

BOARDING-HOUSES FOR PLANTS.

Flowers Cared for While Owners Are Out of Town.

Boarding-houses for plants are a novel institution, designed for the housing of plants for families who close up their city houses for several months during the summer. Every woman who loves flowers is at her wits' end to devise a means of having her plants cared for when she goes away. In the case of a large and valuable collection this becomes a serious matter.

It is up on Columbus avenue that the plant boarding-houses abound. Often in the spring and summer any one paying a florist's may see in his window a strip of painted glass, or some other sign bearing the words: "Boarding House for Plants, 50 cents apiece." A few of the establishments offer accommodations for 25 cents. This price covers a month's board and lodging for a single potted plant.

None of these boarding houses seek winter patronage, as the florist would hardly be paid for his trouble in caring for other people's plants, since at that time they would occupy hot house space which could be turned by the proprietor to greater advantage in raising flowers of his own. Then, too, in winter it is the custom of the florist to put in a stock of hot house plants for sale, that being the time when most flower fanciers think of increasing their collections, and naturally the profits on sales is larger than could be expected from these frail boarders that require unusual watchfulness on chilly days. In summer, however, the rate of board is an ample return for the small outlay of time and attention, when plants need only such trifling attention as being supplied with water.

Sometimes it happens, the men in the business say, that the caretaker finds that the soil in which one of his boarders stands rooted has become impoverished. In such a case he immediately sets to work to replot the plant. All such bits of necessary care are undertaken without extra charge, being covered by the regular board bill. There is also a boy, whose duties consist in walking up and down among the boarders and seeing that they are not molested by bugs.

"I'd much prefer to keep a flower sanitarium," says a caretaker, "than to perpetually have to follow up that boy and see that he isn't napping. It wouldn't be half the trouble. And those boys are all alike. But it's a class of work that only a boy would consent to do. However, on the whole, I must confess that the plant boarding house business is rather too good to give up on account of so insignificant a drawback as a lazy boy, especially when it furnishes occupation and income in what would otherwise be a dull season for the florist."

Bees Industry is a Myth.

Bees, said Farmer William Russell to a reporter for the Minneapolis Tribune, are just like human beings. When they are busy they are virtuous and peaceable; but when in idleness they become vicious, given to foolish actions that dissipate the strength of the colonies and make the work of the beekeeper twice as arduous. Last year the season ran so that the bees were busy all the time. The blossoms came in rotation and the bees always had something to do. They made honey very fast and the business was prosperous.

This season there has been less honey to gather and the bees, with nothing to busy themselves upon, have devoted their time to frolic and idleness. The old rhyme:

"How doth the busy bee
Improve each shining hour—"

is all nonsense. The bees are marvellous of thrift and industry when they have work to do, but they can be quite as foolish as men.

The talk of the "idle drone" is another foolishness that has crept into the language through ignorance. The drone is the male bee. He has no business to gather honey; his function is altogether different and quite as important as that of the worker. He is the father of the hive, and when his work has been performed he is killed off as useless.

The Prize Pig Freak.

D. K. Persons, a farmer of Red Mills, Ark., is the owner of a pig that completely lays all other freak porkers in the shade. It is perfectly devoid of hair, and has a double set of eyes, feet like human hands (even to the nails), one very large ear and a face which looks more like that of a young baby than it does like that of a regulation pig. From between the upper set of eyes projects a proboscis like that of a young elephant. This proboscis has two holes through its entire length, and it is through them that piggy gets his supply of air. Mr. Persons values the freak at \$1,000 and his neighbors say that he takes greater care of it than all of the rest of the stock on the place.

Barber's Doom Is Sealed.

Shaving by machinery has been rendered easy by the construction of a machine reported to have been made by one Melchior Farkas, a convict in the penitentiary of the city of Szegedin, in Hungary. Farkas was put to labor in the cabinet making shop of the prison, and, taking to his work with a will, he soon displayed great inventive ingenuity. With his shaving machine he is said to have shaved all the inmates of the prison, nearly 150 in number, within less than an hour's time.

Old Folks and Young Folks.

Southwest City, Mo., claims the champion fat baby of the country—eight months, 66 pounds.

