

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Exhilarating Use Made of Its Blue Waters
—In Nature's Great Laboratory.

As summer approaches is there anything which pictures itself to one's mind in more rosy colors or in a more charming manner than bathing—sea-bathing. No doubt those who have spent a month at the shore and gleefully indulged in all the rollicking sports, who have immersed themselves in America's briny waves, are longing for another plunge, another gay time on the sands, and, perhaps, too, another shot of the kodiac at some unsuspecting group, who blush in unfeigned embarrassment when the picture is afterward produced within the stately walls of the winter drawing-rooms. But those who have been fortunate enough to glide from Italy's picturesque shores into the warm blue waters of the Mediterranean and float luxuriously in the salty sea among a perfect school of happy bathers will never forget it. Never! Venice, Naples, Capri, Amalfi! It makes one's eyes glisten at the very thought of it. To Italy's splendid title, "The Land of Poetry and Song," might also be added "The Land of Baths," were it not that the second name to some fastidious minds would detract from the beauty of the first.

The ancient Romans, borrowing as they did all the worthily imitable customs from their Greek and Egyptian neighbors, found the baths especially suited to their luxurious tastes and carried them to a degree of excellence which had never been attained, making them not only of immense benefit in a sanitary way, but establishing them as a favorite rendezvous for people of culture and talent as well as for the poorer classes, who also enjoyed the privilege of their own compartments. Look at the baths of Diocletian, which are estimated to have accommodated no less than eighteen thousand people at one time. And those of Caracalla at Rome. What wonderful ruins of a still more wonderful structure. In these walls bathing became a science. Cold baths, tepid baths, hot baths, oil baths, sun baths—every kind of bath! Why simply to visit the place was a rest and recreation. Statuary and paintings lent beauty on all sides. Music charmed. Orators and poets entertained.

What beauty in the remaining walls of the Pompeian baths. The frescoes are as bright and beautiful as if they were done but yesterday, and the marble carvings and pavements which escaped the fury of the burning mountain have softened in color almost to an ivory. One object of especial beauty attracts the eye of the visitor, and that is a graceful bronze vase which stands, as it stood then, in the center of one of the women's apartments. This vase, wide and shallow, is perhaps fifteen or twenty feet in circumference, and must have been used as a shower bath, in which it is easy to fancy some fair Ione reclining. In the villa or public garden of Naples there is another vase similar to this one but much larger, which was also found in these baths and which now serves for a fountain and the accommodation of a family of most impudent ducks—typical Italian ducks, which take all they can get, especially from the foreigners, without offering the slightest entertainment in return, but perhaps it is more especially the foreigners who feed them.

Then the baths of Nero. Around the coast on the charming picturesque road leading from Pozzuoli to Baia one alights from the little carrozzella and clambers up to a cave cut in the side of the mountain wherein is a spring heated to a high temperature in its subterranean channels by veins of volcanic life which abound near Vesuvius. This spot suited well the comfort-loving Nero, who made of it a favorite resort and caused the rough stone couches to be placed there, which still remain.

One reads little of sea bathing in those days. Every Roman colony thought to construct its baths as it thought of raising its temples. But now all Italy turns its face to its natural advantages, and with one accord cries as early as May: "Let us to the sea!" Not all the establishments are as convenient and as well constructed as the Lido at Venice and those of Posilippo at Naples, but they are all on the same general plan. Every place open to the use of the public is provided with a pavilion where people congregate to discuss the latest topics, or to devour with eager ears the latest gossip, while there is always music, from morning till night, if only one of those harassing "organette" or portable pianos, which grind incessantly and seem always to be playing "Santa Lucia" or "Milla Napoli" and vary sometimes with the "Trovatore."

On either side of the pavilion are the "camerali" or dressing-rooms—one side reserved for ladies, the other for gentlemen. These "camerali" are the roughest kind of little wooden boxes, carpeted with a mat of braided straw, and furnished with four rude chairs for the four persons each is supposed to accommodate. Then there are the steps leading to the water. The fee for the use of each room is one franc fifty (or thirty cents), including the linen sheets, the price never varying whether there be one or four persons together.

