

**Agriculture and Horticulture.**

**HOUSING PLANTS.**—Tender plants that, for a few months past, have been in the borders, and that are intended for winter blooming, should at the close of summer or early in September in the more northern states, receive attention preparatory to housing. As a rule, those plants that have flowered freely during summer will not be of much value for winter blooming, and it is not to them we would now direct attention, but to those especially intended for the window, conservatory or greenhouse. Each plant to be lifted should be cut around with a narrow, sharp spade, or some other sharp, thin tool, so as to leave a ball of earth that can be removed with the plant and placed in the pot. It will be seen that it is necessary to determine the size of the ball pretty accurately, since it is not to be reduced after removal. If there is reason to suppose that a plant has long roots running directly downwards, it will be necessary to run the spade under it and cut them off, so that there shall be no roots too long for potting. As a result of cutting about the plants, all the roots that are shortened by the operation will be made numerous young rootlets, and in a fortnight these will have fully formed, and the plants will then be ready to be placed in their pots. A plant in the condition now described, if properly potted and treated, will commence an active growth, scarcely showing a sign of the change it has been subjected to. After the root-pruning process has been performed, it is time to prepare potting soil, if that mixture is not already stored away for the purpose. When leaf-mold can be had to the woods where leaf-mold can be procured, it should be collected as one of the most important materials for the purpose. Sharp, clean sand must be secured and some loam. If the loam can be taken just under the sod of an old pasture it is to be preferred, but, if not, it should be what a gardener or farmer would call fresh—that is, lively, and not old soil that has been run and is poor. If attention has been given in advance to secure good potting soil, probably a pile of rotted sods is at hand to furnish the necessary loam. Those who would have at command a good soil, should lay in a pile of grass-sods every spring, piling them up grass-side down, so that the grass and roots will decay; and, to make it mellow, the pile should be turned two or three times during the summer. A mixture of equal parts of loam, leaf-mold and sand, with a small addition of old cow manure, will make a soil suitable for nearly all plants. When leaf-mold cannot be procured, its place may be taken by dried cow manure pulverized.

Having the potting material ready, and a good assortment of pots, the plants may be lifted any time before frost, and two or three weeks after the operation of cutting around them has been performed. The pots should be an inch or two larger in diameter than the balls of earth, so that from a half-inch to an inch of the prepared soil can be placed between the ball and the pot. First, place a bit of crock over the hole in the bottom of the pot, in order to keep the drainage free, and then fill in a couple of inches of soil, and upon this set the ball of earth, and then fill in the soil carefully all around a little at a time, seeing that no vacant crevices are left, but gently pushing it in when necessary, with a blunt stick, or jarring the pot sufficiently to settle it. When the potting of a plant is finished the soil should be about half an inch below the rim, thus leaving room for water on the surface. After potting give the plants a liberal watering and stand them in the shade, and, if possible, give them the benefit of the close, moist air of a cold-frame, but where this is not practicable, do the next best thing by placing them where they will be out of the way of any currents of air, and are somewhat shaded. They will quickly become established in their new quarters, and then may be brought fully into the light. When cold frames can be used, the plants can be carried along in them for at least a month with the greatest benefit to them. *Fick's Magazine.*

**COOKED FOOD.**—It takes a long time of any conservative person to fall into any new method, which is apt to find favor with the majority in any progressive community. Notwithstanding what has been said of the advantages of a cooked diet, in part, for poultry, many men still hesitate to adopt the plan. The result of feeding swine with cooked corn and meal, instead of the uncooked article, are well known to every farmer. The gain is fully twenty per cent., which much more than covers the extra cost attending upon the course. The argument may be brought against the method that cooked food is not the natural diet of the "feathered world." We are not aware that our primitive man knew very much of the many choice viands with which we are today familiar; but this does not lessen our appetite for them in the least. When we look at it, tastes are almost universally acquired. There can be no objection to change of food, provided the kind substituted fills the requirements of life-giving qualities.

**We seldom boil corn for our poultry.**

As we prefer to give that raw as the evening meal; but for those who choose, even this can be cooked to advantage. It too much work to shell the corn, boil it on the cob, and let the fowls have the sport of rolling the ears about as they pick their living.

The fowls will soon tire of a cooked diet altogether, but it is very easy to substitute grain occasionally. Make the cooked food varied by giving a quantity of potatoes one day, and cabbage or onions for another, and so on through the week; cracker crumbs from the waste of the grocers' barrels and boxes are capital to mix with the meal occasionally; buy them at a low price. Then let them pick the bones left from the table, afterward burning and crushing them for material in making shells. Be careful of eye-brain—it is too much inclined to swelling, and rapid fermentation in the crop producing death in a short time.