There is in Wauchula, Fla., a family of ten children, all born to one mother within forty-two months. There were twins, triplets and quintuplets. A local newspaper tells this story.

Scarcely less remarkable is the case of the 77-year-old citizen of Neat Falls, Wash., who is growing young again. His hair is changing from white to black, his eye brightens and his muscles are as limber as an angleworm's.

Isaac and Moses Martz of Arcadia, Ind., are twin brothers. Their wives are twin sisters. Each household has twelve children—seven boys and five girls. In each family was a pair of twins. The Messrs. Martz are 82 years old.

Alderman John Sheehan of Buffalo saved a Polack's life. The Pole, to prove his gratitude, offered Sheehan his baby boy as a gift, explaining that he was poor and had nothing else. Sheehan declined with thanks.

The Scrap Heap Proved Valuable.

Cycling has proved an unexpected benefit to more than one manufacturer of a line of goods entirely distinct from those usually connected with bicycling. A large watch concern found themselves burdened with a lot of wheels and interior works of a line watches which, for some reason or another, had not proved satisfactory. The mass of material was virtually worthless, and to get rid of it, it was offered for sale at a price, but no one wanted it. An ingenious workman, wanting a cyclometer for his wheel, went to this scrap heap, selected seven parts from it, added two of his own making, and the result was an accurate, durable and economical cyclometer. Other workmen who were cyclists did the same thing until the value of the scrap heap became known to the heads of the company, with the result that from what was at one time deemed a worthless scrap heap over 1,000 cyclometers a day are now being turned out and retail at \$2 each. Reads like a fairy story this, but it is the truth, just the same.

Spreading Plant Diseases.

It is remarked in the Kew Bulletin that the dispersion of plant diseases through the interchange of plants is a peril requiring careful precautions. The phyloxera was introduced from England into Switzerland. The coffee-leaf disease has been conveyed from Ceylon on the one hand to Fiji (with tea seeds) where it practically extinguished the promising coffee industry, and to German East Africa on the other. It has always been a matter of the deepest anxiety lest by any accident it should be introduced through Kew [the famous botanical garden] to the New World, where it does not at present exist. It has been no less a matter of anxiety lest the coffee-leaf miner should be introduced into the Old World. Kew extends, undoubtedly, an involuntary hospitality to many strange guests, which come unbidden from one knows whence.

A Bootblacks' Union.

Bootblacks in Seattle, Wash., formed a union a week ago, its main purpose being to maintain prices and to shut out imported cheap labor. The price of a shine in Seattle has stood at 10 cents as long as the average bootblack's memory reaches back until recently a number of Italians drifted in from the East and began cutting prices. The union will endeavor to maintain the price at 10 cents. Any member cutting below this will be fined 50 cents for the first offence, \$1 for the second, and will be expelled from the union for the third. The union was organized with the help of the Newsboys' Union formed in Seattle some months ago.

Duke of Argyll's Plaid Trousers.

The Duke of Argyll has the reputation of being the worst dressed man in Great Britain. He once saw some shepherd plaid cloth in a shop window, took a fancy to it and went into the place and ordered a pair of trousers from it. He then absently said: "You can send the rest of the piece, as I might want another pair or two some day."

The piece was ninety-six and one-half yards long, and, as a pair of trousers only requires two and one-half yards, the Duke of Argyll, who is typically Scotch and careful, has worn nothing but shepherd's check trousers since 1877, the year of the unfortunate and heedless purchase.

Influence of Imagination.

A Milwaukee merchant, in company with a friend, stopped at a country inn one hot summer evening. Being fatigued from the day's journey, they at once retired. But they could not sleep, and finally the friend of the merchant suggested that the window be opened, as he could not sleep unless there was better ventilation. The merchant groped around in the dark, and at last found a window, which seemed riveted to the frame. His friend told him to smash it, as he would pay the damages. Having done so they at once passed off into dreamland and slept finely in the breeze which appeared to be wafted through the opening. When they woke up in the morning they found that they had smashed the door of a bookcase instead of the window.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

THE Argentine Republic, which has just begun its career as a wheat exporter, expects to ship 90,000,000 bushels of last year's crop. Out of the crop for the previous year it exported 25,000,000 bushels, chiefly to England.