Once in the water and presto! changed! all the reserved etiquette of the Indian drawing room vanishes. Then and then only does liberty exist, and the pretty little signorinas, as well as the handsome signoras, in the very simplest kind of bathing costume (generally dark blue with a little white braid), transformed into veritable water nymphs, swim off with all the grace and alacrity of a fish, never fearing, never tiring, just as if they had been born to it. And there is no end to romance. Fancy a boat full of handsome young officers towing a trail of pretty, bright-eyed girls to some quiet, picturesque spot where all indulge in a jolly little luncheon. It doesn't seem so very much, does it? And yet when one recalls that these same young officers may never have dared address the young ladies on land, or if they have had the good fortune to do so it was

only under the watchful eye of the omnipresent chaperone, then we realize what it really means.

Then there are the quieter places like the placid blue waters of Sorrento, away down under the high walls of rock, where one may sit and gaze up at the beautiful villas and fragrant orange gardens. And Capri, where the wonderful Blue Grotto is free to all who can swim there, while the hurried traveler inevitably falls a victim to the merciless boatmen who shake their hands in one's face and demand "la tariffa," which never fails to exceed the fee regularly established.

Yes, the sea is a blessing to the Italians, open to all and appreciated as well by poor as by rich. Indeed one finds himself wondering what would become of the lower classes, the Neapolitans for instance, if it were not for the wise provision of nature. They are said to be constitutionally opposed to the use of water in winter on the grounds that it means certain death by cold, but in summer they fairly live in the sea, and the little streeturchins frolic about and dive for the pennies of the "forestieri" without even the incumbrance of a bathing costume.

So much for baths, past and present, the one frequented perhaps too much, the other of necessity too little. Now it remains for all to take up a movement already set on foot in Chicago to establish baths within the reach of all, thereby bettering the conditions of all and removing one of the chief causes of disease.—Chicago Times.

STRATEGY OF BIG REPTILES.

Making Rabbits Think Their Open Jaws an Avenue of Escape.

In addition to possessing many wonderful traits that distinguish them from the other members of the big family of snakes at the Philadelphia zoological garden, the two pythons, have recently developed some new wrinkles which they must have brought over from India. While visitors to the garden were marveling at the recent luncheon the reptiles made of their skins, the pythons regained their pristine freshness and recovered from the state of lethargy into which they fall when the skin transition takes place. The reptiles were given their first hearty meal, and the manner in which they got their meal is novel, and shows that some of the customs of their native country still cling to them. A dozen rabbits were put in the large case and immediately there was a scurrying. The snakes did their part and the rabbits more than exhibited their agility. As soon as the big python got a chance he grabbed one of the animals by the nape of the neck, threw it in the air and caught it when it came down with a half hitch he had taken in his body. This performance was repeated several times and finally when all the bones had been broken the python swallowed the rabbit, ears, legs and all. In the meantime, out of deference evidently to his companion, the small python lay quiet. He watched the rabbit, however, and his eyes sparkled like diamonds in the anticipation of the feed. Having swallowed the rabbit, the big python repeated his performance until eight of the twelve rabbits remained. He moved about lazily and tried to catch another rabbit, but the animals he had swallowed made his movements necessarily slow and finally he gave up the job and lay on the floor with part of his body concealed by the foliage. His head lay directly under a bunch of leaves, and he was evidently preparing for a coup d'etat that would net him more rabbits.

