

THE HOME.

The Window Plants.

"What is the matter with my house plants? They are not doing well at all while yours are full of leaves and flowers." This plaintive inquiry, is often directed at me, accompanied by appealing looks for assistance, writes Anna E. Treat.

Naturally, being not very hard-hearted, I try to solve the problem with a view to a remedy. This is about the situation as I find it: At a north window is a flower-stand, a half circle of shelves, the lower one being about six inches from the floor. Upon this are arranged the plants, the one at the top being something over two feet from the window, the light of which is obscured by a shade and a lace curtain draped at the sides. The stalks and leaves are of a sickly green, and no new growth is apparent. The soil about the plants is hard and poor. It is really a saddening prospect. A cellar window where the sun comes daily would actually be better location than this.

"What would be advisable to do?" Well in the first-place discard the flower-stand. It was an illy contrived arrangement for the house. Perhaps against the south wall outside it might serve as a summer home for such of the house plants as are retained in pots. But its mission within is over, for so many neat light devices are obtainable now, there is no need of anything so cumbersome.

None but shade-loving plants ought to have a north window. The far frugum or leopard plant likes the shade, as do ferns, some begonias, palms and ivies.

But think what hardship and privation for the sun-loving petunias, geraniums, roses and callas to be so doomed to a sunless existence. No wonder that they merely exist; who could expect them to thrive and grow?

A window facing the south should be chosen, its only curtain the easily adjusted shade. As few window sills are of sufficient width, a shelf with neat brackets can be made to hold the plants. Another across the middle of the window frame will make a flower window worth having. If four iron brackets are screwed to the window frame, two on either side, so adjusted that they can be swung to the light and at evening turned away from the window, you will have utilized all points to advantage. These are capital places for oxalis, which especially enjoy a seat by themselves, and for cacti.

Before removing the plants to their new location give them all, without distinction of race or color, a plunge bath in hot water. Do not be alarmed, this treatment is not so heroic as it sounds. The porous jars will absorb the hot water, but by the time it reaches the roots of the plants it will be of a pleasant, stimulating warmth. While the plants are enjoying the unwonted luxury it is a good time to attend to the little details of the bath.

Loosen the packed soil about the roots with a little stick, and water them with very warm water, adding a half teaspoon of the odorless fertilizer which now comes neatly done up in pound packages. Sponge the dust from the leaves, for there is nothing a plant so abhors, and with a whisk broom dipped in warm water sprinkle them thoroughly.

Allow the plants to stand in the water until it is cool, then remove them to their new quarters in the sunny window, and you may confidently await for speedy improvement in their health and appearance.

Let them come close to the glass to receive all the benefit of the sun's rays, rather than bestow in winter time. At night if frost is feared, and few windows are quite air tight, turn each plant to face the room, and put in a layer or two of newspapers at the back. Arrange and re-arrange them to suit your taste, and until the right effect is gained. Much is written about the evil of crowding plants.

For my part I like the plan of having one or two windows filled with plants until there is no room for another jar. I take pleasure in the mass of foliage, set with clusters of cheerful blossoms. Every plant must have its quota of sunlight, of course, otherwise crowding would be hurtful.

Out of all this abundance I can select a plant in its most attractive state for some less favored window in another room.

Perhaps it adorns the parlor table, or my writing desk for a time. If friends are expected it is a pretty favor to "daintily" (do not see Webster) the guest room by a plant in bloom.

The pretty jardiniere seen in our fancy stores are well adapted to aid in this form of decoration.

I can always tell when plants are really loved, because they are petted and made much of. Like little children their wants are considered and their individual tastes consulted.

Apple Delicacies.