PROFESSOR CESARE LOMBROSO, the famous Italian criminologist, has discovered that one of the most striking characteristics of criminals is the absence of wisdom teeth. This should not make those people, however, who boast of being without these unnecessary molars feel uncomfortable.

The official estimate of wheat consumption in the United States is 4.67 bushels a head of population. It has been revised on figures representing the actual consumption of over 8,000 persons, and it is now fixed at 4.77 bushels a head. This would give 23.85 bushels as the annual consumption of the average family, with a total annual consumption for the entire country of about 334,000,000 bushels.

The Frenchman who proposes to set out for the North Pole in a balloon argues that the polar circle is an ideal place for an airship, as the temperature is even, the earth unobscured by vegetation, the daylight uninterrupted for six months, and electric discharges rare. Of course, the balloon will be a very elaborate affair, and it will be provisioned for over 100 days. It is not to start until July, 1896.

DURING the fiscal year which closed June 30 over four thousand million (4,130,440,000) cigars were manufactured in the United States. This is an increase of 63,522,000 over the number manufactured during the previous year, yet nevertheless the United States Tobacco Journal claims that the cigar trade is being damaged by the increasing use of bicycles. The theory is that the time spent on a bicycle is withdrawn from the possible time for cigar-smoking.

UNION COUNTY, New Jersey, has found good roads profitable, the increase in tax valuations having been marked this year. The total assessed values for 1895 are \$35,972,500, an increase over 1894 of \$1,359,600. The most conspicuous gain was made by Summit, which stands at \$1,866,000, an increase of \$146,000, or over 25 per cent. Westfield advanced \$216,600 to \$1,448,000, and Plainfield, Cranford and Union had substantial additions to the assessed value of their property.

THE completion of the Eleventh Census of the United States is now promised within this year by a report from Commissioner of Labor Carroll D. Wright to Secretary of the Interior Hoke Smith. He finds the total cost to date is \$10,531,142, and the chief cause of delay has been the population schedule. The only other parts remaining uncompleted are the vital statistics, a part of the compendium and the second edition of the abstract and the statistical atlas.

LENACY is on the increase in England, according to the report of the British Commissioners on Lunacy, issued recently. The total number of lunatics, idiots and persons of unsound mind was, on January 1 of this year 94,081, an increase of 2,014 over the number for the preceding year. The increase was confined almost wholly to the pauper class, and is due apparently, it is said, to the more general reception in asylums of cases of simple mental decay resulting from extreme old age.

A RECENT compilation of New England vital statistics shows that in 1892 twenty-two marriages in every thousand of population occurred in the towns of more than 10,000 population, while in the villages and in the country the marriage rate was five less in the thousand. The city birth-rate is higher in about the same proportion, but the death-rate is also higher. The statistics indicate that while the chances of sufficient food are better in the cities, the chances of prolonged life are better in the country in spite of short rations.

BOSTON has a lighthouse keeper's daughter who, perhaps, has not emulated Ida Lewis, yet she is an accomplished oarswoman as well as a versatile writer. Miss Louise Lynden has lived with her father on that beautiful headland for nearly fifteen years, and although a graduate of the Boston Girl's High School in 1879, has preferred to keep herself on the island summer and winter, ever since her father was appointed as keeper of the light in 1880. Miss Lynden is an accomplished photographer, and many of her charming stories are illustrated by her own pictures.

The trouble with the Bannocks recalls the fact that the Indian population of the United States in 1890 was set down at 248,253, not including the native inhabitants of Alaska, who numbered 32,052. The Indians living on the reservations and receiving assistance from the Government numbered 133,417. It is believed by many who have made a special study of Indian archaeology that the number of Indians within the present territory of the United States, at the time of the discovery of America, was little if any greater than the number now existing, a statement which will strike many with surprise.

