

where lived the descendants of that hardy people who had for centuries kept the English at bay—in every district they found a people who were stirred to the depths of their being at the mention of the magic name Caledonia. But there was another word in the name of their Association which had power to move them. They were Scotsmen and they were proud of it; but they were Catholics also, and of that they were prouder still.

The Habits of Plants

Fortunately for one's interest in flowers, only a few of them are as cruel in their ways as the pitcher family. There are, of course, a few plants which carry about a poison in their juices or in their berries, or, like poison ivy, seem to give off a poison in the air about them. Many people, you know, are so susceptible to ivy poison that they can not as much as pass a fence on which the ivy is climbing without having a very painful rash break out on them. But, after all, perhaps this poison is only the plant's way of protecting itself. You know people don't break off and carry away armfuls of the poisonous plants as they do of their more amiable neighbours. Besides, quite frequently those very poisons are extremely useful. For instance, there is the digitalis which you may see growing in old-fashioned flower gardens. Its tall stalks covered with bell-shaped flowers, sometimes blue or purple or occasionally red—for there are many varieties of digitalis,—are decidedly ornamental. Yet it is so poisonous that not infrequently the enterprising chickens which sample its leaves turn up their toes very shortly afterward. But digitalis, or rather the extracts made from it, are almost indispensable in the treatment of certain diseases.

Some plants have the queer habit of sending out their blossoms the first thing in the spring, before they begin to work at all on their leaves. Haven't you noticed that the swamp maples are always covered with bright red fringes long before the leaves begin to show as even tiny buds? And the catkins give the alder a gray dress long before its mid-summer green one is made. Perhaps long ago—when the ice coat was receding to the north, the air was full of melting snow, and the sun heat might be shut off any moment,—instinct told the alders that the important things were blossoms and seeds. If they wanted to leave any progeny to take their places, they must hustle along with their seeds. Leaves were only a matter of living longer; they could wait for the leisurely life. And so they devoted all their attention in the early spring to seeds. By and by, as the ice receded more and more, they found time to make leaves too, but they have never got over their hurry about their flowers and seeds.

A botanist, who went to Jamaica to study the wonderful flora of the West Indies, tells of a forest of the giant flowers, sometimes fifty feet in height—a truly impressive sight. The thought that if he came back next year he would find all these great flowers a mass of dried leaves filled him with sadness, until he remembered the great seeds that the plant has given its life to produce.

Some families of plants have habits peculiar to themselves, just, I suppose, as human families acquire queer little ways which stick from generation to generation. Some plants climb by twisting around any support which happens to be handy. Haven't you noticed pole beans and hop vines and wistarias and honeysuckles, how they twist and twist around everything they come across, and around themselves when they can find nothing else? They are very persistent about it too, and always try to reach the top of anything they set about climbing. Perhaps that's what gave rise to the Jack and the Beanstalk story. There really is no telling where a climbing bean would stop if the pole only kept ahead of it.

Then there are the clingers that put out claw-like fingers that grip the trunks of trees or tack themselves on fences or houses. Poison ivy has innumerable little claws along its stems, and they are so strong and tenacious it is almost impossible to tear it away from a fence once it gets a hold. Its harmless cousin, the Virginia creeper, on the other hand, sends out a series of long, curling tendrils, which it attaches to any handy support. The ends twist around and around like fingers. They are very tough and strong, and you will find considerable difficulty in dislodging them. Grapevines have a similar fashion of holding themselves up.

Domestic

By 'Maureen'

Cleaning Chamois Leather.

Chamois leathers used for polishing windows, and those kept for silver, etc., can be easily cleaned as follows: First, squeeze the leather in a warm lather containing a little ammonia, repeating the process if the leather is very dirty. Then rinse it in another warm, soapy mixture, but this time with the ammonia, when it will become soft and flexible. Now squeeze out the water and hang the leather out to dry. When quite dry it should be pressed with a cool iron.

Something Girls Should Cultivate.

Neatness is one of the most attractive of feminine qualities to a man. It is also one of the rarest. Early and persistent must be the training which carries the girl into womanhood, with her 'bump of neatness' well developed. Unless inherently fastidious during schooldays she is liable to drift into careless habits which she never outgrows. One girl may have a trick of leaving shoes about her room. As a mere tot she was permitted to do this, and as she grew older the untidy custom was never abandoned for the simple reason that she herself did not notice anything unusual about it, and probably nobody else took the trouble to correct her. Another slovenly habit is leaving a bunch of combings in her comb or on her dressing-table. Constant vigilance on a woman's part is necessary in these small traits unless she would be judged unworthy of her birthright of daintiness.

Care of the Fingers.

Women who are compelled to do a good deal of housework, and whose fingers are constantly in water, should try the plan of washing their hands in the ordinary way with soap and water, and, while wet, of rubbing dry salt well over the cuticle. This will remove all grime and stains, and will keep the hands smooth and white. A slice of lemon is invaluable for preserving the fine texture of the skin, and should be rubbed over the hands while washing. Almond oil massaged well into the skin of the hands night and morning is another simple unguent, and will do much to preserve them in good condition. A pint of rose-water, diluted with a tablespoonful of glycerine, forms another excellent preservative for the hands, and will keep them smooth and white if applied each time after washing.

Cooking Vegetables.

The wrong way to cook vegetables is to put them over the fire in water partly boiling or lukewarm; throw salt in or not as it happens; boil until they are overdone, and then drain the best part down the sink; the tasteless, water-soaked material left in the pot is then dressed up with salt, pepper, and butter, or some other high seasonings, to put in the flavor that has been destroyed by bad cooking.

To be quite perfect all vegetables should be put to cook in boiling water. This does not mean water that has been boiled and cooled, but it must be boiling rapidly when the vegetables are dropped in. Do not pour boiling water over them, but put them into the water. To green vegetables add salt in proportion of a teaspoonful to each half-gallon. Green vegetables and potatoes are rich in potash salts; these salts have a tendency to thickening, as it were, the blood. They are bad for rheumatic people. Common salt, chloride of sodium, has a tendency to correct the influences of the potash salts. Hence hygienists use salt on such vegetables as spinach, cabbage, onions, potatoes, but not in the cereals or on meats. The underground vegetables, the roots, tubers, and swollen stems of plants should be cooked in unsalted water. These are rich in woody fibre; naturally, this fibre is toughened in salt water; we cook them to soften the fibre, and it is even better to use soft water if possible.

Turnips are white, sweet, and palatable, one of the daintiest and most delicious of vegetables when cut into dice and cooked carefully in unsalted water. Boiled in salted water they are coarse, pink, and unpalatable.

Maureen

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