There is no kind of fruit that can be served in anything like so many ways as the apple or that is more easily ruined by improper cooking. Indeed, the difference in flavor and tenderness between a gilliflower apple and a Bartlett pear is not greater than between a properly and faultily made apple pie or dish of sauce. Try the recipes which follow and prove the truth of these assertions:

Plain Apple Pie.—Make the paste flaky by having all the ingredients very cold and handling it as little as possible in making. Pare, quarter and core tart apples. After covering the tin with paste spread half the sugar necessary for sweetening over it; put a row of apple quarters around close to the rim and fill in the center neatly. Add the remainder of the sugar, not allowing any to fall on the outer rim of pastry, season with spice, grated lemon peel or whatever flavoring you prefer; add a piece of butter as large as a walnut, cut in small bits and scattered around; sufficient water to make the filling moist, when baked, and dredge a teaspoonful of flour over the top. After covering with paste sift a teaspoonful of powdered sugar over the top and bake 30 to 40 minutes. The oven should

be quite hot the first fifteen minutes, else the crust will not be light.

Apple Sauce.—Pare, quarter and core tart apples. Put sufficient sugar to sweeten some into an agate or earthen pudding dish; dissolve with hot water, add the apples, cover closely and bake until tender but not broken. Cook rather slowly.

Delicious Apple Dumplings.—Make a sauce of one teaspoon of boiling water, 1 of sugar, 1 tablespoonful butter and 2 of corn starch. Stir constantly until it boils smooth. Season with nutmeg or lemon peel. Pare, quarter and core tart apples. Make a dough as for baking powder biscuit and fashion the dumplings as if they were to be steamed. Butter a pudding mold, arrange the dumplings over the bottom, leaving room for them to rise, pour the sauce over, cover closely and bake until the apples are tender. Serve hot in the sauce.

Apple Rice Pudding.—Pare, quarter and core three tart apples and spread loosely in a buttered agate pudding dish. Add 3-4 cupful of sugar and 3 tablespoonfuls rice to 1 quart of milk; turn the mixture over the apples, spread a few bits of butter over the tops and bake in a moderate oven four hours. Serve hot with sweetened whipped cream.

Apple Meringue.—Pare and core tart apples; place in a pudding dish, add half an inch of water, cover closely and bake until they can be easily pierced with a fork. Allow 2 tablespoonfuls of sugar, 1 egg and 1 cupful milk for every 2 apples. Heat the milk, remove from the fire, stir in the beaten yolk of the eggs and sugar, flavored with grated lemon peel and pour it over the apples. Scatter a few bits of butter over the top and bake 10 or 15 minutes, until the custard sets. Make a meringue of the whites of the eggs sweetened and flavored with lemon; spread unevenly over the custard; brown lightly and serve cold.

TASSO MEN OF WEST AFRICA.

A Peculiar Organization Among the Natives of Sierra Leone.

At the recent crowning of the Sokong, or paramount chief in the Imperri Land, Sherbro, in the colony of Sierra Leone, West Africa, a curious native custom was observed, one which very few, if any, Europeans had previously witnessed, as it is of great rarity and has not been performed for many years. It consisted of the appearance of certain members of a secret society known as the "Tasso," about which a great deal of mystery exists, as they belong to a brotherhood that is regarded with a veneration amounting to awe by the community of Imperri. The power vested in these Tasso men is immense, and gives them precedence next to the Sokong, and even entitles them to raise objections, if they see fit, to laws proposed by that chief.

Tasso is purely a Sherbro institution, peculiar to Imperri. Tassos are practically the heads of the "Poros," or order of native Freemasons; each big chief of a town has his Tasso man, and upon very important occasions, such as the present, he attends with his chief. Here were four Tassos with their chiefs, who formed part of the body-guard to Sokong and took a prominent part in the ceremony.

It is necessary to observe carefully the costumes worn by these men, more particularly their enormous headgear, which is about 3 feet in height. It is a great weight, and is consequently removed whenever the men are not actively engaged. These headpieces are erected on a foundation of plaited cane. The human skulls and the thigh bones immediately above the part fitting the head are those of defunct Tassos, which can only be renewed from other departed members of the brotherhood. The whole is surmounted by a gigantic bouquet of feathers gathered from all kinds of birds, these bouquets being quite 3 feet in diameter. The dress of these men is of the usually.