ONE of the largest private estates in the world is that of Dr. W. Seward Webb, at Shelburne, Vt., on the shores of Lake Champlain. The property consists of more than 4,000 acres of beautiful rolling land bordering on the lake. There Dr. Webb maintains one of the most magnificent establishments on the Continent—Shelburne House—where he

lives the greater part of the year and entertains in royal style. He has a stable of blooded horses, a fleet of yachts on the lake, and has a game preserve of several hundred acres. He can entertain his friends with racing, yachting and hunting and fishing, all of which sports he enjoys himself.

The two new battle ships of which plans are now being drawn are not to cost over \$1,000,000 each. Turning labor into time at a dollar a day, the census average, this would make the maximum cost of each the work of 4,000 men for 1,000 days, or about three years. This would include, of course, all the time spent in preparing all the materials of all kinds—as in digging the coal to heat the furnace to make iron and steel for nails and armor and guns, felling the trees to make lumber, digging the mineral for the paint, planting and cultivating the beans for making the oil, and so on. So that probably the estimate above is well within the actual cost of labor time required.

IRRIGATION experiments along a new line have been making during the past few months in the "arid region" of western Kansas, where the rainfall is insufficient for crop-raising, and where no river water for irrigation can be obtained, and so far they have been a great success. The plan is to sink wells to a water-bearing strata and pump the water for irrigating the crops. The State Government is making the experiment, and a farm has been established at Goodland. The engineers report that there is a water-bearing sand, fully one-third of which is water, underlying the whole of the arid district at an average depth of twenty-one feet. This will yield more than a sufficient amount of water for all purposes of irrigation, and it can be economically raised. If all this turns out as prophesied the arid district promises to become one of the most fertile regions in Kansas.

Few Americans are aware of the fact that if it were not for the little island of Sicily, there would be no lemons, nor are many aware of the great importance of this commerce and of its necessity to the United States. The production of lemons in America is so limited at the present time, both as regards quantity and seasons, that all the California and Florida products do not supply 10 per cent. of the country's needs. After the months of August and September, when our domestic lemon crops mature, except for Sicily we should be without any lemons whatsoever, except a few that Spain sends us during the rest of the year. Accurate figures show that from September to April 30, during the past five years, the importations from Sicily each year have been about one million two hundred thousand boxes, each containing 300 lemons, or equal to 360,000,000 lemons.

A RECENT address before the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce by an American manufacturer named Pearce is rich with facts about the present relations of different countries, and especially of the Orient. Mr. Pearce has just been around the world taking observations. He says that 60 per cent. of the jute mills of Dundee, Scotland, are idle because Great Britain cannot compete with India. At Manchester 50,000 cotton spinners are protesting against the duty on English cotton goods imported into India. Children work in the cotton looms in India for 5 cents a week, and India has increased her cotton product fourfold in the last four years. China is also beginning to spin cotton, and England must soon lose this market also. Spinners get 25 cents a week there, against \$2.50 a day here. Mr. Pearce believes that it is not the competition of Europe that this country need fear, but that of India, China and Japan.

In his article on what to avoid in bicycling, printed in the North American Review, Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson, a well-known English medical authority, writes that excessive cycling is dangerous because of its effect on the heart, the motion of which he has known to be raised from 80 to 200 beats a minute by the exercise. He thinks too there is a tendency to develop the lower limbs at the expense of the upper. "There is little doubt of the correctness of these observations," adds the New York World, "and they are the more trustworthy because Sir Benjamin is himself a cyclist convinced of the benefit of the exercise when moderately indulged. His conclusions are supported by Dr. Reilly, of the Chicago Board of Health, who declares that as a result of excessive bicycling the deaths from nervous diseases in that city has been tripled. Perhaps this is an extreme view, but it is not doubtful that a person of sedentary life and indoor habits can commit suicide in a most delightful way by 'scorching' through his holidays on a bicycle. No form of exercise is more attractive, and when it is indulged in with a knowledge of the limits of endurance no exercise is likely to prove more healthy. But thousands of young people and a good many older ones who think they are strengthening themselves by exercise are really wrecking their nervous systems by overexertion and 'overtraining.' All this may be trusted to right itself in time, for the bicycle has come to stay. But in the mean time those who cannot learn except by their own experience will go on filling the graveyards."