The onlookers were not disappointed, for presently the big python opened his mouth and the cavity looked for all the world like a hole in the case. One of the rabbits thought it was an avenue of escape and made a bolt heading into the capacious maw. The jaws closed, there was a peculiar movement of the snake's body and there was one less rabbit in the cage. The smaller python fell in with the ideas of his companion at once and he, too, slid into a corner and opened his mouth. Seeing their companion had apparently made his escape and that there was another cavity open to them another of the rabbits dived into the mouth of the small snake. He had not been gorged like his big brother and he soon dispatched the rabbit and came up smiling for another go. Meantime the large snake had recovered and was prepared for another nice fat rabbit. He opened his maw and gave a vicious hiss that startled the small snake as well as the rabbits and there was additional agitation all around. The small snake had evidently been trained in this service, for he immediately began to move about the cage, gathering the rabbits in a circle made with his body. Meantime the big snake had not moved, and his mouth was as wide open as a clam's at high water. The small snake must have sunk in a fashion peculiar to his family, for the larger one closed his jaws with a snap that sounded like a pistol shot, and his forked tongue darted forth in an alarming manner, and a sharp, hissing sound started the rabbits on a steep chase around the cage over the small snake's body.

For a minute all was quiet, the small snake evidently turning the matter over in his mind and coming to the conclusion that he was not to get any more rabbits. Then he began to form a circle about the rabbits and formed a corral around them with his body. Then he raised his head above and back of the frightened rabbits and the big snake, with its face opening ready, winked his eyes in anticipation. One after the other the four rabbits were forced to jump down the big python's throat, until there was no room for more. Then and only then did a smile of joy settle over the big reptile's countenance, as he calmly closed his mouth and went off into a dose. The smaller reptile, seeing his chance at last, quickly dispatched the other rabbits and he, too, went off into a corner and composed himself for a long rest.—Philadelphia Press.

—Men are more liable than women to insanity, but die sooner after becoming insane.

FIRESIDE FRAGMENTS.

—Baked Squash.—Pare the squash, remove the seeds and steam until it is tender; mash it, season with butter, pepper and salt and add one-half pint of bread or cracker crumbs. Stuff this well and put it in a greased baking dish and bake one hour. The half pint of bread crumbs is sufficient for one medium-sized squash.—Prairie Farmer.

—Sponge Drops.—Two eggs thoroughly beaten, two cups of sugar, one-half cup of butter, one cup of sweet milk, three teaspoons heaping full of baking powder, lemon or vanilla to suit taste; add flour to make little thicker than cake, cream the eggs and sugar and the butter and beat rapidly, then add the milk, stirring all together, then the flour with the baking powder, stir until thick enough to drop from a spoon.—Home.

—"Little Pigs in Blankets."—They make a delicious dish for entertainments, and are made as follows: Take nice breakfast bacon, trim off the rind and ragged edges, and slice as thin as possible. Be careful to keep the lean streaks whole, as they represent the borders on the blankets. Next, take large oysters and lay one on the border-ends of each blanket; fold the border ends over the oysters, making both edges of the blankets meet, and pin together with wooden toothpicks. Broil in butter and serve hot.—Farm and Fireside.

—English Muffins.—Dissolve one-half cake of yeast in one quart of tepid water, one teaspoonful of salt, and enough flour to make a thin batter. Let it stand all night. Early next morning beat the batter well; set in a warm place, and let it rise. Bake on a griddle, turning only once. Simple as this recipe sounds, it requires experience to tell the right consistency of the batter, and just the right heat at which to cook these muffins of our grandmothers. They will present rather a shapeless appearance, as they are dropped from a spoon, but they should be crisp, light, and without a suspicion of toughness. If well made they are delicious.—Good Housekeeping.

—Coffee Ice Cream (Delicious).—Two cups of sugar and the yolks of four eggs beaten together thoroughly. Pour over the mixture a pint of boiling milk, and stir the whole for two or three minutes. Put the basin containing this custard on a hot part of the stove and continue stirring, but do not let it boil. Take the custard off the fire, add to it a pint of sweet cream, stir again, and throw in two large tablespoonsful of fresh ground Mocha coffee. Beat the mixture thoroughly over the fire for about three minutes, then cover the cream closely, so that the coffee can infuse through it for about an hour. At the end of this time it should be thoroughly cold. Strain it through a napkin and freeze.—Boston Budget.