BARBARIC DESCRIPTION.

made up of a network over the body from which hang various skins of animals; bunches of fiber from the waist forming a short skirt, while attached to the knees are several pieces of hollowed native iron, from which depend rings of similar metal that jingle as the men move about, making a considerable noise. The Tassos do not dance, that part of the ceremony being undertaken by the "Laga" and his followers, who are subordinate to the Tassos. It is only necessary for a single "Laga" to be present in attendance upon several Tassos. The "Laga" has his body bedaubed with large white spots, and has a retinue of boys, to the number of about fifty, who are ready to rush madly round the town, headed by the "Laga," to notify the people of what is about to take place, to call them together or warn them to get into their houses. If a Tasso dies in a town he must not be interred there, but in the bush, as the law is that no woman must look upon a dead Tasso; and when one dies in a town a "Poros" law is immediately placed upon that town, compelling the women to withdraw from it until the burying is over. "Poros" law is so imperative that the inhabitants of a town can be sent into the bush in a few minutes, but it occasionally happens that natural curiosity will induce a woman to secrete herself, and thereby, in disobedience to the "Poros" law, become acquainted with some of the external mysteries of the "Poros."

The superstition in such cases is that sickness follows, and during her illness the lady confesses what she has done and seen; she is then carried into the "Poros" bush and initiated into the "Poros" rights, and henceforth all such women are regarded in the same light as "Poros" men, and are practically native Freemasons. At the ceremony described one such "Poros" woman formed part of the royal procession, and I was informed that three other "Poros" women were then located within the town.

The coronation ceremony was performed under the supervision of the governmental treaty chief, Beh Sherbro of Yonni, Sherbro, who upon this occasion wore the beautiful large and massive silver medal which had been presented to his ancestors by King George III., bearing the date of 1816. Beh Sherbro sitting in a Madeira chair, supported by two subchiefs.

VERY ODD FRENCH TAXES.

GOVERNMENT HARD UP AND TAXES EVERYTHING IN SIGHT.

This Year They Will Have Even Higher Rates—Windows and Doors, Shops Bicycles, Dogs; Clubs, Cards, and Carriages all Yield an Income.

The French Senate and the Chamber of Deputies are now engaged in the delicate task of making up the "budget" for 1896, and the financiers are having a hard time to make both ends meet.

For a long time France has been running behind in her income and ahead on her expenses. In order to preserve the national credit, the French statesmen have for many years imposed on their countrymen many varied and unique systems of taxation; 1896 is to see these even more whimsically modified.

It is a case of "every little helps," "The death duties" tax will yield the Government this year 25,000,000 francs, the tax on servant girls and male help, "contributions sur les domestiques," 10,000,000 francs; that on horses and carriages, 1,000,000 francs; on foreign securities, 15,000,000 francs; from the Custom Houses in Algeria, 4,500,000 francs, and from the tax on playing cards, 1,200,000 francs.

On matches France exacts a heavy duty for each box. Within the past three years match making has become a Government monopoly and is managed like a trust, the country profiting handsomely.

On articles that would seem to us as worthy of being

AS FREE AS AIR

the State places a duty, small in itself, but which in the long run brings in tidy little sums. Among these are bicycles, dogs, billiard tables, playing cards, horses, carriages, social clubs and checks and notes.

To prevent people from trying to evade the death duties by transferring their property for a nominal sum when they are growing old a substantial tax on transfers, which amounts to a percentage of the value, is insisted upon.

Most curious of all is the taxing of doors and windows throughout the entire country, in the villages as well as in the great cities, pro rata according to the number of such openings a building may happen to have. All tradesmen are licensed, each being made to pay a certain small tax for their shops each year.

