—S. Leonard Bastin in St. Nicholas.

VICTORIA'S LETTERS.

Royal Secrets That Are Stored Away in Buckingham Palace.

"We may wonder if the world will ever be allowed to see the private correspondence amassed by the late Queen Victoria," says a writer. It is stored away in a strong room built into the walls of Buckingham palace, and the queen shared her confidence with no one.

So long as she was physically able to do so she opened and closed the safe herself and arranged its contents. When she was too feeble to do this she employed an old and trusted secretary, but even he had to work under the royal eye. He was never allowed to keep the keys nor to read the letters that he handled.

Queen Victoria was always a voluminous letter writer, and she was in constant communication with most of the royalties in Europe. Every domestic secret and privacy of royalty during half a century is said to be represented by the contents of this wonderful safe, and it is easy to believe that the modern historian would find his hands full if he were permitted to browse among these letters.

But probably he will have to wait a few hundred years, and then his popular audience will be a languid one. It is one of the ironies of life that we can never have a thing when we want it.—Pittsburgh Press.

A Royal Snake Slaughterer.

The "secretary bird" is one of the most precious birds in South Africa. It is a royal game, and any person destroying one is liable to a fine of £50. Majestic looking birds, they stand about three feet high and generally go in pairs. They are of drab color, with black, feathery legs, and are valued for their propensity for killing snakes. Where the secretary bird is seen there are sure to be many reptiles about. The bird beats down its adversary first with one wing and then with the other, at the same time trampling on it with its feet until the snake is sufficiently stunned to catch it by the head with its claws. Then the bird rises far up in the air and drops its victim to the ground to be killed. By this means thousands of venomous reptiles are destroyed.—London Scraps.

Silver Sword of Hawaii.

One of the most curious plants in the world and one of the greatest interest to all botanists is the silver sword. This exceedingly rare plant, with its magnificent silver spines and handsome crest, may still be found in profusion in the upper part of Kaupapa gap, the southern outlet of the vast extinct crater of Haleakala, on the island of Maui. It flowers from July to October and occurs hardly anywhere else in the world. Even stranger is the variety known as the green sword, which occurs only in Haleakala crater and is unknown to exist elsewhere.—Honolulu Star Bulletin.

Prince Henry the Navigator.

The kingdom of Portugal counted in its royal house one of the men who hold first rank in scientific attainment and practical application. He was the son of John I. of Portugal and Queen Philippa, who was an English princess. He spent his life in sending out ships on voyages of discovery, and it was through this Prince Henry, called "the Navigator," that Columbus got his idea of seeking for a new land across the sea.

Carrots.

Carrots were first introduced into England by Flemish gardeners in the time of Elizabeth, and in the reign of James I. they were still so uncommon that ladies wore bunches of them on their hats and on their sleeves instead of feathers.

Much Entertained.

Said Cholly—I have just been looking over a volume of revised statistics. Quoth Alex—Well?

Cholly—I had no idea there were so many interesting ways of breaking the law.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The lessons of life are lost if they do not impress us with the necessity of making ample allowances for the immature conclusions of others.

THE WHIP IN RIFLE BARRELS.

It Is Caused by the Pressure of Modern High Power Powder.

The use of high power powder in rifles has given rise to a phenomenon which did not exist in black powder days. This is known as "whip" and is due to the pressure and vibration set up by the powder. It is constant with given loads and is always in the same direction.

Sights are aligned by the manufacturer to compensate for this whip in proportion to the powder charge used. In firing auxiliary cartridges it will often be found that the rifle shoots off center. As a matter of fact the bullet from the auxiliary is traveling in a true line with the bore, and it is the sights that are wrong. The lighter charge of the auxiliary does not produce the usual whip, with the result that the line in prolongation of the bore of the rifle along which the bullet travels is not the line given by the alignment of the sights.

Two other rifle terms that must not be confused are upset and keyholing. Keyholing is the tendency of the bullet to turn over in flight, while upset is the slight shortening of the major axis of the bullet due to the force of the charge. It was peculiar to black powder fired behind lead bullets and does not exist to any appreciable extent in metal jacketed bullets with smokeless powder. In the latter case the charge burns more slowly and the jacket stiffens the bullet against the sudden blow from behind.—Ouring.

ORIGIN OF THE PERISCOPE.

The Reflecting Spyglass Used at the Siege of Sebastopol.

