

## AGRI-HORTICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

**SKELETON LEAVES.**—At a recent meeting of the Scientific Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society, Mrs. Cussons, of Southport, exhibited some skeleton leaves, and with them sent the following note: "For the dissection of leaves I find the process of maceration too long and tedious, to say nothing of the uncertainty as to the results. I have therefore adopted the use of alkali in saturated solution, the specimens to be introduced while the liquid is heated to the boiling point; the time of immersion to be regulated by the character of the various leaves and the nature of the epidermis to be removed. When the specimen is freed from epidermis and cellular tissue, it must be subjected to the action of chlorine to destroy the colouring matter. The introduction of peroxide of hydrogen not only serves to render the lace-like specimen purer in colour, but also preserves it. In destroying the colouring matter in ferns this also is invaluable; added to the chlorine, it gives a solidity to the bleached fronds, and appears to equalize the action of the chlorine. For skeletonizing capsules the slow process of maceration by steeping in rain-water is alone available; a moderate heat may be applied to hasten the process, but alkali is useless. The only known flower which can be dissected is the *Hydrangea japonica*. The fibrous nature of the petals renders it easy to skeletonize in the perfect truss in which it grows. Skeletonized leaves and capsules appear to gain in the process a toughness and durability not possessed by them in their natural state."

**UTILIZATION OF SUINT.**—One of the most singular discoveries in the history of agricultural chemistry is due wholly to the French. Sheep draw from the land on which they graze a large quantity of potash, which is eventually excreted from the skin along with the sweat. It was shown by Chevreul that this peculiar potash compound, which is called suint, forms at least one-third of the weight of raw merino wool, while it constitutes about fifteen per cent. of the weight of the fresh fleece. As it is easy to extract the "suint" by mere immersion in water, the wool manufacturers can readily produce more or less concentrated solutions, from which the potash may be recovered by appropriate treatment. The development of this new industry is principally due to MM. Maumné and Rogelet, whose process, in operation at most of the great seats of the wool manufacture, is very simple. They evaporate the solutions to dryness, and place the residuum in resorts, and distil it very much the same as coal is distilled at gas-works. The result is that while much gas is evolved which can be used for lighting the factory, and much ammonia is expelled which can be collected and used in many ways, there remains a product consisting of carbonate, sulphate, and chloride of potassium. These salts are separated by the usual method, and pass into commerce.

**CHLORIDE OF POTASSIUM FOR SHEEP.**—The use of chloride of potassium is recommended in Germany as a means of increasing the growth of wool in sheep. The fact of the "yolk" of sheep containing a large proportion of this chemical led some German chemists to make experiments with a view of proving whether the supply of this material would promote the growth of wool; and the result has proved that, by administering chloride of potassium in the proportion of one part of chloride to nine parts of salt, the production of wool may be increased and its quality improved, while the general health of the animals is at the same time benefited. Experiments are being made in order to ascertain the proper quantities to administer.

## MUSICAL.

Mr. Mapleson is going to take a new departure, and show the Americans something of English enterprise, by bringing to this continent, not only a first-class troupe of artists, but the Conductor (Signor Ardit) band and chorus of Her Majesty's Opera House, London. The list of artists includes Miss Minnie Hauck, Mlle. Bauermeister, Signor del Puente, Signor Campanini, and Signor Foli, and it is intended to produce M. Bizet's new opera of "Carmen" in the New York Academy of Music, with the original London cast.

Now, we are not all envious of our cousins in New York, nor are we so covetous of our neighbours' good fortune as to desire "Carmen" to be produced in Montreal instead of New York, but we are not above partaking of the crumbs from the rich man's table, and we would like to hear a few of the artists who are coming so close to our city, even without their band or chorus. Surely when Mr. Mapleson shows sufficient enterprise to bring such a vast array of talent over 3,000 miles, and maintain them at enormous expense during thirty performances on speculation, we ought to be able to offer sufficient inducements to secure a portion, at least, of this "glorious company" for a few days!

We do not want to hear "Carmen," or "Lohengrin," or any of the latter-day novelties; any opera, well performed, would satisfy us, and would be a novelty in Montreal. We think the Directors of our Academy ought to take the initiative in the matter, and thus show that their company can possibly be said to have some remote connection, at all events, with music.

## DR. MACLAGAN'S ORGAN RECITALS.

The first of these recitals was given in Zion Church on Monday evening. The audience was not very large, but we could hardly expect that it should have been, so many people being out of town.