Since the people do not kick the State is each year able to put on the screws a little tighter. Take the case of playing cards, for example, or, as the French call them "cartes a jouer." In 1875 the tax stood at 15 centimes, or about three cents a pack. That same year it was raised to 30 centimes, or 6 cents. In 1871 the duty was doubled, and now in the new budget the tax is to be remodelled so that for piquet cards it will be 15 cents, and 25 cents for whist packs. In the clubs double the tariff will have to be paid. From cards alone the additional revenue will be about \$250,000.

Then again the taxes imposed vary. Articles are taxed impartially throughout the whole country, but at different rates. In the tiny villages in the thinly populated communities, in the small towns, the duties are low. In Paris they rise to their maximum. In no other corner of France is taxation so high as in the gay city. Steadily downward the scale drops, a hundred thousand, fifty thousand, twenty-five thousand, ten thousand, until at last it stops short at three thousand. Communities below three thousand in population, whatever their size may be, are taxed alike. Exactly the same rate of duty, for instance, would prevail in a little village numbering only five or six hundred souls, as would be in a larger place where population had climbed up to 2,900.

From this it follows that there is a wide margin between the lowest taxing rate and the highest.

Horses are taxed from \$1 to \$5 each, dogs from 20 cents to \$2, this impost being much complicated and varied, however, because of the fact that different rates are charged on

DIFFERENT BREEDS.

Last year 2,847,000 canines were taxed, including even the two Chinese edible dogs, the property of Waldeck-Rousseau, the statesman—the only dogs of this description on the Continent.

Carriages are taxed variously, those on two wheels running from \$1 to \$8, and those on four wheels running from \$2 to \$12. Bicycles pay the uniform rate of \$2 a year. It is probable that this comes year they will contribute a far greater amount to the revenue, for the number of them has increased enormously of late.

Social clubs are very curiously taxed, 20 per cent. of their dues being taken up by the State. The revenue from this is not the enormous sum it would appear to be, for the reason that in proportion to England and America France has very few social clubs. The tax from this source aggregated in the last budget less than a million and a half francs.

The game of billiards is tremendously popular in France. There must be very nearly 100,000 places wherein billiard tables are set, and the tax on each of these is from \$1.20 to \$12. In the cafes, along with the billiard tables, checker boards are almost invariably set out. These, however, are not taxed as yet.

The impost on doors and windows is a graduated tax, and details of which it would take almost columns to fully outline. Like nearly all of the other schemes for revenue collecting, it varies according to the size and importance of the commune. Its general principle is that each building has to pay so much for each door or window, the ratio increasing as there is more of these openings. Thus the lowest rate is six cents for a single window or door a year, nine cents for two openings, eighteen cents for three, thirty-two cents for four, and fifty cents for five. In the big cities the ratio graduates from twenty cents up to \$1.70. This tax is really a tax on light, air and sunshine.

Refused to Walk.

Why did you refuse young Stingyman? He asked me to walk through him with him.

HEALTH.

Bow-Legs.

Bow-legs are usually an acquired deformity; not always, for some children are born bow-legged. They are caused when acquired by allowing a child to stand or to walk too early, before the bones have become sufficiently hardened; but generally there are to be found indications of systemic weakness, as well.

In some cases an absence of chalky or phosphatic material in the system is responsible for the trouble. Whatever the cause may be, the heavier the child, the more apt is the weight of the body to bend the bones.

It is not uncommon, especially in apparently mild cases of the difficulty, to find knock-knee combined with bow-legs. From the hip to the thigh the bones are curved inward, while from the knee downward they are bowed outward. This is called a "compensating" curve, and makes the yielding bones appear less affected than they really are. A double bend of this kind should be looked for by the parent when there is reason to fear a degree of curvature sufficient to call for medical intervention.

Of course, the earlier the period of the child's life at which treatment is instituted, the more easily will the desired result be obtained.

When the child begins to stand, the legs should be carefully inspected, to note whether there is any bending of the bones beneath the weight. Should such be the case, restrictions should be placed upon the child's activity. His weight should be kept off his legs, until they are found to sustain it without bending. If the strength of the limbs does not rapidly increase, the doctor should be consulted with a view to obtaining a suitable apparatus for keeping the legs in their normal position when the weight is thrown upon them.