Speaking of the origin of the periscope, the following extract from the writings of the well known inventor of "Pepper's Ghost" gives the credit to the clerical profession. Pepper wrote soon after the Crimean war:

"During the siege of Sebastopol numbers of our best artillerymen were continually picked off by the enemy's rifles as well as by cannon shot, and in order to put a stop to the foolhardiness and incautiousness of the men, a very ingenious contrivance was invented by the Rev. William Taylor, the conductor of Mr. Denison in constructing the first 'Big Ben' bell. It was called the reflecting spyglass, and by its simple construction rendered the exposure of the sailors and soldiers who would look over the parapet or other parts of the works to observe the effect of their shots perfectly unnecessary, while another form was constructed for the purpose of allowing the gunner to 'lay off' his aim in safety.

"The instruments were shown to Lord Panmure, who was so convinced of the importance of the invention that he immediately commissioned the Rev. William Taylor to have a number of these telescopes constructed, and if the design did not terminate just at the time the invention was to have been used no doubt a great saving of the valuable lives of the skilled artillerymen would have been effected."—London Express.

Gam's Dry Humor.

When the gallant Welsh captain, David Gam, was sent forward by Henry V. to reconnoiter the French army before the battle of Agincourt he found that the enemy outnumbered the English by about five to one. His report to the king is historic:

"There are enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners and enough to run away."

This quaint forecast of the result of the battle at once spread through the camp, and doubtless every yeoman archer of the valiant company felt an inch taller. We know that it was almost literally justified by the event. Poor Gam's dry humor was equalled by his courage. He was killed while in the act of saving the life of his prince.—London Standard.

Distilled Water.

Distilled water after having been exposed to the air is one of the most salubrious of drinks. Its daily use in measured quantities is helpful in cases of dyspepsia and greatly assists the general functions of the body. Every large steamer carries a water distilling apparatus by which sea water is made fresh. In the days before steamers primitive distilling apparatus was used on warships and vessels carrying passengers.

Well Fitted.

"Yes, grandma; I am to be married next month."

"But, my dear," said grandma earnestly, "you are very young. Do you feel that you are fitted for married life?"

"I am being fitted now, grandma," explained the prospective bride sweetly. "Seven gowns!"—Kansas City Journal.

More Than the Average.

Mrs. Wayup—How much sleep do I need, doctor? Doctor—Well, the average person needs about seven hours. Mrs. Wayup—Then I shall take about fourteen. I consider I am much above the average.—Judge.

A Plain Heroine.

"This is refreshing. The author says his heroine isn't beautiful."

"It will be refreshing to see the pictures of the heroine come up to the print."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Many Sided Woman.

Man thinks he is going to solve the mystery known as woman after he is married. And then the plot thickens.—Toledo Blade.

It is bad to work idly; it is worse to loiter instead of beginning to work at all.

TREES IN BOOKS.

Probably the Most Curious Collection of Volumes in the World.

There is perhaps one of the most curious collections of books in the world to be found in a small town on the continent of Europe, says the London Tit-Bits. It is really a botanical collection. Outwardly each volume presents the appearance of a block of wood, and that is what it actually is. But an examination reveals the fact that it is also a complete history of the particular tree which it represents.

At the back of the book the bark has been removed from a space which allows the scientific and the common name of the tree to be placed as a title for the book. One side is formed from the split wood of the tree, showing its grain and natural fracture. The other side shows the wood when worked smooth and varnished. One end shows the grain as left by the saw and the other the finely polished wood. On opening the book it is found to contain the fruit, seeds, leaves and other products of the tree, the moss which usually grows upon its trunk and the insects which feed upon the different parts of the tree. These are supplemented by a full description of the tree. In fact, everything which has a bearing upon that particular tree secures a place in the collection.

THE RUINS ON THE HILL.

Where Richard of the Lion Heart Dwelt in France.

Perhaps the loveliest spot in all the winding miles of beauty along the river Seine between Rouen and Paris is Petit Andely. Bagged and whittored looking, the stony hills rear proudly up above the placid river and sleepy town and squarely upon its crest looms the ruin of Richard the Lion Heart's Castle-Gallant, a great, burst, keep, and a few bits of massive wall. Once, the castle flaunted its menacing leopard standards against the blue and white and gold of the Frankish skies, but that was before Philippe Auguste stormed and smashed it and smashed the townfolk while he was doing it.

