

THE HARPER.

The weary old Harper sat down at our gate,
When the vespers were sung and the evening was late;
And the tresses of gray that hung over his eye
Were wav'd by the breeze that blew hurriedly by.

The lady looked down from her turretted bower,
Where her daughter, fair Isabel, bloom'd like a flower,
And the lord of her love, with the blood on his cheek,
Sat pond'ring the thoughts that he chose not to speak.

The weary old Harper was brought to the hall,
Where the trumpet of battle hung high on the wall;
And the ladies stood tremblingly mute by his side,
And the baron was pacing in silence and pride.

But the fair lady Isabel well could espay
Through the tresses so gray the young light of his eye;
And his bosom that heaved to the light-sounding tone,
Drew a sigh of affection and grief from her own.

The weary old Harper—so wither'd and gray—
Got shelter and food for the meed of his lay:
And the wine-cup was drain'd till the hoar-frost of time
Seem'd thaw'd from his heart like the autumn-tide rime.

The morning arose, and the matins were sung;
But Isabel came not—the lovely and young—
No, Isabel came not—shall come not again—
For the weary old Harper was lord of Balmain.

THE CULTIVATION AND USE OF TEA.

The tree, or rather shrub, from the leaves of which the beverage called Tea is made, is a native of China and Japan, in which countries alone it is cultivated for use. It is an evergreen, somewhat resembling the myrtle in appearance, and grown to a height varying between three and six feet. It is capable of enduring great variations of climate, being cultivated alike in the neighbourhood of Canton, where the heat is at times almost insupportable to the natives; and around the walls of Peking, where the winter is, not unfrequently, as severe as in the north of Europe.

The best sorts, however, are the production of a more temperate climate; the finest teas are said to grow in the province of Nanking, occupying nearly the middle station between the two extremes of heat and cold. The greatest portion of what is brought to the Canton market, and sold to the European merchants, is the produce of the hilly, but populous and industrious, province of Fokien, situated on the seacoast to the north east of Canton. It appears to thrive best in vallies, or on the banks of hills, exposed to the southern sun, and especially on the banks of rivers and rivulets.

The first European writer who mentions tea is Giovanni Botero, an eminent Italian author, who published a treatise, about the year 1590, on the magnificence and greatness of cities. He does not mention tea by name, but he describes it in such a manner, that it is impossible to mistake it. "The Chinese," he says, "have an herb, out of which they press a delicate juice, which serves them for drink, instead of wine; it frees them from those evils which the immoderate use of wine produces among us."

The tea-plant is propagated from the seed. Holes are drilled in the ground at equal distances, and in regular rows; into each hole the planter throws as many as six, or even a dozen seeds, not above a fifth part of the seed planted being expected to grow. While coming to maturity they are carefully watered; and though when once out of the ground, they would continue to vegetate without further care, the most industrious cultivators annually manure the ground, and clear the crop from weeds.

The leaves of the tea-plant are not fit for gathering until the third year, at which period they are in their prime, and most plentiful. When about seven years old, the shrub has generally grown to about the height of a man, and its leaves become few and coarse; it is then generally cut down to the stem, which, in the succeeding summer, produces an exuberant crop of fresh shoots and leaves; this operation, however, is sometimes deferred till the plant is ten years old.

The process of gathering the tea is one of great nicety and importance. Each leaf is plucked separately from the stalk; the hands of the gatherer are kept carefully clean, and, in collecting some of the fine sorts, he hardly ventures to breathe on the plant. At a place called Udsi, in the island of Japan, is a mountain, the climate of which is supposed to be particularly congenial to the growth of tea, and the whole crop which grows upon it is reserved for the sole use and disposal of the emperor. A wide and deep ditch round the base of the mountain prevents all access, except to the appointed guardians of its treasures. The shrubs are carefully cleansed of dust, and protected from any inclemency of the weather. The labourers who collect the leaves, are obliged, for some weeks previous, to abstain from all gross food, lest their breath or perspiration might injure the flavour; they wear fine gloves while at work, and during that period bathe two or three times a day.