The first piece on the programme was a Fantasia in C minor by Hesse, which was admirably executed, but without the slightest attempt at expression. It was followed by a well written Andante by Smart, but neither of them seemed to impress the audience very much. After this came a Selection from "Dircorali," which took them completely by storm, and received tremendous applause. Then we had one of Bach's Fugues, and an acrobatic performance in which a Christmas Hymn was twisted into every conceivable shape, the whole concluding with the Coronation March from "Le Prophete."

We must not forget to mention the inevitable Andante in G by Batiste (which was, as usual, encored); also, the vocal solos by Messrs. Trotter and Redfern, which were well received.

While we must admit that Dr. Maclagan played, as far as mere execution is concerned, very well, and that there was much to admire in his performances, we would remind that gentleman that a mere mechanical performance of difficult pieces on the organ is not necessarily *organ music*, and would recommend him to take for his models such men as Best, Stainer or Archer, who have made their reputation, not merely by executing difficult pieces in an inane way, but by an intellectual interpretation of the works of the great masters.

These recitals might be made a means of education for the masses, if, instead of the florid and meaningless variations of Batiste and Wely, we had some of the *music* of Beethoven and Mendelssohn. True, we were treated to two fugues, one by Bach and the other by Hesse, but fugues are calculated more to show dexterity of the performer than to move the hearts of an audience, which, we take it, is the true office of the musical artist.

We hope Dr. Maclagan will take these remarks in all friendliness, as they are made solely from a desire to give an honest and impartial criticism.

## THE OLD ORGANIST.

'Tis forty years ago since first  
I climbed these dusty, winding stairs  
To play the Dean in; how I spurned  
Beneath my feet all meaner cares.  
When first I leant, my cheek on fire,  
And looked down blushing at the choir.

Handel and Haydn, and Mozart—  
I thought they watched me as I played;  
While Palestrina's stern, sad face  
Seemed in the twilight to upbraid;  
Pale fingers moved upon the keys—  
The ghost-hands of past centuries.

Behind my oaken battlement  
Above the door I used to lean,  
And watch in puffing crimson hood,  
Come stately sailing in the Dean;  
On this, the organ breathing low,  
Began to murmur soft and slow.

I used to shut my eyes and hear  
The solemn prophecy and psalm  
Rise up like incense; and I loved  
Before the prayer the lull and calm  
Till, like a stream that bursts its banks,  
Broke forth brave Purcell's "Oh, give Thanks."

I knew those thirteen hundred pipes  
And thirty stops, as blind men do  
The voices of the friends they love,  
The bird's song, and the thunder, too;  
And the fierce diapason's roar,  
Like storms upon a rocky shore.

And now to-day I yield me up  
The dusky seat, my old loved throne,  
Unto another; and no more  
Shall come here in the dusk alone,  
Or in the early matin hour,  
To hear my old friend's voice of power.

And yet methinks that, centuries hence,  
Lying beneath the chancel floor,  
In that dark nook I shall delight  
To hear the anthem's swell once more,  
And to myself shall quietly smile  
When music floods the vaulted aisle.

Or, mocking gravely at some hand  
Less skillful than my own was once,  
In my snug nest I'll lie, and mark  
The blunders of the foolish dunce;  
But to myself the secret keep,  
And turn me round again to sleep.

## BEETHOVEN.

When Steibelt, a pianist and composer of note in his day, came with his great celebrity from Paris to Vienna, several of Beethoven's friends were afraid that the reputation of the latter might be injured. Steibelt did not call upon him—they met, for the first time, at a party given by Count Fries, where Beethoven introduced his new trio in B flat, for pianoforte, clarinet, and violoncello (op. 11). The performer has no peculiar opportunity for display in this piece. Steibelt listened to it with a sort of condescension, paid Beethoven a few compliments, and thought himself sure of his victory. He played a quintet of his own composition, extemporized, and produced much effect by his *tremolando* passages, which were then quite novel. Beethoven could not be induced to play any more. A week afterward Count Fries gave another concert. On this occasion Steibelt played a quintet with great success, and a brilliant fantasia, which he had evidently got up—on the same theme (*Pria ch' impregno*), on which the variations in Beethoven's trio are written. This provoked the admirers of Beethoven and the master himself; they insisted on his sitting down to improvise. He went to the instrument in his usual, I may say, uncouth manner, as if he was pushed there, and, as he went by, took up the violoncello part of Steibelt's quintet, laid it (purposely) upside down on the desk, and, with one finger, strummed a theme out of the first bars. As he went on he became so enraged and excited in his improvisation that Steibelt left the room before Beethoven had done—never would meet him again, and made it a condition that any one wishing for his company should not invite Beethoven.