Now, ghostly and wan, the stark ruin shimmers upon its hill, with never a single spear to glint from keep or barbican. The spears are still growing far below—the stout young poplars on the river bank and island sentinel in through golden days when the river is gleaming jade; in the ferny sets, when it mirrors back every sturdy limb and feathery frond, and all the silent blue nights, when the stars bend crackling down to whisper and coquette and the ripples chuckle softly against the rich brown banks.—Arthur Stanley Riggs in National Geographic Magazine.

The Parrot Bird.

Among the feathered inhabitants of New Zealand there is a bird called the parrot bird, or tui. It is about the size and shape of a blackbird, but has a pair of delicate white tufts at its throat and is a glossy dark green above, which looks black in the sun. It can be taught to crow, to speak, to whistle tunes, and, besides these tricks, it has a repertoire which is not often equaled by any other feathered songster. At vespers it has a note like the toll of a bell or the clear, high note of an organ. It can mimic every bird in the bush to perfection. It will break off in the middle of an exquisite melody and in indulge in a strange melody of sounds which are impossible to describe. But if you can imagine "the combination of a cough, a laugh, a sneeze, with the smothering of a pane of glass," it will be some approach to the idea.

From Medicine to the Drama.

The earlier part of Victorien Sardou's career was beset with many trials and difficulties. His parents wished him to take up a medical career, and he began his studies with some zeal. The love of the drama, however, was far greater than the love of the pill box, and in the interval of the other work Sardou was busy upon a play. Life was a struggle for him, for he had little money, though he managed to get journalistic work to supplement his more slender income. His first play was a failure, and Sardou rushed from the theater vowing never to enter one again. He fell seriously ill, was nursed back to health by Mlle. de Breceourt, an actress who lived on a floor below, and from that time his fortune was made.

Ship of the Desert.

For safety and endurance in traveling in desert regions the camel has been found unequalled by any other animal. Its foot is a soft cushion, peculiarly well adapted to the stones and gravel over which it is constantly walking. During a single journey through the Sahara horses have worn out three sets of shoes, while the feet of the camel, traveling over the same course, were not even sore.

Not Grasping.

"What a grasping fellow you are, Hawkins! You're bothered me about this bill fifty times in ten days."

"You wrong me, Jarley. I'm not grasping. I've bothered you about the bill, I admit, but I haven't been able to grasp anything yet."

Cholera.

Cholera was first recognized by the Portuguese in India as far back as the middle of the sixteenth century. It has the peculiarity of following a well defined route, with progress just equal to that of an average journey on foot.

Mean.

"It's so hard to buy for a man."

"Yes, I've noticed when you women are doing it you look as though it hurts."—Detroit Free Press.

ONCE A SOVEREIGN STATE.

Now Noli Is Simply a Fishing Village With a Past.

One of the oddest and quaintest little independent states that ever existed in Europe—the tiny republic of Noli, founded before Rome and maintaining its liberty for many centuries until Napoleon swept away its privileges—is today merely a fishing village near Genoa, but it is full of reminders of its former greatness and affords a wonderful glimpse of mediaeval times. Destroyed by the Carthaginians in 217 B. C., and who knows how often by subsequent marauders, there seemed no limit to her powers of recovery.

This quaint little fishing village maintained itself as a sovereign state for centuries, took a prominent part in the quarrels of Guelphs and Ghibellines, sent doughty warriors to the Crusades, commanded the interest of emperors and popes and only succumbed at last to the armies of Napoleon. Dante clambered hither over terrible hills on hands and knees and revenged himself by consigning Noli to his "Purgatory." Everybody is rich in this poor man's paradise, says the Wide World Magazine. During the anchovy months it is not rare for the 120 boats to earn \$4,000 in a night, or \$75,000 in a season. Through fish alone a man earns far more than a clerk, besides which he has no "appearances" to keep up. Under these happy conditions he soon acquires land and houses, which afford a steady revenue while he sleeps or fishes. The earth here has only to be scratched in order to bring forth wealth, so rich is the soil and so abundant the water.

PERILOUS ATHLETICS.

Sport That Wrecks the Heart an Evil to Be Avoided.