Notwithstanding the tediousness of such an operation, a labourer can frequently collect from four to ten, or even fifteen pounds a

day. Three or four of these gatherings take place during the season, viz. towards the end of February or beginning of March; in April or May; towards the middle of June; and in August. From the first gathering, which consists of the very young and tender leaves only, the most valuable teas are manufactured, viz: the green tea called Gunpowder, and the black tea called Pekoe.

The produce of the first gathering is also denominated in China, Imperial tea, probably because where the shrub is not cultivated with a view to supplying the demands of the Canton market, it is reserved, either in obedience of the law, or on account of its superior value, for the consumption of the emperor's court. From the second and third crops, are manufactured the green teas called in our shops Hyson and Imperial, and the black teas denominated the Souchong and Congo. The light and inferior leaves separated from the Hyson by winnowing, form a tea called the Hyson-skin, much in demand by the Americans, who are also the largest general purchasers of green teas. On the other hand, some of the choicest and tenderest leaves of the second gathering, are frequently mixed with those of the first. From the fourth crop is manufactured the coarsest species of black tea called Bohea; and this crop is mixed with an inferior tea, grown in a district called Woping, near Canton; together with such tea as remains unsold in the market of the last season.

Owing to the minute division of land in China, there can be few, if any, large tea growers; the plantations are small, and the business of them carried on by the owner and his own family, who carry the produce of each picking immediately to market, where it is disposed of to a class of persons whose business it is to collect, and dry the leaves, ready for the Canton tea-merchant.—*Parley's Magazine.*

THE WATER PINK.

It is difficult in some case to draw the line between the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The sensitive plant possesses qualities which entitle it to rank in both, but the most curious combination of vegetable and animal properties is met with in the water pink and the animal grass which grows in Port Mahon, in the island of Minorca. They are thus described by Mr. Jones in his sketches of naval life:

"As I sauntered along the shore of the harbour, my attention was drawn to a beautiful flower at the bottom where the water was nearly a fathom in depth. It grew on a stalk about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, and about ten inches in length; was in shape like an inverted cone, about ten inches in diameter; and was variegated with brilliant colours, red, yellow, and purple. It was a beautiful thing, and I wanted it; so I determined to knock it off, hoping some chance might bring it to the shore. I threw, and saw I struck it; when the water was cleared up, the stock was there but I could not discover the flower.

After a vain search I went on further, and came to another near the shore; I thought I was sure of this, and got a stick to draw it to me, when, as soon as I touched it—quash—the whole disappeared. It was an animal—flower and all. I have since procured several, and have preserved them. The stock is formed by concentric coats of gristly matter, which is transparent when the outer one is removed. It is attached to the rocks below. This forms a tube which is an animal about seven inches long, with two rows of feet in its whole length; at its upper end is the head, and rising from the latter, the flower I have spoken of. This is formed by a vast number of fibres, each with an exceedingly fine and variegated fringe placed like that of a feather; they do not form a single cup, but several; and their roots are so ranged as to produce a spiral channel reaching to the animal's mouth. They have a strong sensitive power, and as soon as touched, are dragged by the animal into the stalk. After a few minutes it ascends again, and the flower spreads out as before; doubtless they are intended for taking food. A touch will spoil them, so delicately are they formed. I cut off the flower and passed a paper under it, in water, then by laying it on a board and pouring water on it, spread it out as I wished it. They are of the cerialine species, and are called water pinks by the natives. I can take you, too, to parts of the harbour where the bottom is covered with tufts of grass, some dark coloured; some in plain tufts, and others with a star in the middle; this grass, too, is all animal, and if you touch it, will disappear in the ground. There is a large quantity of it just north of the hospital island.