If you are too busy to attend to systematic feeding, your good wife will do it willingly, or the children will plead for the chance, after a little instruction. Don't forget that the poultry branch of the farm will pay the best percentage of profit, in proportion to the outlay, of any. If you are still conservative on this point, try it faithfully one year.—*Am Poultry Yard.*

**Religious.**

**THE LEAFY CLOSET OF PRAYER.**

Along a mountain stream, skirted with trees and alders, near the village of Ellington, Connecticut, there was a well-trodden footpath, that led from a cottage to a place of prayer. At the close of the day a mother was wont to leave the cares of her family, and in the quiet of this secluded spot to hold sweet communion with God. One summer evening she was criticised by a neighbor for the seeming neglect of her family, and for this habit of stealing thus "awhile away." When she returned home, her heart was much pained at what had been said. So she at once took her pen and wrote an answer to the criticism. She headed it, "An Apology for my Twilight Rambles Addressed to Lady."

This mother was Mrs. Phoebe H. Brown. In 1824 she gave Dr. Nettleton permission to issue it in his "Village Hymns." The first verses of the original commenced thus:

"Yes, when the toilsome day is gone,  
And night with banners gray  
Steals silently the glade along,  
In twilight's soft array—  
I love to steal awhile away,  
From little ones and care,  
And spend the hours of setting day  
In gratitude and prayer."

One of the "little ones" for whom she was thus accustomed to pray was the Rev. Samuel R. Brown, D. D., who has just rested from his labors as a missionary in China and Japan. What an example to praying mothers, and what an apt illustration of God's promises, showing that those who resort to "the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"—that when we pray to him in secret, he shall reward us openly.

We have the Bible; let us not shut our eyes to its blessings. It is to be read and obeyed. A feast is not brought in costly dishes to be looked at and taken away; no more is God's word put in costly binding for the place of honor and neglect upon our center tables. "Thy word is a light unto my feet and a lamp unto my path." There are lanterns which may be closed so that no ray of light escapes, or opened so that a stream of light is thrown far ahead upon the path. So with the Bible. Closed and unstudied, it is a dark lantern; opened, studied and obeyed, its light is clear and full. It is able to make us wise unto salvation, and to thoroughly furnish us unto all good works.

To those who sometimes think that Christianity is on the decline and are disposed to look on the dark side of things, it may be profitable to know that there has been progress from the first century until now. According to the Reformed Church *Advocate*, Sharon Turner has, with great research and labor, prepared the following statement of the progress of Christianity. At the close of each century the number of believers is given:

Century.	About
First	500,000
Second	2,000,000
Third	5,000,000
Fourth	10,000,000
Fifth	15,000,000
Sixth	20,000,000
Seventh	24,000,000
Eighth	30,000,000
Ninth	40,000,000
Tenth	50,000,000
Eleventh	70,000,000
Twelfth	80,000,000
Thirteenth	75,000,000
Fourteenth	80,000,000
Fifteenth	100,000,000
Sixteenth	125,000,000
Seventeenth	155,000,000
Eighteenth	200,000,000

During the present century it is estimated the Church has doubled its communicants.

**Colors and Dyes used in Antiquity.**

BY MARCUS MONTAG.

In the realms of literature and the fine arts the perfection of the ancients is willingly admitted. But in industrial matters they are either depreciated to an exaggerated extent or exalted beyond measure. We will endeavor to prove that both these opinions are at fault, at least in so far as colors are concerned, building simply upon facts, and strictly rejecting all hypothesis or random conjecture.

We will examine in succession the various colors known to the ancients, and compare them with our modern colors.

**WHITES.**  
Chalk and white lead were the only colors known of old. But under the name of chalk they confounded true chalk-carbonate of lime with various argillaceous earths, such as pipe clay. As for white lead of the ancients, it is known only from the accounts of its preparation given us by Theophrastus and Dioscorides. According to Pliny, the white lead manufactured at Rhodes was superior to all others.

Davy, who has analyzed a great number of ancient colors, did not find white lead in any of the specimens submitted to his examination. To the whites known by the ancients there have been added in modern times:

1. Pearl white, or subnitrate of bismuth, the use of which is of very little importance (being rarely employed saved for the reprehensible purpose of powdering the face, a custom which is unfortunately no longer confined to women of questionable character).
2. Zinc white, a color preferable to white lead in a great number of cases, in so far as it is less poisonous and is not affected by sulphur fumes.
3. Permanent white or *blanc fixe* (artificial sulphate of baryta). This color is absolutely fast, not poisonous (being neither volatile nor soluble under any probable circumstances), and very much cheaper than white lead. It is largely consumed in the production of paper hangings.

Dyeing white was unknown in antiquity. The natural whiteness of linen after being bleached on the grass—that of the wool of white sheep, after the action of burnt sulphur, which appears to have been known and practiced in very remote ages—and the white silks of China, were all that could be produced in the way of white goods.