Certain critics in Paris claim that the new two-manual pianos recently exhibited in Paris will supersede those now in use. In the two-manual instrument two grand pianos are placed one over the other, and in the top piano the manuals are reversed, the bass notes being where the trebles usually are, and *vice versa*. Thus the performer can play without crossing his hands, and can play bass or treble, as the case may be, on the two pianos simultaneously.

## CURRENT LITERATURE.

## HARPER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE for September.

Harpers' are almost invariably first in the field, and the present number well sustains their old-time reputation. The contents are varied enough to suit all tastes, and the illustrations are of even more than usual merit. There are two articles which are especially interesting to Englishmen: "Sheen the Beautiful," by Miss Clara F. Morse, with its 13 illustrations of Richmond Hill, Twickenham, and other scenes of historical interest; and a charming paper on "Thomas Bewick," the father of English wood engraving; here we have a portrait of Bewick, and reproduced with great skill a profusion of engravings from his "British Birds and Quadrupeds," (many of those who visited the Caxton Exhibition in this city will remember that a copy of this very scarce book was shown,) we may say with Wordsworth that we look at them with "ever-recurring pleasure;" there is an illustrated article on "The Reformed Wiesbaden," and still another, a pleasant gossip on a "Spring Jaunt in Staten Island." The number is filled with portions of the serial stories, "MacLeod of Dare," by William Black, and "The Return of the Native," by Thomas Hardy, and several short stories; also three or more poems—in fine, it is an exceedingly rich and beautiful number.

## EVOLUTION.—THE STONE BOOK, AND THE MOSAIC RECORD OF CREATION. By Thomas Cooper. Dawson Brothers, Montreal.

It is refreshing to turn from that strangest of all tongues, the language of the so-called sensational novel, to the idiomatic English of Thomas Cooper. The author has a knack of putting old truths in new lights, and of enforcing and illustrating his arguments, which renders them more than ordinarily attractive. In this little volume miracles are discussed with shrewdness and a homely directness of argument. It is a model of vigorous thinking and effective eloquence. Our author tells us that it contains the substance of three lectures which have been spoken in nearly every town in England. Thomas Cooper is a man of remarkable powers, and has had a remarkable history. The writer of these lines knew him as a Physical Force Chartist in 1840, and from that date he suffered two years' imprisonment for his political opinions. His conversion has been so complete that he has lectured against striking a blow even in self-defence; and at this time he is a hearty septuagenarian lecturing on "Christian Evidences" with a strong common sense which has seldom been equalled. The present volume is the fifth of the "series," and is worthy of the man. It is a book which learned men may read with advantage. The "Record of the Creation" in the third lecture deserves to be scattered as men fling seed into the furrows.

## HOLMAN LIVER PAD CO., 301 Notre Dame street, Montreal.

DEAR SIRS,—By the advice of my friend, Mr. Inglis, of your city, you sent me a "Holman Liver Pad" nearly four weeks ago; also a letter of advice, &c., &c., and requested me to let you know what effect the Pad was producing in about ten days. Well, Sir, if the advertisement of the Pad had been sent I never would have purchased one, and the idea of letting you know in ten days the beneficial results from simply wearing it seemed to me, who had been suffering for nearly six months, a sort of CRUEL JOKE. However, as faith in its efficacy. Well, thanks to the discoverer of the Pad, it seems to require no faith on the part of the wearer to be benefited by it. I was astonished at the end of ten days to find that the pain I suffered on the attempt to take a full inspiration had, as well the cough, almost left me. Please find enclosed \$5 to pay for the Pad sent, and also for another, which I hope will complete the work so well begun. I am truly thankful for the relief I have found from the use of this Magical Little "Doctor Pad." Long life to him. Please also convey my thanks to Mr. Inglis for having sent it.

Very respectfully yours,  
G. F. MAITLAND.

THE ACCIDENT INSURANCE CO. OF CANADA is now issuing Policies and Permits for Travel, covering all accidents by land or water—fatal or non-fatal—at the same rate which had hitherto been charged for Insurances covering accidental death only when beyond the limits of Canada. An Insurance of \$5,000 if killed, or \$25 a week if injured, for a three months' trip to Europe, costs now only \$25 in this Company. The Head Offices at 103 St. Francois Xavier Street.—EDWARD RAWLINGS, Manager.—Adv.