Deformities of the limbs, when present at birth, should receive attention at the earliest possible moment, for during infancy the bones are soft and yielding and capable of being molded into proper form with little or no discomfort to the child.

In the case of older children, in whom the bones have become thoroughly hardened, where the degree of curvature is considerable, a skillful surgeon should be called.

Warm Feet.

You will never be in good health and never do your best work if your feet are constantly cold. Grave diseases of the throat and lungs are caused by cold feet alone, and these troubles are always aggravated by a frigid condition of the lower extremities. If proper footwear does not give relief, consult a physician, for the chances are the system is "run down," and radical measures are necessary. In nine cases out of ten, however, the foot covering is to blame, either because of its shape or its material. Save in warm weather, and for low-cut shoes, leather, as ordinarily prepared, has serious objections. It lacks two prime qualities—porosity and capacity for absorption—being in this respect too much like rubber. No foot can remain either comfortable or healthy if kept in a perpetual bath of its own emanations and excretions. Leather, especially that of the more porous varieties, may be tolerated for the outside, but for cold weather it should always be lined with woollen cloth, or, better, with wool felt. In fact, for all cold climates, and for winter wear in all climates where there is any winter, a foot-gear made from all-wool felt approaches the ideal. According to modern notions, any illness in one part of the body may be occasioned by some irritating cause far removed from the seat of the trouble. Just how this is cannot always be clearly explained, but that such connection does sometimes exist is beyond dispute. In the matter under discussion, if the nerves of the whole body are irritated by a tight shoe, or the extreme cold of the extremities makes extra demand upon the blood supply, there is neither nerve force nor blood enough left for other functions.

Late Suppers.

The old tradition that to eat anything just before going to bed is sure to produce indigestion and render sleep impossible is now happily exploded. It is not good, as a matter of fact, to go to bed with the stomach so loaded that the undigested food will render one restless, but something of a light palatable nature in the stomach is one of the best aids to quietude and rest. Some physicians have declared, indeed, that a good deal of the prevalent insomnia is the result of an unconscious craving of the stomach for food in persons who have been unduly frightened by the opinion that they must not eat before going to bed, or who have, like many nervous women being keeping themselves in a state of semi-starvation. Nothing is more agreeable on retiring for the night than to take a bowl of hot broth, like oatmeal gruel or clam soup. It is a positive aid to nervous people, and induces peaceful slumbers. This is especially the case on cold winter nights, when the stomach craves warmth as much as any other part of the body. Even a glass of hot milk is grateful to the palate on such occasions, but a light, well-cooked gruel is better, and in our climate, during the cold months of winter, should be the retiring food of every woman who

Had his Reasons.

Agent—Why didn't you take the residence I recommended to you? Parvenu—It is so near the opera house that my wife couldn't have used her carriage.

Weather.

Gray above and white below! Times are only givin' Blusterin' winds and blidin' snow, Where's the joy in livin'?

Yet the saddest day that's seen Shortens up the measure Which has set itself between This and times of pleasure

Let's don't think o' sunbeams flown! Welcome still each gray day; Every one's a steppin' stone On the road to May Day.

THE BRITISH SOLDIER.

INSTANCES OF HEROISM ON THE BATTLE FIELD.

Reminiscance of the Soudanese War—Two Brave Englishmen Who Died for Their Flag and Country in Critical Moment.

Heroism on the field of battle, whether displayed by friend or foe, always challenges admiration. From the annals of the Soudanese war the following story, more tersely told, is culled.

Only those who have been engaged in active warfare in the Soudan can realize fully to what extent the religious fanaticism of the Mahdi's followers will carry them in time of war. Reckless as to death, they rush madly into the thick of the fray. Fearless, bold and resolute is a true description of the Hadendowa tribe of Soudanese warriors, whose native home lies in the wild and mountainous districts of the Eastern Soudan.