To many persons, even in our days, the word "dye," as applied to whites, seems nonsense. Pure white does not exist.

Both vegetable fibres after being bleached with chlorine, and animal fibres after stoving, retain a yellow or grayish cast, which has to be combated by the addition of a color *complémentaire* to yellow. This is the meaning of dyeing whites, an operation which must be pronounced modern. Sometimes we go further than merely destroying the yellow tint, and give a slight color. White, therefore, now ranks truly among the very light shades, and takes various names according to its tint. Thus we have azure whites, inclining to a blue; cream whites tending to a yellow, etc.

For a long time indigo and annatto have been exclusively used in white dyeing; then came extract of indigo and ammoniacal cochineal, which have in their turn been laid aside in favor of

**BLACKS.**

The ancients knew the several varieties of carbon still employed as black colors. The painter Apelles, according to Pliny, made use of the black obtained by the calcination of ivory.

Davy detected lampblack mixed with ochres in the pictures of the baths of Livia.

For writing ink the Romans employed, first the juice of mulberries, then a kind of imperfect Indian ink, for which Dioscorides has given the receipt: three parts of lamp black with one part of gum. It is probable that an ink of this kind was in use among the Greeks. It is probably only semi-fluid, and required to be ground up.

The ancients used various colored inks, which were probably pigments suspended in water.

They dyed leather black with gall nuts and coppers, but this preparation was not employed as an ink till the ninth century of the Christian era. It is, moreover, less solid than the inks with a base of lampblack. If the manuscripts found at Herculaneum had been written with our ordinary ink they could never have been deciphered.

We have made no additions to the list of black colors based on carbon, but we have greatly improved the art of black dyeing.

Black, in the strictest sense, does not exist. It is merely relative, and appears black only when seen alone. But if we place two different blacks in contact they each take a different tint by the force of contrast. The art of the modern black dyer consists in obtaining these shades at will, a matter which the ancients appear to have overlooked. —*Tenturier Pratique—Chemical Review.*

**The Geysas.**

Of the queer callings to be noticed is that of the "Geysas" or singing and dancing girl. Geysas may be hired at a few minutes notice in all the great towns of the empire. As a rule, they are comely, modest damsels, although in obedience to the refined taste of a certain class of foreigner, a school possessing as little of one quality as of the other has sprung up. To the ceremonial feasts of rich men singing and dancing girls are the invariable appendages, and are not unfrequently treated rather as guests than as hired servants. As a rule they perform in pairs, one playing the guitar while the other sings or dances; but quartets and choruses may be had for payment. It is never etiquette to treat them as professionals; the hint for performing should be given incidentally, and on no account is the payment for their services to be made openly, but is to be pushed under their rice bowl in a piece of paper, so that it is discovered as it were by accident.

With the Geysas proper often come the dancing-girls, so-called, although "posturers" would be a more correct expression, inasmuch as Japanese dancing consists entirely of a series of graceful ankle and hand twisting positions, quite independent of any musical accompaniment. Good singing and dancing girls earn large sums of money, and famous ones must be looked beforehand; but in their performances, whether of singing or posturing, there is very little to charm the European sense, and a very few minutes suffices to render the performance very boring.—[All the Year Round.

**The Highest Mountain.**  
Nobody's reputation and honor are safe in this cynical age. For the last ten years Mount Everest, in Nepal, has been considered the highest mountain in the world, reaching the respectable altitude of 29,002 feet. Diaw-alaghi and Kuchinjing, in the same range, with about 28,000 feet, shared this honor between them until Major Everest, of the Bengal Engineers, discovered their big brother. Before they were measured Humboldt thought some points in the South American Andes reached the highest altitude on our globe. And now comes Captain J. A. Lawson, who has discovered in the little known island of New Guinea a peak which beats them all, which he has appropriately named Mount Hercules, and fixed its elevation at 32,786 feet above the level of the sea.

**The Diamonds of South Africa.**  
The produce of the South African mines is enormous, and the quality of the stones, which are frequently marred by a somewhat tawny complexion, is reported to be improving. Indeed, a twin "drop" from the Vaal river, skillfully mounted by Mr. Streeter, was declared by experts to be of Indian extraction. Vast profits have, of course, been realized. One gentleman's "claim" is said to have cleared in two years \$45,000. The New Rush Mine alone yields \$3,000 a day. In 1875, when the diggers had been at work only four years, gems to the value of \$3,500,000 had been extracted from it. The packets of diamonds sent by post-bag from Kimberley to Cape Town in 1876 weighed 773 pounds, and were worth \$1,414,590. Nor does there seem to be any present supply coming to an end. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that only a very small portion of the diamantiferous regions of South Africa has yet been explored.

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