A TASTE FOR READING is one of the very best traits of character which a parent can bestow upon a child. It has proved the salvation of thousands from dissipation and idleness; to say nothing of the acquisition of knowledge, and the improvement of the mind. Viewed in the light of mere employment of leisure hours, reading is at once the safest, cheapest, and most agreeable of occupations. With proper but not too rigid direction at the outset; direction not imposed as an onerous regulation, but given almost insensibly in the way of advice. A habit of reading will always do more good than harm, even though the matter read should not be of the very best and most useful description.—*N. Y. Weekly Dispatch.*

DESULTORY READING.—Desultory reading is indeed mischievous, by fostering habits of loose discontinuous thought; by turning the memory into a common sewer for rubbish of all sorts to float

through; and by relaxing the power of attention, which of all our faculties most needs care, and is most improved by it. But a well regulated course of study will no more weaken the mind, than hard exercise will weaken the body; nor will a strong mind be weighed down by its knowledge, any more than an oak is by its leaves, or than Sampson was by his locks.

RECIPES, &c.

THE NETTLE.—The nettle is generally considered by farmers and gardeners as a useless and troublesome weed; but it needs little argument to prove that the most common gifts of Providence are often the most useful to mankind. The common stinging nettle is one of the best medicines which is produced in the vegetable kingdom; and its medicinal qualities ought to be more generally known and appreciated. In the form of a simple, weak infusion, taken in the quantity of a pint a day, it acts as an alternative and deobstruct in impurities of the blood. A strong decoction taken in the same quantity proves an admirable strengthener in general or partial relaxation. Applied as a fomentation or poultice, it relieves swellings, and abates inflammations; and the expressed juice taken in spoonfuls, as the exigency of the case may require, in internal bleedings, is the most powerful stypic known. We may add, that its leaves, when boiled, are converted into a tender, healthy, and nourishing aliment, grateful to the palate. And yet there are few plants whose appearance is viewed by the farmer with more disgust than the stinging nettle.

A thing worth remembering at this season of swimming and bathing.

RECIPE FOR FLOATING.—Any human being who will have the presence of mind to clasp the hands behind the back, and turn the face towards the zenith, may float at ease and in perfect safety in tolerable still water—ay, and sleep there, no matter how long. If not knowing how to swim, you would escape drowning, when you find yourself in deep water, you have only to consider yourself an empty pitcher—let your mouth and nose—not the top of your heavy head—be the highest part of you, and you are safe. But thrust up one of your bony hands, and down you go; turning up the handle tips over the pitcher. Having had the happiness to prevent one or two drownings by this simple instruction, we publish it for the benefit of all who either love aquatic sports or dread them.

SIMPLE REMEDY TO PURIFY WATER.—It is not so generally known as it ought to be, that pounded alum possesses the property of purifying water. A large table spoonful of pulverised alum, sprinkled into a hogshead of water (the water stirred round at the time), will, after the lapse of a few hours, by precipitating to the bottom the impure particles, so purify it, that it will be found to possess nearly all the freshness and clearness of the finest spring-water. A pailful, containing four gallons, may be purified by a single tea-spoonful.

CHLORIDE OF SODA, is said, in the London Lancet, a medical work, to be an effectual cure for a burn. It is stated in that journal, as an example, that an attorney, in attempting to put out the flames that had attacked the curtains of his bed, got his hands burned and blistered, but not broken. He sent for a couple of quarts of the lotion, four ounces of the solution to a pint of water, had it poured in soup plates, wrapped his hands in lint, as no skin was broken, and so kept them for some time. Next morning he was so perfectly well that only one small patch of burn remained, yet an hour had elapsed before the application. It is added that the same remedy is sufficient to heal scalds and a black eye.—*Newark Daily Advertiser.*

CURE FOR CANCER.—Ms. Thomas Tyrrel, of Missouri, says he has effectually cured himself of an obstinate cancer, "by the free use of potash made from the ashes of red oak, boiled to the consistence of molasses, used as a poultice, covering the whole with a coat of tar. Two or three applications will remove all protuberances, after which it is only necessary to heal the wound with common salve."

THE COLONIAL PEARL,

Is published every Saturday, at seventeen shillings and sixpence per annum, in all cases, one half to be paid in advance. It is forwarded by the earliest mails to subscribers residing out of Halifax. No subscription will be taken for a less term than six months. All communications, post paid, to be addressed to John S. Thompson, Halifax, N. S.

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HALIFAX, N. S.: Printed at The Novascotian office.