"No one will gainsay the value and pleasure of outdoor exercise graduated to suit the needs of every individual throughout life," says the Journal of the American Medical Association, "but the species of overdoing called for in the intense competition of the great contests of our schools and colleges can no longer be defended by platitudes regarding the alleged psychological value of its competitive features. The time has come when statistics regarding latest athletic injuries must be reckoned with and the lives of our youths safeguarded by making a distinction between sane sport and insane participation in the intolerable strain of competitive games of the extreme type."

The same paper says the authorities of colleges need to be reminded in an emphatic way, in the words of Dr. R. N. Wilson of Philadelphia, that "no form of athletic event is sane that demands of the participants the semiconscious state of heart exhaustion at its conclusion."

And it denounces the daredevil forms of "sport" that depend for their thrill on nearest possible approach to death by the actors in them, such, for example, as "looping the loop" in an airplane or driving a motorcar a hundred miles an hour. Such, it says, are not sport, but degeneracy.

A Strange Situation.

"Humor is a very funny thing," said Blinks.

"It ought to be," said the philosopher. "Oh, I don't mean that way," said Blinks. "I mean that it is a strange thing. Now, I can't speak French, but I can always understand a French joke, and I can speak English, but I'm puzzled if I can see an English joke."

"Most people are," said the philosopher. "Are what?" said Blinks. "Blessed if they can see an English joke," said the philosopher. "It is a sign of an unusually keen vision."

Force of the Imagination.

There is a story of a man who was tied up in a dark room and informed that he was to be put to death by bleeding. His tormentors made a small incision in his neck and arranged for a stream of lukewarm water to trickle down his back for fifteen minutes. At the end of fifteen minutes the man died of exhaustion. He had not lost a drop of blood, but he thought he had. Such is the power of suggestion.—London Saturday Review.

Diesel's Humor.

I was introduced by particular request to Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, a pretty little woman, a flirt and a rattle-brained, gifted with a volubility I should think unequalled and of which I can convey no idea. She told me she liked "silent, melancholy men." I answered that I had no doubt of it.—Letter of Benjamin Diemel to His Sister.

Different Effects.

"The same thing will make entirely different impressions on different readers," remarked the man who writes.

"Quite so," replied the lawyer. "Letters which bring tears to a girl's eyes frequently make a jury laugh."—Washington Star.

Paraguay Laos.

Lace making was taught the natives of Paraguay by missionaries two centuries ago. Today in all towns of 8,000 inhabitants many of the men and nearly all the women and children make lace collars, handkerchiefs and ladies' ties.

Accomplished.

Blobs—I never knew such a liar as Longbow. Stobbs—Yes. That fellow could actually eat an onion and lie out of it.—Philadelphia Record.

Diversity of opinion proves that things are only what we think them.—Montaigne.



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CURIOUS ORIGIN OF A LAW.

It Was Passed In England on Account of Peter Thellusson's Will.

The Thellusson law, once enacted by the British government, was a law to regulate the disposition of property by will and to prevent the excessive accumulation of estates. It had a curious origin.

On the 27th of July, 1797, one Peter Thellusson, an English merchant of French birth, died in London, leaving a certain sum to his widow and children and the remainder of his property then amounting to several hundred thousand dollars, to trustees to accumulate during the lives of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren living at the time of his death and the survivors of them. The accumulation would have been enormous. The will was contested, but was held valid. In order, however, to prevent such a disposition of property in the future, parliament passed what was called the Thellusson act, or accumulations act, regulating and limiting bequests in such a way as to make great accumulations impossible.

When Peter Thellusson's last surviving grandson died, in 1856, a question arose as to whether the eldest male descendant or the male descendant of the eldest son should inherit the property, and this question was decided on appeal by the house of lords in June, 1859. The Thellusson will and the legislation growing out of it were a subject of much discussion by lawyers.—Pittsburgh Press.

An Exhilarating Bath.

"Many doctors are now discarding the stronger alcohol in ordering baths," says the Farm and Fireside, "and are prescribing the more agreeable bay rum, which is made in Japan from the distillation of rum and the leaves of the bayberry tree. If you want a pleasant, exhilarating bath use this in dilution suited to your condition. For bathing the sick it seems to have a longer and more stimulating and tonic effect than whisky or alcohol."

What They All Hope.

"I understand your daughter is learning to cook."

"Yes, she's learning, but she says she hopes it will be a trade she'll never have to work at."—Detroit Free Press.

Suburban Life.

"We are just like one big family in our suburb."

"Is the scuffling that bad?"—Pittsburgh Post.

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