The very playthings in Japan have now a warlike character. The Japan Mail says that even the game of chess is transformed, the figures being painted clay images representing Japanese and Chinese soldiers of various ranks.

FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS.

JACK'S RESOLVE.

"If I were the king of a country as wide
As the sky on a bright summer day,"
Said Jack with a nod, as he hunted about

In a wearied-to-death sort of way,
"And my wealth and my power were limitless quite.

To do just the thing I might choose,
Do you know what I'd get with the gold that I had?
How that wonderful power I'd use?"

I would give the last cent that I had
In the world,
And I'd add my crown to the cost,
For a pencil," said he—then he
Paused with a smile—

"For a pencil that couldn't get lost."

A HEART PARTY.

A new form of evening entertainment is called a "heart party."

A large heart, made of red flannel cloth, is pinned upon a sheet hung from a door. In the center of the heart is sewed a small circle of white. Arrows of white cloth, with pins placed therein, are given to the guests, each arrow bearing a number, the number corresponding to a list whereon the names and numbers of the guests are placed.

The point of the game, of course, is to see which person, when blindfolded, will pin the arrow nearest to the central spot of white. Four prizes may be offered, one each for the persons coming nearest to the center, and one each to those coming the farthest from the bull's eye.

The prizes may be a heart-shaped pin cushion, a heart-shaped photograph frame, silver heart-shaped pin and a heart-shaped box of bonbons. The booby prizes may be a Brownie holding a tiny heart and a pin cushion made of red satin and shaped like a beet.

A FINE OLD GAME FOR BOYS.

The old game of hare and hounds is gaining new popularity and being played by many boys nowadays.

Any number of persons may play the game. One or two of the players are chosen as hares, and each is provided with a bag filled with torn pieces of paper, which are called "scents."

The hares start off together, the rest of the players, who are called hounds, not being allowed to see the direction they take. When five, ten or fifteen minutes—as may have been agreed upon—have elapsed the hounds set off in pursuit of the hares. In their hunt they are guided by the scent, handfuls of which are thrown out by the hares as they cover the course.

Usually it is agreed beforehand that the run shall be a certain number of miles or for a certain length of time. If a hound catches one of the hares within the specified distance he wins; otherwise the hares win.

If a hound catches sight of the hares he and his companions may not cut across and run toward them directly, but he must follow the scent, although sometimes rules are made allowing this to be done, under which circumstances it is, of course, perfectly allowable.

Very often chalk is used in place of paper, the hares making marks upon trees, walls and pavements. This is not, however, as satisfactory as paper for scent. The scent should be white in summer and black in winter. The reason it should be black in winter is that in this way the hounds will be enabled to more easily follow it.

This game is often played by rival clubs, two rival packs of hounds constituting the whole pack. The game is then decided by adding together the numbers representing the order in which the two clubs finished.

WHIPPED A PRINCE.

"Tom" Benton occupied for many years—in fact, until his death—a responsible position in the household of Queen Victoria. Benton, who was of humble birth, was but a lad at Brighton when his parents died within a few months of each other. It was shortly after these events when the Queen's attention was called to the young boy under rather peculiar circumstances.

One day while Benton was gathering shells on the beach at Brighton to make pin cushions, which he sold to the summer visitors, a young boy, nicely dressed and about his own age, appeared upon the scene and scattered with a vigorous kick the accumulated shells. Benton gathered up his treasures, and placing them again in a pile, warned the intruder that if he repeated the trick he would give him a "good licking."

The kick was repeated with even more vigor than before and the shells were sent flying in every direction. True to his word, the "poor boy" soundly thrashed the stranger. It was a close contest at first, as the lads were quite evenly matched, but the more fully developed strength of Benton finally brought him off victorious.

Just as the melee was over a gentleman and lady approached, and the former said:—"You did quite right, young man; we have seen the whole transaction. This boy is our son, but he was the aggressor and received the thrashing he well merited." A number of questions were asked the lad as to himself and his family. The replies told the boy's life, how the death of his parents had brought poverty to himself and his brothers and sisters.