—Pot Roast Beef.—Put the roast into a pot with water enough to come to the top of the meat. Put in salt and pepper and set over a hot fire and boil long enough to cook the meat perfectly tender. When the meat is tender take the top off the pot and let the water boil low so the grease will fry in the pot and brown a little. Watch carefully and don't let it burn. When slightly brown pour enough boiling water into the pot to make gravy and thicken with flour which has been smoothly mixed with a little cold water. Now put the top on the pot and set it where it will simmer for ten or fifteen minutes. It is now ready to take up. I think this is nicer and easier than cooking in the oven.—Detroit Free Press.

LATEST IN WOMEN'S HATS.
Perfectly Flat Disks of Felt Which Are Twisted Into Fantastic Shapes.
Manufacturers are now busy in making perfectly flat hats for women. They are mere disks of felt, which the milliners twist and bend into fantastic forms. Crowns which are mere rings of felt or other material are sewed on the under side of the felt plaques, sometimes in the center, but oftener at the side or rear of the center. The felt disks are fifteen inches in diameter, and are only slightly stiffened. The demand is exceedingly brisk just now, and six or seven Newark firms are making them.

Many patents have been obtained upon this simple flat disk of felt and the process of making it. The most important patent is one for splitting the plaques and cementing the pieces together. There is a great advantage in this, not only because it enables them to make hats of two different colors, over and under, but it makes a disk of greater durability and stiffness for the weight of fur used.

Heretofore all fur hats have been formed by blowing the fur upon a perforated cone and shrinking them with steam or hot cloths. In making the flat plaques most of the manufacturers have been blowing them upon low cones and flattening them in the sizing process. One firm devised a process for blowing the disks flat and in a continuous strip, and have made a sizing machine for working the flat material. They have also machines for poucing and finishing the plaques.

Some of the flat hats exhibited in the milliners' windows are dreams of beauty with gorgeous blendings of color upon the napped upper surface and creamy felt below. Others have a broad border of furry nap, or are full brush hats. A few have low crowns, built up by hydraulic pressure, but the dietim from Paris is that the crown must be on the under side, and hatters are now making shallow crowns of felt to be sewed on. Some of the French plaques are so limp that they can be formed into tams and beef eaters, while others are made much stiffer, and will be supplemented with milliners' wire sewed under the rim. The American plaques are superior to the imported in every respect, and are preferred by the milliners.—N. Y. Times.

—"Have you had a good season?" asked a tourist. "Naw," replied the seaside landlord. "Even the mosquitoes have nearly starved to death."—Washington Star.

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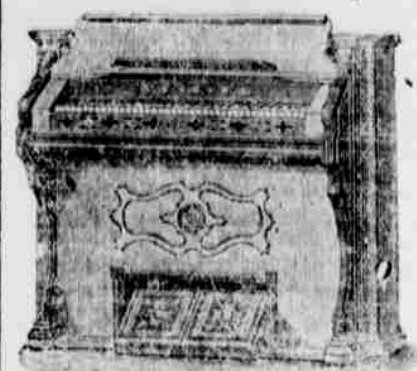
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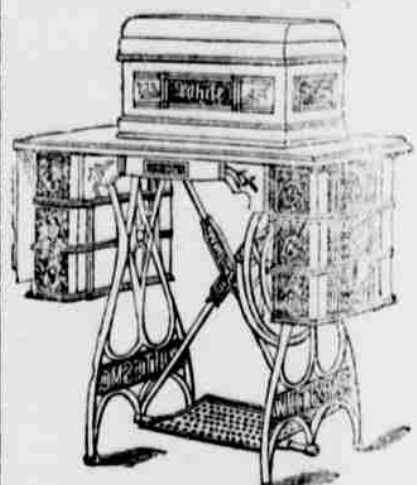
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Calf Skin " "	.40 to .50	
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Corn meal, cwt.		2.00
Bran, " "		1.25
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