This warlike tribe of warriors had never known what it was to suffer defeat at the hands of an enemy until they received their first check from the British troops at the battle of El-Tebe. Many a brave young fellow shed his life's blood fighting hand to hand with this warlike tribe in defense of his country on the field of battle that day, and many a poor mother at home in England mourned the loss of the one great joy of her heart, and whose home was left desolate and bare, now that the beloved one had perished gallantly fighting on the plains of the Soudan. The disastrous defeats of Hicks Pasha on the Nile and the intrepid Baker Pasha in the Eastern Soudan, led up to the subsequent events that follow.

TWO HEROES.

At the battle of El-Tebe (February 29, 1884), Colonel Barrow and Trumpeter Fanning, a young man of 19 years, were leading a wing of the Nineteenth Hussars in a charge against the Arab forces who were then in full retreat, when suddenly they were cut off from the main body of the regiment by a superior force of the enemy. Colonel Barrow had already been badly wounded in the charge, having been speared through the left arm and side, and was, therefore, powerless to defend himself. Trumpeter Fanning, who was riding by his side, took in the whole situation at a glance, and, quickly dismounting from his horse, stood on the defensive over the body of his fallen Colonel, and fought with indomitable pluck and courage. Drawing his revolver, and with a determined look to do or die upon his manly face, he calmly awaited the onslaught of the savage horde. Not a shot was wasted. Every bullet had its mark, for Fanning knew only too well his chances would be small once his revolver was empty.

THE CRITICAL MOMENT.

At last the critical moment came, and he had fired his last shot. Drawing his sword, he awaited the attack with a firm grip. And now came a terrific hand-to-hand struggle, in which he fought like a lion, until, stabbed in the right arm with a spear, the gallant fellow, through weakness and loss of blood, was compelled to relinquish his hold upon his sword.

Nothing daunted, however, the gallant trumpeter seized his trumpet with his left hand, and again fought the enemy hand-to-hand until literally borne to the ground by sheer force of numbers. Here they fell upon him and hacked his body with their short stabbing spears and knives, and left him and the Colonel for dead upon the field.

When the bodies were removed they were taken back to camp. Here it was found that Fanning was stabbed in 17 different places, yet, despite this fact, the gallant fellow lingered for five days afterward, and died at Victoria Hospital, Suez, where he was buried. Needless to say he recovered from his wounds he would have received the Victoria Cross for bravery. He left a widowed mother to mourn his loss.

The trumpet, which bore such mute testimony by the blood-stained finger-marks in his deathly grasp of the gallant stand made by the heroic youth, was afterwards recovered and preserved as a memento by his comrades. Colonel Barrow afterward died from the effects of his wounds, although not until he had rendered excellent services on the Nile expedition.

Favored Infant.

Three little maidens were discoursing about the baby brothers who had taken up their residence in the three families during the past year.

My little brother Ned's got a lovely silver mug that grandma sent him, said the first little girl; it's just a beauty; and he had a silver knife and fork from grandpa, too.

My little brother Walter's got a beautiful carved rattle that Uncle Henry sent him from China, said the second little girl; mother's put it away in a drawer to keep till he's grown up.

My little brother Freddie's not half so big as your brothers, said the third child, with an air of one endeavoring to conceal a feeling of triumph, but the doctor says he's had more spasms than any other baby in this whole neighborhood, so there!

Conspirators.

It's not dark enough yet, she whispered as she peered eagerly up and down the street.

There's no one in sight, he replied, after a careful survey. But some one may come around that corner at any minute and recognize us, and then I would want to die.

Well, then, we'll wait a bit. What dreadful deed did these two contemplate committing?

He was only about to give her the first lesson in riding a bicycle.

She's Heard Them O'er and O'er.

Have you formulated a plan for engagement proposals, Maude, for Leap Year?

No, Kate, but I have all the old gazes by heart.

Naps.

Since Ol'we got older, remarked Mr. McGarvey, Ol' shlope a good dale durin' me wakin' hours.