"This is the Queen," said the gentleman, who was none other than Prince Albert, "and the young man

to whom you administered such a merited whipping is the Prince of Wales." Turning to the Prince, he continued:—"You must send for his young man to school and pay for his tuition out of your own pocket money. That cannot add to your punishment, but can benefit this poor lad with whom you picked such an uncalled for quarrel."

Thus it was that "Tom" Benton met the Queen of England. He was sent to a school midway between Portland and Dover. After completing his studies there he was taken into Her Majesty's service and remained there his entire life. Between Benton and the Prince of Wales there was a strong bond of friendship, such as could exist between a true manly man and the future King of England.

USE OF PAPER PULP.

It is Being Converted Into Many Curious Things.

We have had the golden age and the iron age and various other ages, says the Philadelphia Record, but the present, says an exchange, will probably be known as the wooden or paper age. Paper dress material masquerading as silk is the latest invention in the paper line, and threatens to drive the silkwork out of the business. Spruce sawdust, cotton or jute waste and alcohol are put into the machine, and come out at the other end shining, delicately colored, rustling silks, suitable for the most fastidious lady's gown. Of course, this paper silk doesn't wear so well as the real fabric, but think how much cheaper it will be.

Enthusiastic paper manufacturers say the new woman and the new man will dine off paper dishes. It is not improbable that the hat of the future will be an indestructible paper affair, impervious to fire and water. Over in Paris any enterprising milliner will be able to show you stylish bonnets and hats made entirely of paper, frame, trimming, ornaments and all. Parasols of paper do not seem to have been thought of yet, but satCHEL and trunks of paper are common enough. The paper trunk, despite its frail sound, is the despair of the baggage smasher. It refuses to smash.

So do paper car wheels. They have been in use for years on some of the most important railroads in this country. It must not be supposed that the wheels are made entirely of paper. This material only forms the interior shell. Having been subjected to terrific pressure, it is molded and firmly bolted to the outer rim, which is of steel. Greater durability and lightness are claimed for these wheels, but don't let the idea of lightness lead you to get under one. If you do, you may possibly have use for one of the paper coffins which are being turned out at wholesale by a firm at Westfield, Mass.

The railroad train of the future is likely not only to have paper wheels, but to run on paper rails. These are made entirely of paper and are formed in molds under great pressure. They have been used to some extent in Russia and Germany, and are said to be free from many of the defects of the ordinary steel rail.

Paper horseshoes are another European invention. Among the advantages claimed for them is that they maintain a rough surface, enabling the horse to get a good grip on the smooth pavements. German paper makers have put on the market a substance called "papier sculptor," which is used instead of clay for moldings. It is simply paper pulp kept soft enough to be worked.

Paper mache ceilings and wall decorations are very fashionable. This may look like leather or brocade, or a thousand and one handsome embossed effects, but they are wood pulp just the same.

The house furnishing departments in the big shops furnish interesting evidence of the extent to which paper enters into ordinary life. Paper pails and tubs are appreciated by the suburban dweller who hasn't set tubs. They are much lighter and easier to keep clean, as well as cheaper, than the old style. Water colors are made of paper. So is the much abused cupsidder.

Peach baskets, berry baskets and almost everything under the sun—salt, which used to come in pretty blue and white bags, oatmeal, crackers, ice cream, shoes, dresses—is sent home in a paper box.

A New Trolley Brake.

A Chicago paper describes a new automatic trolley brake, which seems to fill the bill admirably. To work it the motorman has only to turn a crank six inches; that sets a spool working on the axle, the spool winds up the wheels in the length of a car, if necessary, and brings the vehicle to a full stop—a vast improvement over the old brake, which, controlled only by human muscle, generally fails to stop the car in less than several hundred feet. The great merit of the automatic brake is that it will enable the driver to bring the car to a halt in time to permit escape of persons who, under the old brake, would run risk of being overtaken and injured or killed.

Armenian Fasts.

The Armenians are great people for fasts. During one they eat nothing for a week. On the Saturday there is no real refreshment, but the younger unmarried members of the family are allowed to partake of cake and salt so as to have dreams about water, and it is a sacred rule that every young man must marry the girl who gave him fresh water to drink in his dream that night.

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